

The President's Daily Brief

~~*Top Secret 4 September 1968*~~



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
4 SEPTEMBER 1968

1. Czechoslovakia -
Soviet Union

Tensions in Czechoslovakia continue to subside slowly. The press reports that some Polish, Hungarian, and Bulgarian troops have left for home. Soviet soldiers have withdrawn from some important buildings in Prague.

Deputy Premier Sik, a liberal who has long been anathema to Moscow, resigned yesterday shortly after being vilified in Izvestia. Izvestia also criticized Foreign Minister Hajek in terms which suggest it expects him to follow suit.

There is still no indication that the Soviets or their associates are getting ready to move against Rumania or Yugoslavia.

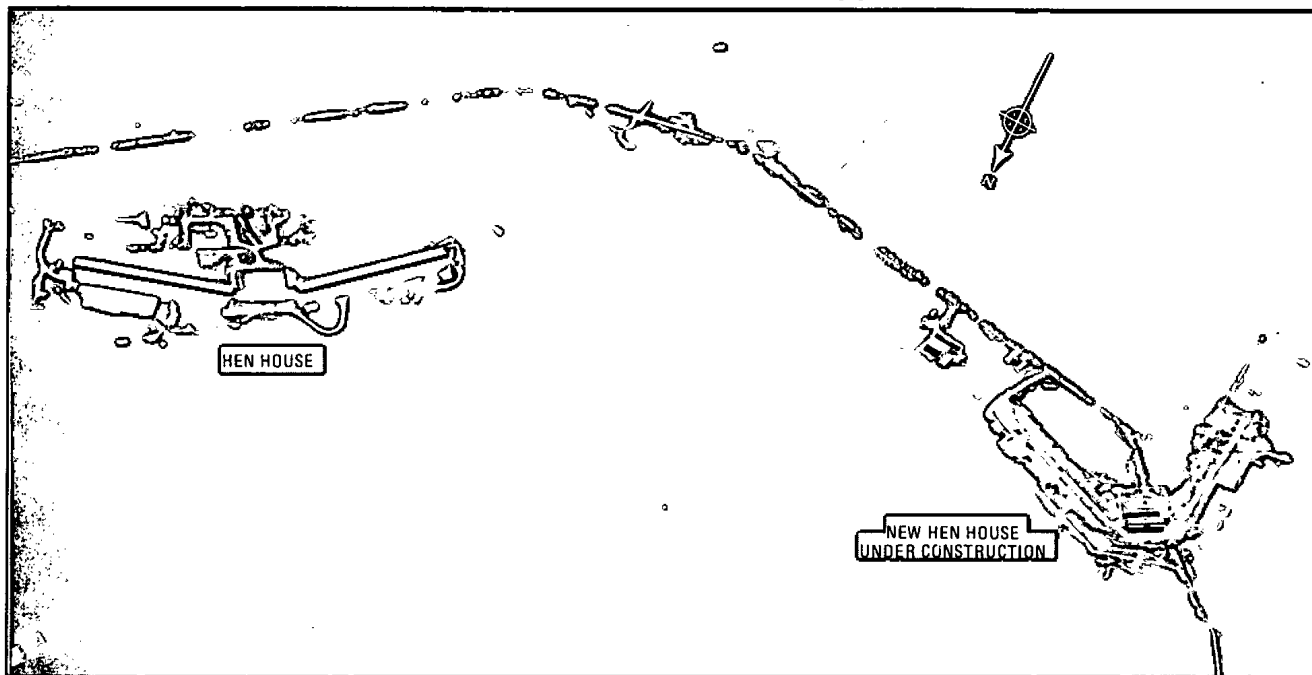
2. Poland

Gomulka probably secured his position over the short run by following the Soviet line on Czechoslovakia, but he also increased his isolation within the faction-ridden Polish leadership.

The central committee met again last week, and this time Gomulka's most prominent critics simply stayed away.

