



The President's Daily Brief

~~*Top Secret*~~ 6 March 1968



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DAILY BRIEF
6 MARCH 1968

1. South Vietnam

Close to 20,000 North Vietnamese are estimated to have infiltrated South Vietnam in January--the highest monthly total of the war. [REDACTED]

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The US Embassy has taken a preliminary look at damage done by the Tet offensive to the South Vietnamese economy and concluded it has been severe. Aside from the serious disruption to movement of goods and products, industrial facilities have suffered extensive damage, and most business activity has been suspended.

As for the offensive itself, there have been no major clashes reported so far today. Communist units continue to move toward cities in the north, and there are indications that a major attack may be mounted on Da Nang later this month.

2. Panama

Robles is refusing to compromise; Arias is equally determined to get concessions or proceed with impeachment; the National Guard remains uncommitted; and the situation is ugly.

The National Assembly is scheduled to meet today to hear the report of the commission that was to investigate the charges against Robles. It is not clear, however, whether the assembly will meet, and there are reports that the government is planning some action--such as suspension of the constitution--in an effort to keep it from convening.

Meanwhile, Arias-controlled radio stations are broadcasting inflammatory reports on the situation.

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3. Laos

The week-long lull in fighting continues, although the Communists still threaten government positions.

4. Czechoslovakia

[REDACTED] on the Czech political scene and on relations between the various East European states.

[REDACTED] the Soviets originally approved Dubcek's nomination as party first secretary, but began having second thoughts when they saw how far he intends to go down the liberalization path.

[REDACTED] the Soviets do not understand how popular this course is. [REDACTED] they could run into serious trouble if they overplay their hand in trying to restrict Dubcek's reforms.

[REDACTED] Dubcek is planning some major personnel changes. One of these came Monday when an old Novotny warhorse was eased out of his job as the party's top ideologist.

We note Novotny was not on the Czech team Dubcek led to the Warsaw Pact meeting in Sofia.

5. Warsaw Pact

Top leaders of the pact countries sit down today in Sofia; Russian-Rumanian fireworks are expected.

[REDACTED] Rumanians intend to propose some major changes in the pact's command structure which would dilute Moscow's authority. The Rumanians, [REDACTED] may even threaten to withdraw from the pact.

We [REDACTED] doubt the Rumanians will go through with such action, but they will probably use the threat for tactical bargaining.

The Rumanians and Russians also will be crossing swords on the nonproliferation treaty and on relations with West Germany.

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6. Japan



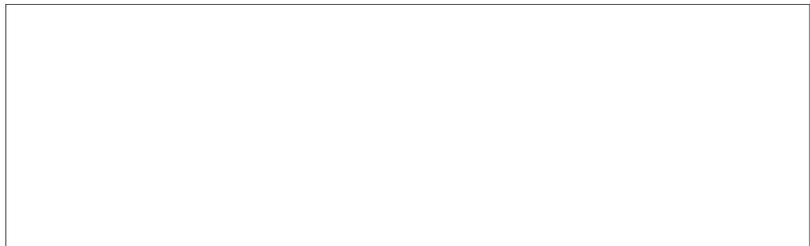
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7. Bolivia-Chile

The last of Che Guevara's guerrillas are headed back to Cuba by way of Easter Island, Tahiti, and Paris.

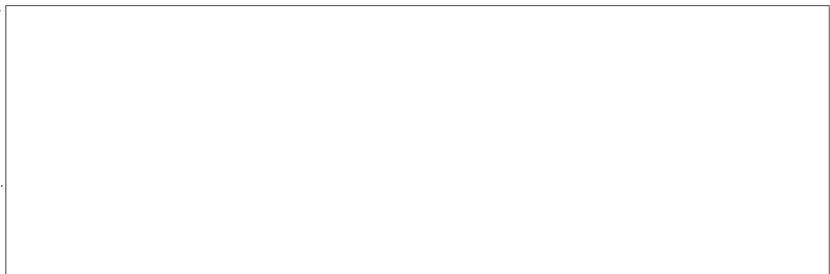
The five survivors had crossed from Bolivia into Chile, where they were arrested on 22 February. With the prompt intervention of Salvadore Allende, Chile's left-wing senate president, the five were freed and then whisked off to Easter Island to begin their homeward journey. Bolivia is protesting release of the guerrillas, but is not likely to get much satisfaction.

