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The WEEKLY REVIEW, issued every Friday morning by the Office of Current Intelligence, reports and analyzes significant developments of the week through noon on Thursday. It frequently includes material coordinated with or prepared by the Office of Economic Research, the Office of Strategic Research, and the Directorate of Science and Technology. Topics requiring more comprehensive treatment and therefore published separately as Special Reports are listed in the contents pages.

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C O N T E N T S

(Information as of noon EST, 18 December 1969)

Far East

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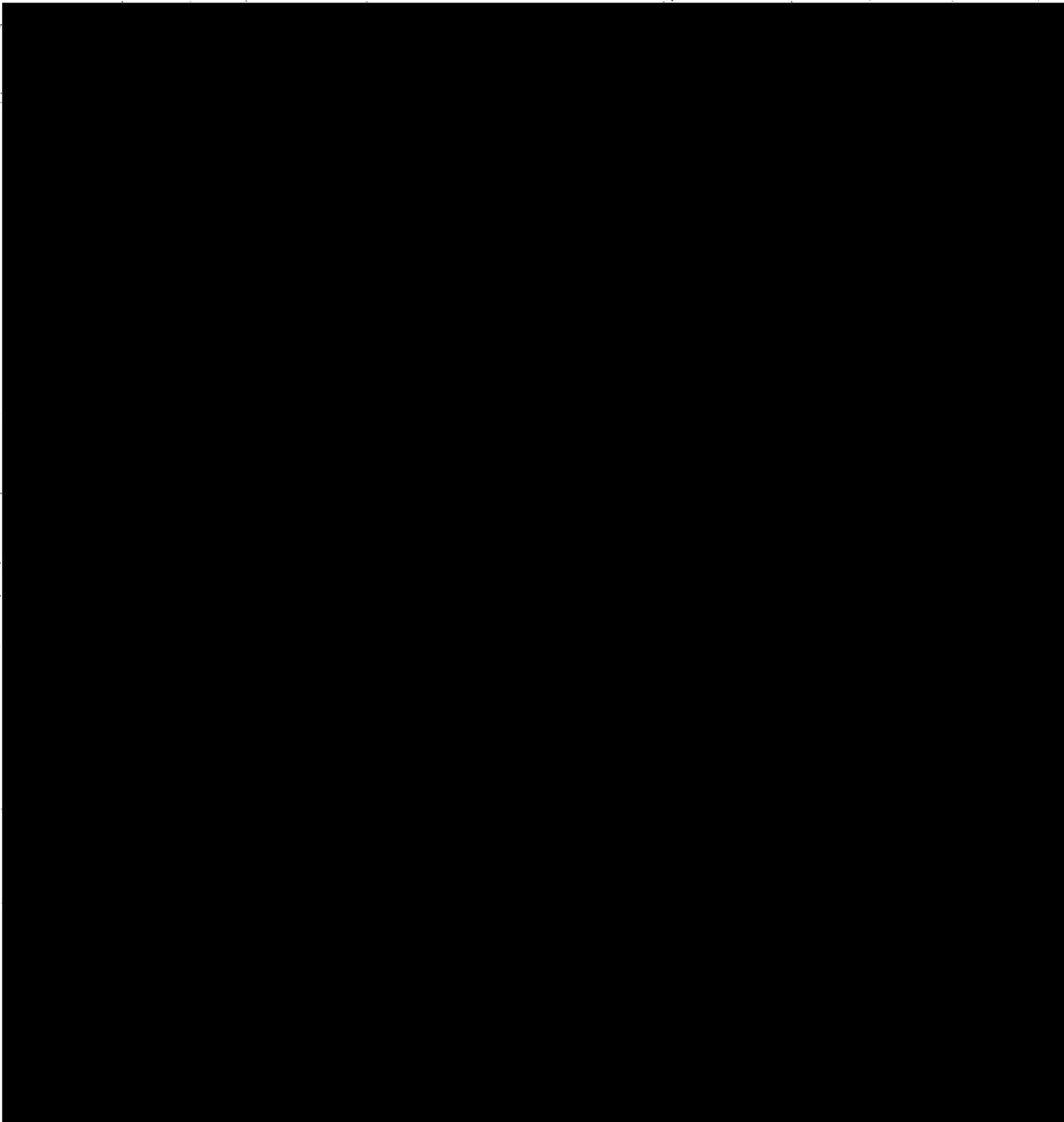


CLOSING DOOR?

