

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 24 July 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
24 JULY 1968

1. Czechoslovakia

Moscow's announcement that a massive military exercise will be held near the Czechoslovakian border all but put a gun on the table for talks with the Czech presidium. Along with this threatening move, the Russians have turned up their propaganda against Prague. The Czechs, however, are maintaining at least an outward appearance of calm.

Neither side has said yet just where or when the meeting between Soviet politburo members and their Czech counterparts will take place

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Nor has Prague committed itself to send the whole 11-man presidium as requested by Moscow. The Soviets, aware that various factions are represented on the Czech presidium, hope that one or more members will cave in under pressure.

Some Soviet troops remain in Czechoslovakia.

2. Soviet Union

The Soviets apparently are postponing their latest attempt to get off an unmanned circumlunar flight. It had looked as if the launch would come this week, but several of the support ships are now moving off their stations in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. The ships are not headed home, however. We do not know just what caused the delay. The Russians may try again in August.

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3. Bolivia

Using the authority of the state of siege he declared Monday, Barrientos has clapped 40 opposition leaders in jail. This seems to have defused the Guevara diary crisis. Arguedas, the cabinet officer who claims he gave the diary to the Cubans, has been asked by the Chileans where he would like to go for asylum. Cuba has already publicly offered to take him in.

4. Chile

The worst drought in 100 years is adding to Frei's economic problems. Not only agriculture is being hurt badly; depleted reservoirs have meant reduced hydroelectric power and a corresponding cut in copper production. A loss in copper revenues at a time when Chile may have to buy more food abroad could easily set off a new round of inflation.

5. Communist China

China has far more water than it needs. Flooding in central and south China has ended all chance for a good early rice harvest. About 25 million tons were ready for harvesting when the rains began in mid-June. Despite efforts to protect the dikes, some crop loss is inevitable and the trouble will be compounded by the delay in planting the next crop.

6. Iraq

As the dust settles in Baghdad after the coup, the new regime is beginning to look a little more moderate than its predecessor. There are not likely to be any marked shifts in attitude toward Israel or the US, however.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam

- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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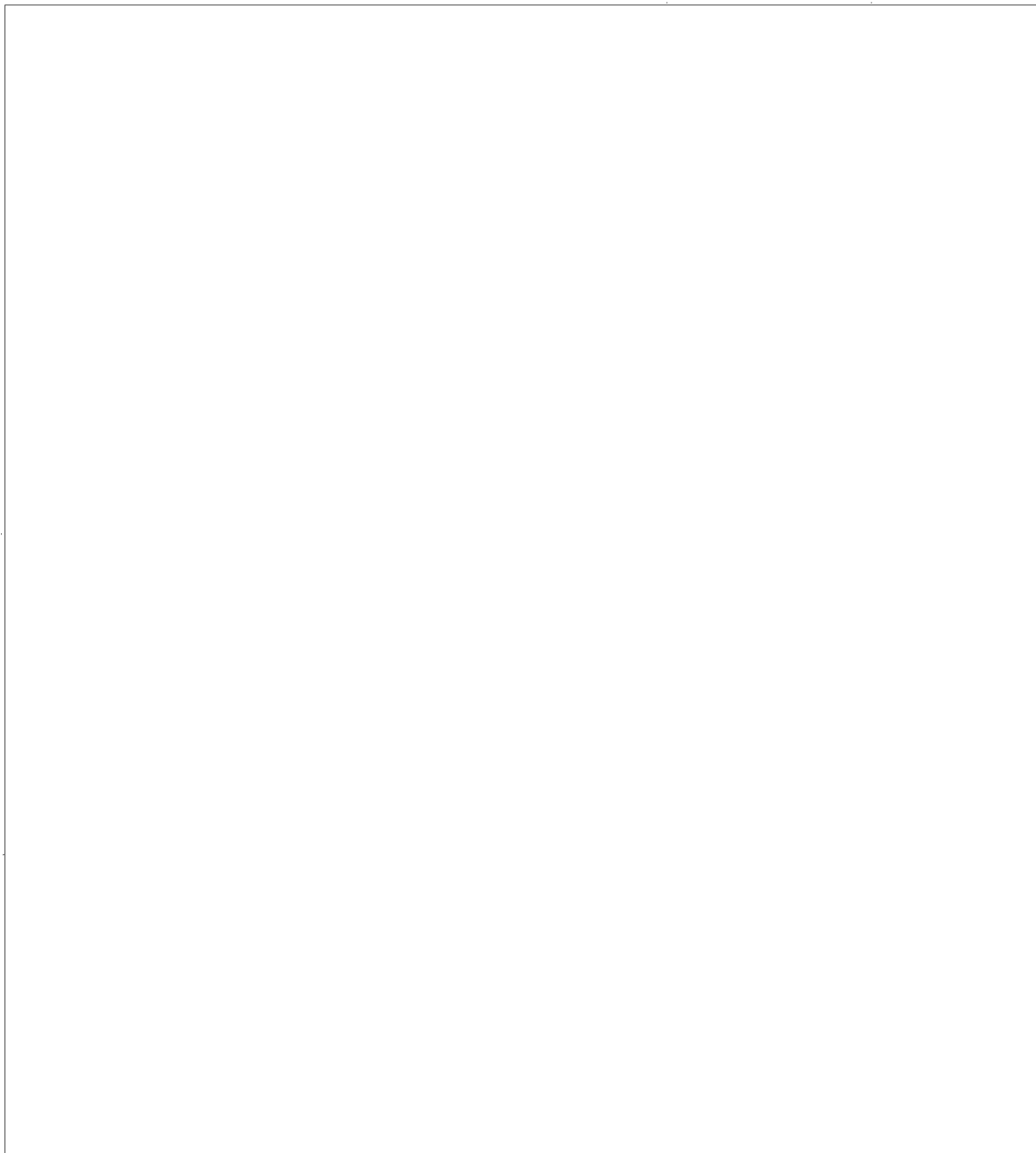
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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
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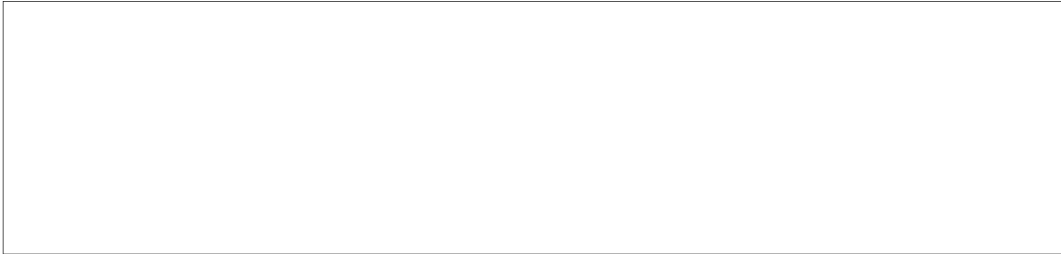
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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