8. South Yemen



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9. Liberia



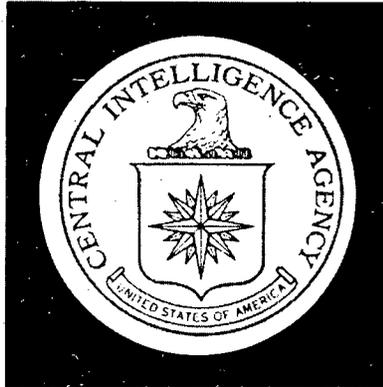
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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam



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6 March 1968

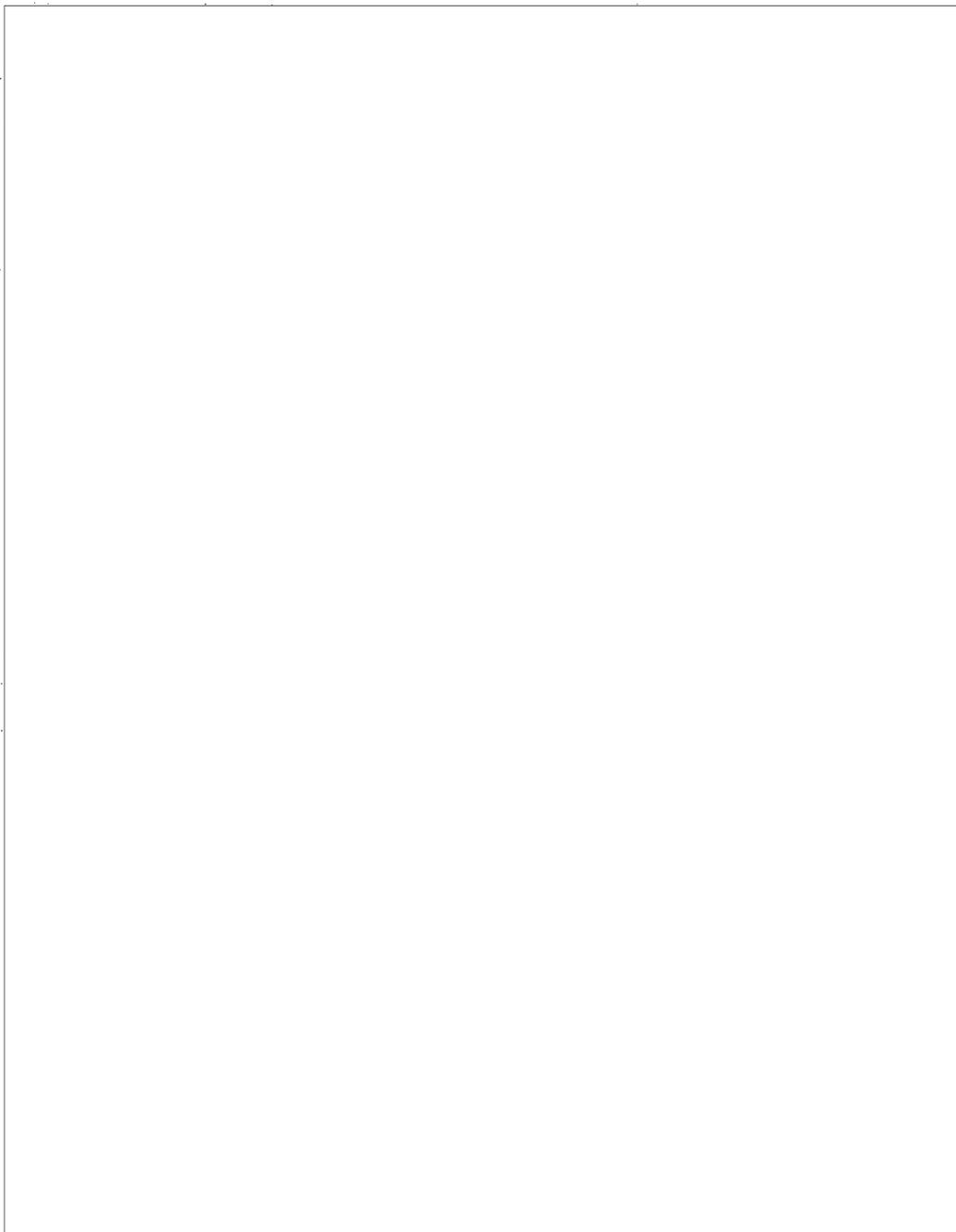
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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION



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Conditions in Hanoi: The morale of the people of Hanoi appears high and they seem no less willing to support the regime's war effort. [redacted]

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[redacted] The electric power supply in the city is