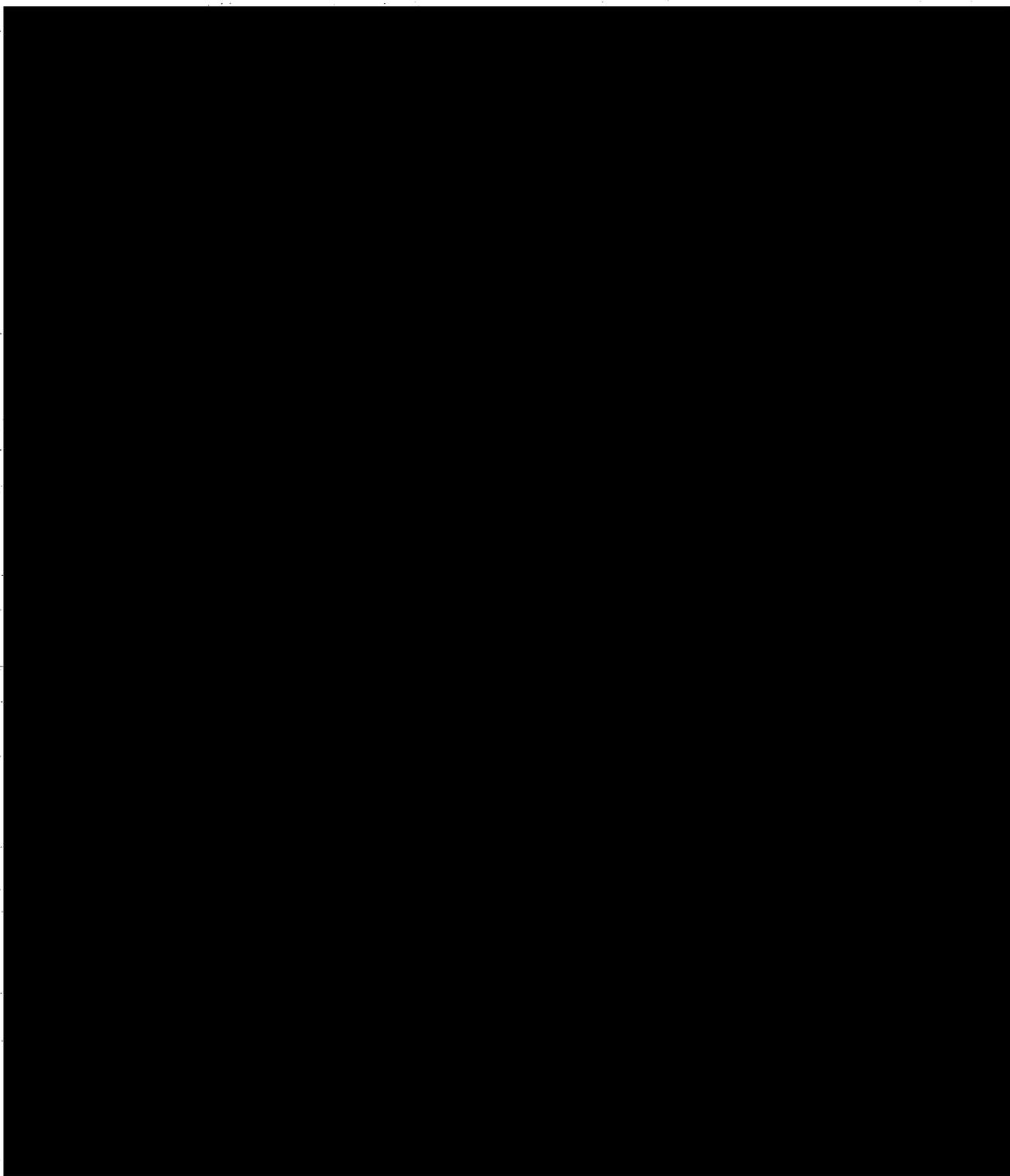
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The departure of the two top members of the Soviet delegation from the border talks in Peking may foreshadow an attempt by the Soviets to lower the level of their representation if the discussions remain deadlocked.