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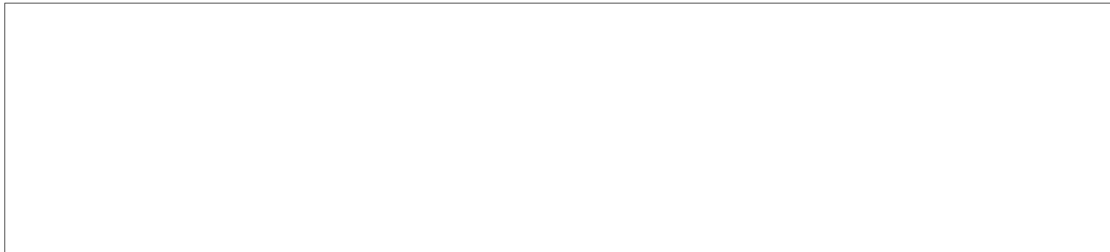
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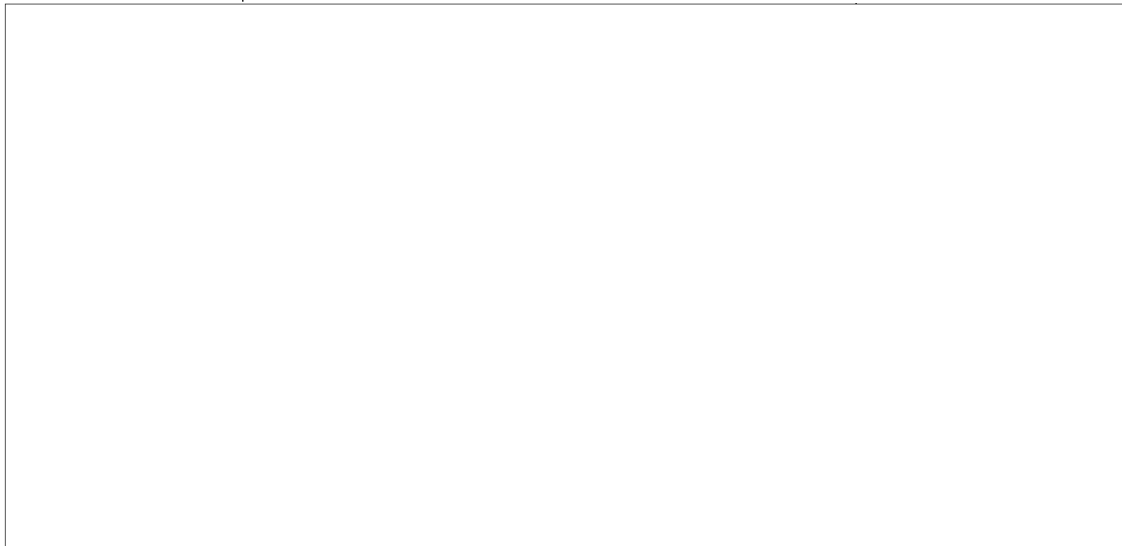
Press Conference in Phnom Penh: North Vietnam's ambassador in Phnom Penh took the line at a press conference yesterday that the three US pilots are already free, as they have been handed over to members of American pacifist organizations. According to the French press agency, he refused to say when or by what route the pilots were to leave North Vietnam.

The ambassador also dismissed the Honolulu conference between Presidents Johnson and Thieu as a meeting of "master and valet." Everything is decided at the White House and the Pentagon, he said.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report today.



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