



The President's Daily Brief

28 April 1969
(Morning)



~~Top Secret~~

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

EUROPE

The French public has reacted calmly to the defeat of the referendum (only the second of 18 referenda and plebescites held in France since 1793 to fail) and to De Gaulle's subsequent resignation. Although a few isolated outbreaks of violence have occurred, neither government supporters nor opposition forces have tried to provoke major civil disorders. In any event, there are elaborate security plans to control any outburst.

The resignation of De Gaulle after almost 11 years in office will open a period of intense political maneuvering and bargaining. Although no formal candidacies have been announced, a Gaullist and a centrist are likely to be the prime contenders in the presidential election which must be held between 20 and 35 days from today. Senate President Alain Poher, who will serve as interim president until the election is held, is almost certain to be a candidate and will be backed by centrists and some leftists. The other probable candidates are former prime minister Georges Pompidou, who is certain to be the choice of most Gaullists, Independent Republican leader Valery Giscard d'Estaing and leftist leader Francois Mitterand. The Communists have no candidate at the moment and the leaders of the party have declared that they seek an alliance of all parties of the left.

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During the interim period until the election, no basic domestic or foreign policy changes are likely. Although Poher is an anti-Gaullist centrist, neither Prime Minister Couve de Murville nor any of his cabinet has resigned and Poher does not have the constitutional power to remove them without their consent. Furthermore, Poher is more likely to focus his attention on the election campaign rather than policy decisions.

In the referendum itself, slightly over 80 percent of the electorate voted and almost 53 percent of these voted "no." Interior Minister Marcellin announced that the votes from the overseas territories cannot affect the outcome.

VIETNAM

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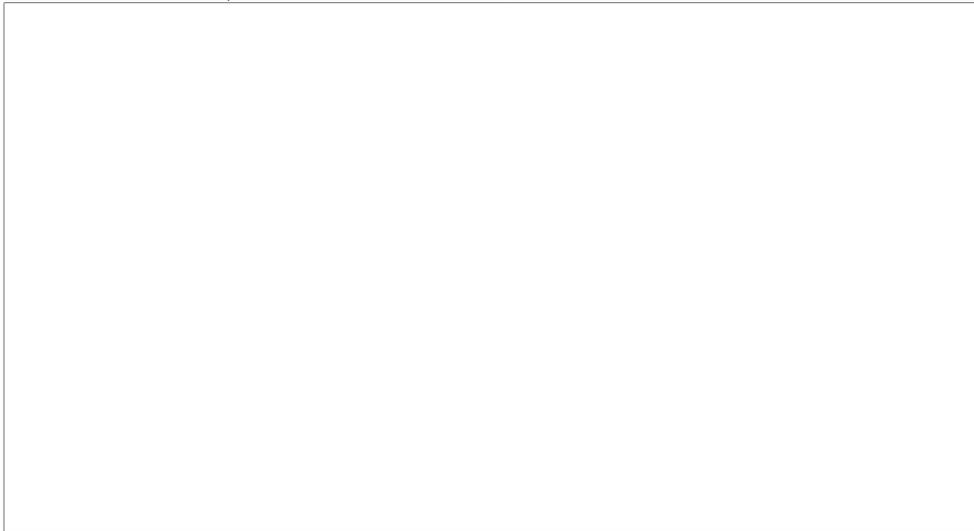


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MIDDLE EAST

The fedayeen have been increasing their pressure on the Jordanian Government and this raises the risk of a major clash between them.

Various fedayeen organizations have been preparing for an all-out confrontation with King Husayn since a joint communiqué of 15 April repudiated his six-point peace plan, and Fatah remains on an alert status. Furthermore, Prime Minister Rifai tentatively agreed last week to permit Egyptian-based personnel of the military branch of the Palestine Liberation Organization to enter Jordan. Rifai stipulated, however, that the transfer would require Husayn's agreement after he returned from London yesterday.

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It is doubtful that the King will agree to allow this influx of troops, inasmuch as the fedayeen already constitute virtually a state within a state in Jordan, and more units would further jeopardize his position. Husayn is expected to try to enforce stronger controls over the fedayeen short of an all-out clash. Even minor efforts to limit their operations, however, will almost certainly meet with resistance from the terrorists.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

As predicted, the communiqué issued Saturday at the conclusion of the CEMA summit session was very bland, indicating that few decisions were taken and major disagreement on economic unity continues. Displaying unusual sensitivity, Pravda yesterday took pains to denounce Western press reports that "irreconcilable contradictions and incompatible interests" exist among the CEMA members. The writer did not completely deny the reports, however, saying only that the session took place in an atmosphere of cordiality and that decisions of "major importance" were adopted unanimously. The communiqué did not even mention economic integration or creation of a convertible currency for multilateral trade relations--two of the major issues.

The session lasted four days, rather than the anticipated two, indicating the probability that the nations stuck to their previous positions on economic matters and that a variety of political issues were also discussed.

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

BOLIVIA

In the aftermath of President Rene Barrientos' fiery death in a helicopter crash yesterday, Vice President Luis Adolfo Siles Salinas has been sworn in as president and the armed forces have "guaranteed" the constitutional succession.

The armed forces remain the key to political power in Bolivia. They probably will back Siles for the moment but could oust him should he attempt to assert any independence. Armed Forces Commander in Chief Alfredo Ovando is on his way to Bolivia from the United States. Ovando had been considered the probable winner in the presidential election scheduled for July 1970. He may now decide to move before the election.

There is no evidence that the Barrientos crash was anything but an accident. Siles has ordered a suspension of all public and private activities for three days and a period of national mourning for thirty days. La Paz and Cochabamba (where the accident occurred) are calm with no evidence of hostile political activity.

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