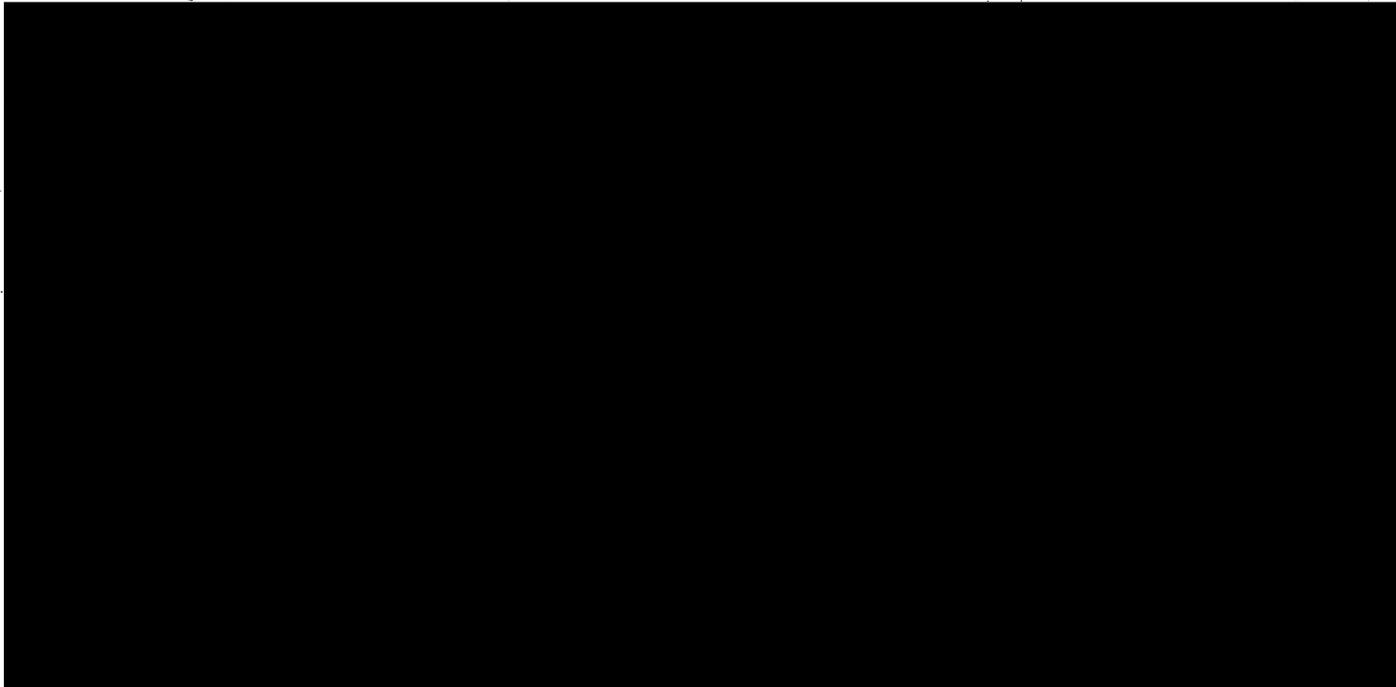


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A CLOSING DOOR?

The departure this week for Moscow of the chief and deputy chief of the Soviet delegation to the Sino-Soviet border talks in Peking, ostensibly for the current Supreme Soviet session, follows two months of apparently fruitless negotiations. The departure of the two Russians came against a background of pessimistic Soviet reports of lack of progress, and an apparent Soviet desire to reduce the discussions to a lower level. The Chinese announcement of the move carefully reported that the delegation would be gone about one week and that the talks were "temporarily recessed in their absence." This may be a thinly veiled threat that the talks will break down completely if the two Russians do not return to Peking. The Soviets have announced no timetable for their return. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Soviet officials are saying that First Deputy Foreign Minister Kuznetsov will be returning, although perhaps not for long.

Reports that the Soviets had intended to recall Kuznetsov have circulated for the past month. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Chinese are reported to have refused to progress beyond a demand that there be a troop withdrawal from border areas and from Mongolia. The Soviets may believe that Kuznetsov's return to Moscow will emphasize their serious concern over the deadlocked issue, and they may send the deputy minister back for one more try before replacing him. In publicly announcing the departure, Moscow sought to make clear the continuing nature of the talks by emphasizing that the remainder of the Soviet delegation is still in Peking.

Continuation of the talks appears to be the one common objective of both sides and there still may be time for a compromise if the level of representation is a crucial issue at this time. At the least, neither side wants to be responsible for the cessation of negotiations. Peking has clearly been nervous about Soviet military intentions and probably feels less apprehensive while talks are in progress. The Russians know that the discussions have probably been a major factor in keeping the border quiet for the past several months, and would like to see that situation continued. [REDACTED]