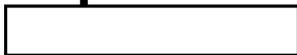


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USSR

Brezhnev's speech in Ulan Bator yesterday was predictably upbeat on bilateral relations with the US and negative on the prospects for better relations with China.

The Soviet leader stated that a "considerable step forward" had been made in the area of strategic arms limitations, and that work will be concluded in the coming months on a new agreement. He described the meeting with President Ford as having taken place in a "good, constructive spirit," and stated that the course of US-Soviet relations had been "confirmed." Brezhnev seemed to be implying that Soviet doubts about the continuity of US policy under President Ford have now been assuaged. He also made an unusual reference to the participation of Secretary Kissinger and Foreign Minister Gromyko, perhaps as a way of both congratulating the two men and sharing some of the responsibilities for the Vladivostok decisions with Gromyko, a fellow member of the Politburo.

Brezhnev included some veiled criticism of the US in his discussion of the Middle East, but he largely stuck to Moscow's line regarding the necessity for solving the problem in the Geneva forum. He balanced his support for the Palestinians with a reference to guaranteeing the security and independence of "all" the countries in the conflict.

On China, Brezhnev pulled few punches in describing Peking's call for a prior withdrawal of Soviet troops from "disputed areas" as "absolutely unacceptable." He reiterated Moscow's desire for nonaggression and non-use of force agreements with China.

Perhaps with an eye to the propaganda war with Peking, Brezhnev refrained from making any personal attacks on the Chinese leadership and reiterated Moscow's hope their "common sense" and considerations of "vital

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interests" will lead to a real normalization of relations between the two states. The Soviets frequently take the more polemical line that the Chinese "people," whose interests allegedly would be served by better relations with the USSR, will eventually have an impact on the course China takes.

In more formal channels, the Soviet government yesterday rejected Peking's offer to conclude a nonaggression treaty tied to withdrawal of Soviet forces from areas near the border. Moscow, in a brusque message to Peking, dismissed the Chinese offer of November 6 and caustically asserted that Peking shows no "real interest" in an understanding with the USSR.

The Soviets intended by their response and by Brezhnev's remarks in Mongolia yesterday to turn the propaganda tables on Peking by making it clear that the Chinese proposal does not constitute a serious effort to move negotiations ahead. The timing suggests that Moscow saw some advantage in throwing cold water on the prospects for improved Sino-Soviet relations while Secretary Kissinger is in Peking.

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INDIA

A French aerospace firm has agreed to help India develop a launch vehicle for putting up a synchronous satellite. According to a press report, a French firm, the European Propulsion Company, has granted India a license to build the Viking booster engine. This engine, originally developed for the European space launcher, is a simple, liquid-fueled type that is appropriate for India's requirements.

The Indians are seeking to develop a launch vehicle capable of putting a 1,650-pound satellite into synchronous orbit by the mid-1980s. Although the project has not gone beyond the planning stage, the French assistance should help the Indians get the program under way. The launcher is to use the Viking engine in two of its three stages. Although no decision has been made regarding the third-stage engine, the Indians may look to the French to assist with it as well. If successful, this project will enable India to put large telecommunications, meteorological, and earth-resource sensing satellites into orbit. Such a capability would enhance India's prestige.

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CAMBODIA

Debate in the UN General Assembly on the Cambodian representation issue began yesterday, one day late because of U Thant's death. Assembly President Bouteflika still plans to conclude deliberations and hold a vote late today.

The crucial vote will be on whether the Asian-initiated resolution deferring UN action on the issue will have priority over the pro-Sihanouk resolution calling for replacement of Phnom Penh's delegation with one from Sihanouk's "government." Although this vote will not technically decide the representation issue, it is being viewed by all as a test of strength. If the vote on priority goes against the Lon Nol government, ejection from the General Assembly is almost a foregone conclusion. Conversely, a favorable vote would in all likelihood mean that Phnom Penh would retain its seat for another year, although this is not guaranteed.

The outcome is still a toss-up. Knowledgeable estimators differ slightly, but no one gives either side a margin of more than two on the priority question. Last-minute switches are possible. For example, Iceland, which had earlier indicated it would vote for Phnom Penh on the priority issue, reportedly decided on Monday to abstain. A number of delegations are still wavering.

In Cambodia, it has become apparent that a significant government shake-up will occur, no matter what the outcome at the UN. Prime Minister Long Boret hopes to take advantage of a victory to purge and reorganize his cabinet, most notably by replacing the defense, interior, and finance ministers.

These changes would be minor, compared to the political upheaval that would result from a government defeat at the UN. Long Boret has already said he will resign in the event of a loss, and there are numerous reports that the military would push for greater participation in a new government. Finding a new prime minister as capable as Long Boret and keeping the political fighting within bounds would be major challenges to President Lon Nol.

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PERU

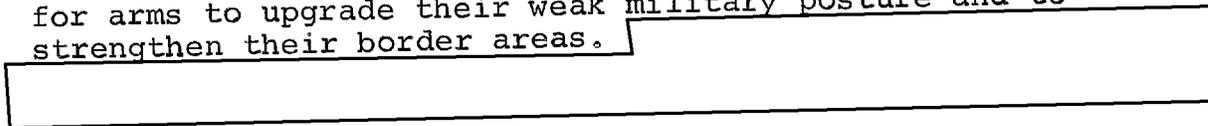
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Awareness of Chile's deployment of troops to the north and other obvious efforts to improve its defensive capability in the border region are also causing Peru to doubt its ability to easily defeat Chile now. The Chileans are trying to convince Peru that a war would be long and costly.

President Velasco has also been encountering widespread civilian and military disaffection with his regime, and he may want to focus on internal problems. The recent border meeting between high-ranking Peruvian and Chilean army officers and an unconfirmed Peruvian offer of a nonaggression pact are indications that Velasco would like to ease the tensions with Chile. This approach should continue at least until he improves his political position and until the military develops confidence in its ability to defeat Chile quickly.

Peru will continue to purchase new weapons and proceed with its buildup of military forces in the border region. So long as this continues, Chilean concern over Peruvian intentions will not subside significantly. The Chileans are thus certain to continue their urgent search for arms to upgrade their weak military posture and to strengthen their border areas.

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Ethiopia: The military council has not yet announced a replacement for General Aman as head of the provisional military government, indicating it is having difficulty finding anyone to accept the post. There have been no disturbances [redacted]

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[redacted] Units in the field are said to be demanding an explanation of the council's decision to carry out the mass executions last weekend, but they do not now seem to be preparing military action against the council. [redacted]

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Israel-Syria: According to the US defense attaché in Tel Aviv, the Israelis may have begun to demobilize some of the reservists called up in mid-November. The demobilization probably reflects the Israeli belief that the Syrians this weekend will renew the UN mandate, which permits UN forces to be stationed between Israeli and Syrian troops on the Golan Heights. [redacted]

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