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New Skrunda Radar Covers Additional Missile Approach Routes to Moscow



SKRUNDA BALLISTIC MISSILE EARLY WARNING AND TRACKING FACILITY

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3. South Vietnam

[redacted] along with his chief aides, at any cost this month. A North Vietnamese delegate to the Paris talks remarked, [redacted] is really hurting us."

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[redacted] terrorists in South Vietnam have also been told to attack US Embassy personnel and in general increase their disruptive efforts.

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4. Soviet Union

Satellite photography discloses that the Soviets are at work in Latvia building another radar installation for detecting and tracking US intercontinental missiles. This giant installation, which should be operational in 1970, will cover part of the North Atlantic and western Europe. It will also fill some of the gaps in Soviet coverage of the Arctic Ocean.

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Two other radars of this type probably are already operational. Another installation near Moscow, which uses a different type of radar, has been undergoing checkout tests for over a year.

5. Communist China

[redacted]

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6. Congo
(Brazzaville)

Brazzaville, where the situation has teetered for years between confusion and chaos, seems to be outdoing itself at the moment. Not even the local inhabitants are really sure what is going on, but we believe we can discern the following developments:

--The army has moved to take over the government and has made a figurehead of President Massamba-Debat. The soldiers are deeply split by tribal and other loyalties, however, and they have little concept of how to run a government.

--Goon squads recruited from the single party's youth wing have retained their arms and engage in frequent shoot-ups with the army.

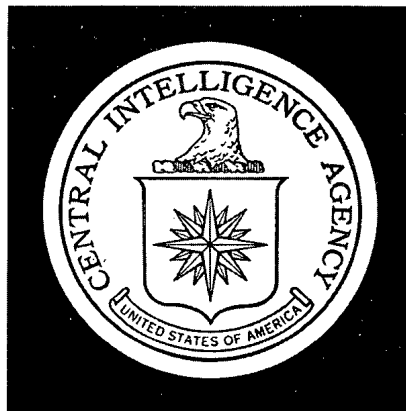
--Large numbers of civilian extremists, most of them espousing some kind of cloudy Maoist or Castroite ideology, are still at large.

--Agents from Mobutu's government across the river in Kinshasa are trying to bring Brazzaville into Kinshasa's sphere of influence.

At the moment heavily armed paratroopers are guarding the presidential palace in Brazzaville while the army tries to decide what to do with Massamba-Debat. Even the French, who in the past have been willing to shore up Massamba, seem to be holding back this time until the dust settles.

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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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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

4 September 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION



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Premier's Statement on Liberation Front: Pham Van Dong used his national day speech on 2 September to make some more semantic changes in the standard formulation of Hanoi's demands for the Liberation Front. This is the second time in as many months that Hanoi has made an effort at an authoritative level to indicate that there is some flexibility in its political position on the Front. The Premier said that the US has to "recognize and talk" with the Front about problems in South Vietnam. By omitting earlier demands that any postwar settlement must be in accordance with the program of the Front, or that the South Vietnamese had to be left alone to settle their own affairs, the North Vietnamese Premier implied that Hanoi was no longer setting any conditions on talks between the US and the Viet Cong.

These same hints of flexibility appeared in mid-July in a Foreign Ministry statement which paraphrased Hanoi's original Four Points, dropped the exclusive role of the Front, and called for a settlement on the

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basis of self-determination. The Foreign Ministry statement was accompanied by official comments both in Paris and back in Hanoi that the restatement was not a change in Hanoi's position, and Pham Van Dong in his national day speech quickly followed up his paraphrasing of the issue by saying that his restatement "was in conformity with the main content of Hanoi's original Four Point stand."

As might be expected from a major speech on a Communist national day, Pham Van Dong's address exuded confidence in ultimate victory, urged the people on to greater military efforts, and exaggerated US military problems as well as US political intentions. He put special emphasis on the national character of the present war, calling it the "second Vietnamese patriotic war of independence." He also dramatized popular US opposition to the Vietnamese war, claiming at one point that Vietnam had become "the number one question in US political life, the key issue in the present presidential election campaign."