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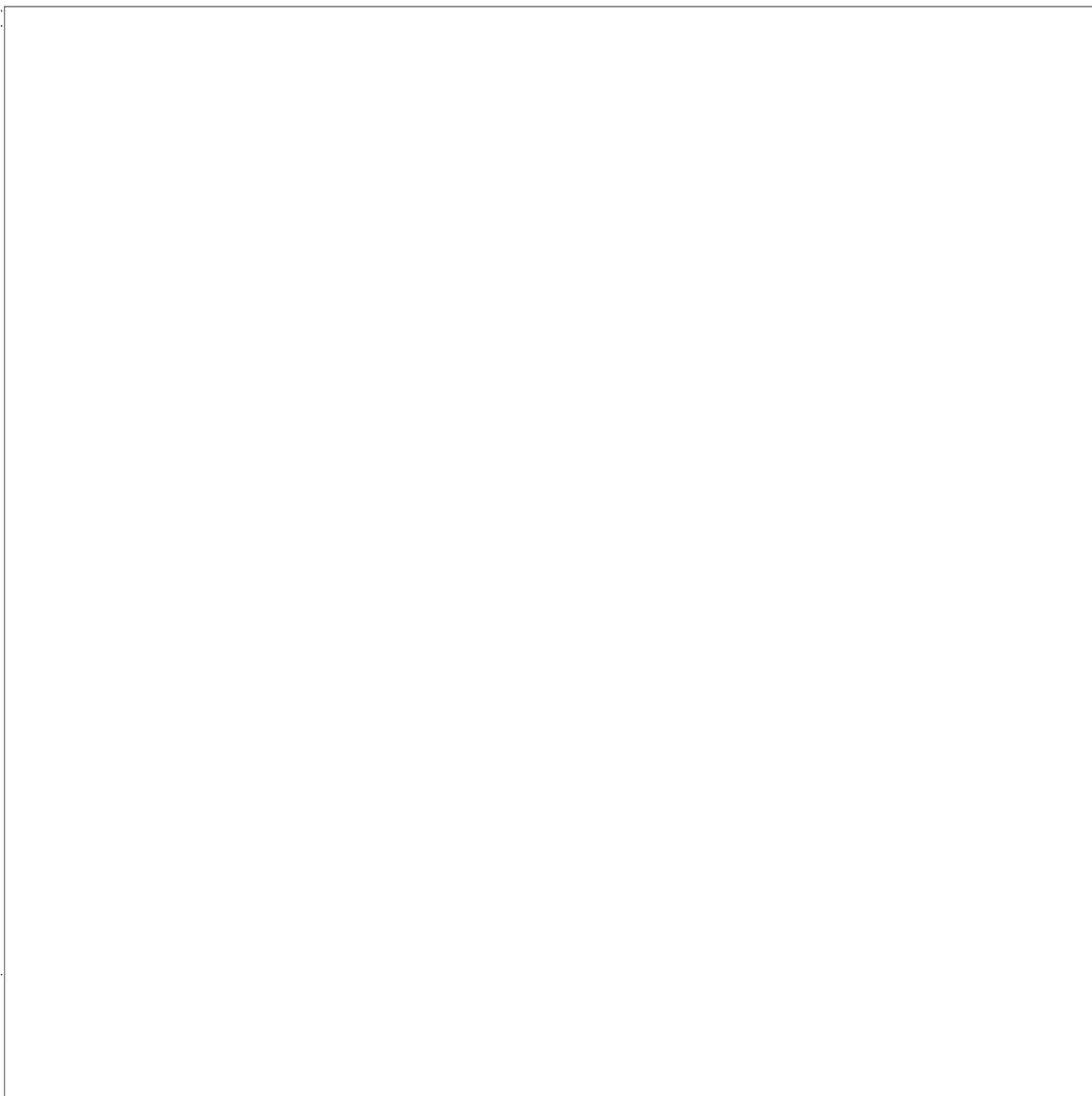
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now restricted to three days a week for ordinary residents, but foreign embassies have no restrictions placed on them. Gasoline and oil are in very short supply, with embassies allowed a monthly ration of 400 liters; requests for additional supplies frequently are turned down.

Vietnamese students in China during the Cultural Revolution were badly treated, [redacted] and many returned to North Vietnam with feelings of hostility toward China. [redacted] the most evident economic aid in Hanoi is that supplied by East Germany, particularly in the form of bicycles and medicine.

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

War Protest Activity: Hanoi's English language broadcast reported on 5 March that American playwright Arthur Miller had criticized US policy in Vietnam at a meeting attended by some 5,000 persons in New Haven, Connecticut. Quoting various press accounts of the meeting, the broadcast said that Miller had compared US policy in Vietnam to a cancer which undermines "even the pride of the American life."

The same broadcast also reported that Dick Gregory was going to stage another 40-day hunger strike to protest the war.

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