



The President's Daily Brief



23 June 1969

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I. MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

EUROPE

The new French cabinet reflects a compromise between orthodox Gaullism and Pompidou's desire for greater flexibility in foreign policy. By unexpectedly naming Maurice Schumann as foreign minister, Pompidou served notice to orthodox Gaullists that he intends to chart his own course in foreign affairs, especially in the realm of European cooperation. The new foreign minister, a former member of France's Christian Democratic party, has been identified over the years with the cause of European unity. He has, however, been willing to adapt personal ideals to circumstances by participating in a number of Gaullist cabinets. Schumann in any case is likely to have little independent power.

Pompidou had been under strong pressure from orthodox Gaullists to retain Michel Debre as foreign minister. By naming Debre minister of state for national defense, a newly created post, Pompidou has avoided an early clash with the Gaullist party. In his new position, Debre will be formally the highest ranking minister below Prime Minister Jacques Chaban-Delmas.

Pompidou made good on campaign promises by naming centrists Jacques Duhamel and Rene Pleven to important posts. Both men broke ranks with their party by backing Pompidou in his campaign. Valery Giscard d'Estaing, leader of the Gaullist-allied Independent Republicans, was named finance minister. Leo Hamon, a left-wing Gaullist, was also brought into the cabinet.

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Parliament will meet next week for a short session, and Pompidou has promised to have the prime minister outline the general lines of his policy to the Assembly before it adjourns until October. Unlike the situation under the Fourth Republic, the new cabinet need not win a vote of confidence.

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Two leaders of the CDU/CSU have recently given US officials some revealing insights into the way election-year politics are figuring in their party's approach to foreign policy. The two--Franz-Josef Strauss and Kiesinger's adviser Kurt Birrenbach--made the following points, among others:

--Strauss claimed it would be undesirable for any politician to appear too close to the Americans during the campaign. He said he was wondering, in fact, whether his own and Kiesinger's forthcoming visits to the US were really wise. He apparently has been trying to sow some doubts in Kiesinger's mind on this score. (We doubt that the simple fact of the visits would be particularly harmful to Strauss' or Kiesinger's standing with the German electorate. Strauss has purely selfish reasons, of course, for keeping Kiesinger at home and out of the limelight. Moreover, he could be trying to get the US to provide additional inducements for his and Kiesinger's trips.)

--Strauss applied the same argument to the offset negotiations. He said it would be hard to wind up these talks before the elections because any agreement would open its negotiators to the campaign charge of "giving too much to the Americans."

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--Birrenbach, who arrives in Washington today, complained that he had not been able to see Brandt when he was preparing for the trip. He said that as a result he would be representing Kiesinger's viewpoint rather than the coalition's. He claimed the coalition was in a parlous state, and he made it clear he hoped it would not be reconstituted after the elections. He said he felt that if Brandt returned as foreign minister, most of West Germany's foreign policy resources would be harnessed to Brandt's eastern policy, rather than to more important tasks such as the construction of unity in Western Europe.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

Recent satellite photography shows that the second of two launch pads for the Soviets' huge new space booster is nearing completion at Tyuratam. A booster has been erected for the first time on this pad, located at Complex J.

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VIETNAM

Sihanouk has announced a new arrangement with the Vietnamese Communists regarding their activities within Cambodia. The signed agreement apparently came out of the high-level talks that have been going on for several weeks in Phnom Penh. Sihanouk said that the Viet Cong ambassador, admitting that Communist troops are on Cambodian soil, had "promised" the withdrawal of all but the sick and wounded "as soon as possible." All Communist troops would leave when the war was over.

Sihanouk gave no hint of any concessions on his part that may have been made, but the lifting of the recently imposed ban on shipment of supplies to the Communists could be one. He did make it clear that he is under no illusions that the Communists will honor the agreement. Sihanouk no doubt believes, however, that it can be used to good advantage in future negotiations over the ultimate disposition of Communist forces in Cambodia.

MIDDLE EAST

Heavy shooting across the Suez Canal has again become almost a daily occurrence. The artillery exchanges will probably continue as Egypt attempts to keep the major powers focused on the problem while at the same time trying to avoid provoking an all-out Israeli response.

The Israelis claim they attacked an Egyptian radar station near the southern end of the canal on Saturday night. This

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marks the first Israeli penetration in this area. Cairo announced it had sent two commando groups on raids across the canal the same evening.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

SUDAN

The Dutch Embassy in Khartoum, to which the US interests section is attached, has been notified by the new Sudanese Government that the US staff must be drastically reduced. Only the chief of mission, an administrative officer, and a consular officer, along with some nondiplomatic staff members, will be allowed to remain.

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