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National Day Celebration in Paris: The North Vietnamese delegation in Paris celebrated their anniversary with a small reception attended by Communist diplomats, newsmen, and representatives of French leftist circles. The party was marred by the same Sino-Soviet polemics which characterized other Vietnamese celebrations around the world. According to Western press representatives in attendance, the Chinese chargé, while standing within a few feet of Ambassador Zorin, denounced the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia. Zorin asserted the Soviet troops would stay until "the threat" to the Soviet Union had subsided.

The party was also the occasion for the social debut of the Liberation Front representative in Paris. He told newsmen that the Front information office will officially open soon with the arrival of its new director from Prague, Pham Van Ba.

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Conference in Cairo: Hanoi is sending middle-level officials from both the North and the Liberation Front to an Afro-Asian solidarity meeting in Cairo scheduled to open on 7 September. The conference is to be focused on Vietnam in an attempt to drum up support for Hanoi. Some of the Vietnamese speakers have already arrived

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The Vietnamese apparently intend also to tour several countries in this area after the conference.

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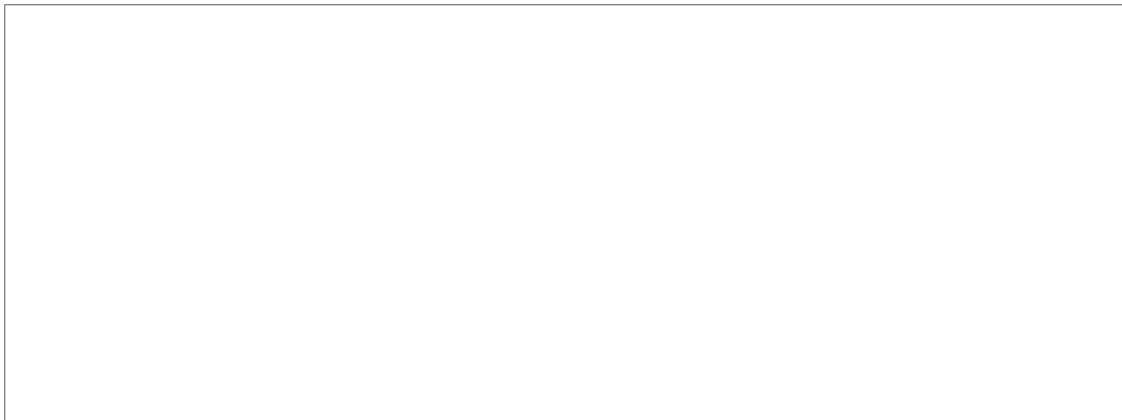
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Air Activity: Since 27 August, Communist MIG fighters have continued to range south of the 19th parallel from Hanoi bases. There have been no recent engagements with US aircraft, however.

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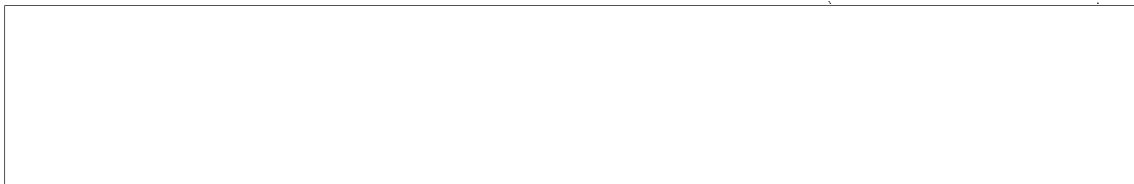
The North Vietnamese Air Force apparently celebrated the national day by staging a fly-by over the heart of the capital. At least eight MIG-21 aircraft, in a tight formation in groups of four, made three passes each as part of the air show.

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

There is nothing of significance to report to-
day.

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