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 Authority EO 12958
 By 19 NARA Date 11/24

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
 WASHINGTON

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INFORMATION
 August 22, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger
 SUBJECT: Morning Briefing Items

-- Vietnam Military Developments: Communist units continued tactical activity in widely scattered areas of South Vietnam yesterday, including a 10-round rocket attack against the Danang Air Base, killing one US and wounding 43. Damage to facilities at the base was minimal. Duc Pho, a coastal town in Quang Ngai Province, was also hit by enemy mortars, killing 10 civilians and wounding 162.

-- Paris Talks: Yesterday's Plenary Session revealed nothing new with the other side repeating their standard line including the charge of indiscriminate escalation on our part. In his rebuttal, North Vietnamese spokesman Ha Van Lau did not refuse to consider the specific suggestion we made for humanitarian treatment of American prisoners.

-- Vietnam Political Developments: According to press reports, Prime Minister Tran Van Huong resigned today, "after a five-week impasse over efforts to reshuffle the South Vietnamese Cabinet."

Possibly related to Huong's resignation is a report received by the State Department from Ambassador Bui Diem that he has received two urgent messages from President Thieu's office asking that Nguyen Huu Hanh, former Governor of the National Bank and currently alternate director of the IMF, return to South Vietnam from his Atlantic City vacation for "important consultations." Diem believes that Hanh's return is involved with the Cabinet reshuffle.

-- Mosque Fire Could Increase Tension: The burning of a Mosque in Jerusalem has increased tension in the Middle East. The Mosque itself is not one of Islam's holiest places, but it is in the same complex as the Dome of the Rock, the site of Mohammed's ascension to heaven.

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NLN 99-6/32 (3 pages) letter of 4-4-03
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Although the fire was probably accidental, rumors are circulating that it was set deliberately as part of a plan to drive the Arabs out of Palestine, and Cairo radio has linked the fire to the "barbarism of Israeli Nazism." At Tab A is a message to you from Habib Bourguiba, President of Tunisia, concerning the incident.

-- Story of Husak/Svoboda Meeting with Brezhnev:

[redacted] Husak and Svoboda met with Brezhnev in Crimea in early August at Czech request over the opposition of the Soviet Embassy in Prague. Czech leaders feared excessive Soviet military reaction to August 21 demonstrations, and convinced Brezhnev that Czech forces could handle their own situation. The Soviets agreed to scale down planned movements of Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia, increase their numbers as inconspicuously as possible, and route maneuvers around Czechoslovakia -- in exchange for completion of Czech "consolidation and normalization" by January 1, 1970. The Embassy finds the story plausible if unverifiable. Reportedly when Czech leaders told the Soviets that excessive violence in Czechoslovakia might have repercussions in Poland, Hungary, and Romania, Brezhnev commented: "we'll wipe Romania off the map when it suits us."

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-- Romanian Consular Convention and Trade

Relations:

[redacted] final negotiations on US-Romanian Consular Convention could start "about a week" after the arrival of Ambassador Meeker. Macovescu also reiterated earlier the Romanian suggestion that both sides exchange drafts before the start of negotiations. According to Macovescu, when Ambassador Bogdan returns to Washington he will carry with him two lists: one covering Romanian products that might be sold in US if lower tariffs prevailed, and another showing plant and equipment Romania hopes to buy during their next five-year plan.

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-- Indicators Concerning Chinese and Soviet

Behavior: Peking has paid its back dues to the International Red Cross -- another indication of its interest in moving toward more normal diplomatic relations with the non-Communist world. Its action entitles it to participate in the forthcoming Red Cross Conference at Istanbul, but Peking has yet to answer the invitation. (Peking long ago attended such conferences, but walked out in 1957 because the Republic of China was also invited, and Peking has not since participated.)

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Meanwhile, leaders of the Australian Communist Party have concluded. [redacted] that the Soviets intend to launch a large-scale military operation against the Chinese. The Australians reportedly were much upset at such an eventuality. The Australians probably have no inside information as to Soviet thinking, but it is interesting that Soviet behavior has generated such alarm among Communists who have long been close students of Moscow's intentions.

A Soviet second secretary this week asked a State Department officer point-blank how US would react if the USSR took out Chinese nuclear facilities.

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