



*The President's Daily Brief*

11 July 1969

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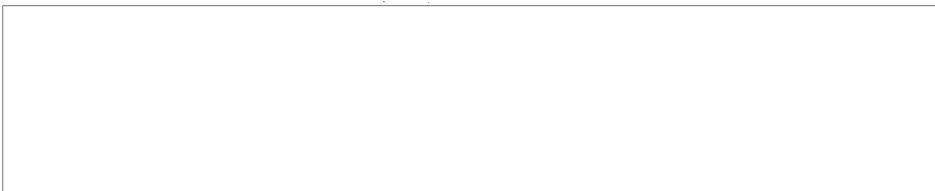
I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

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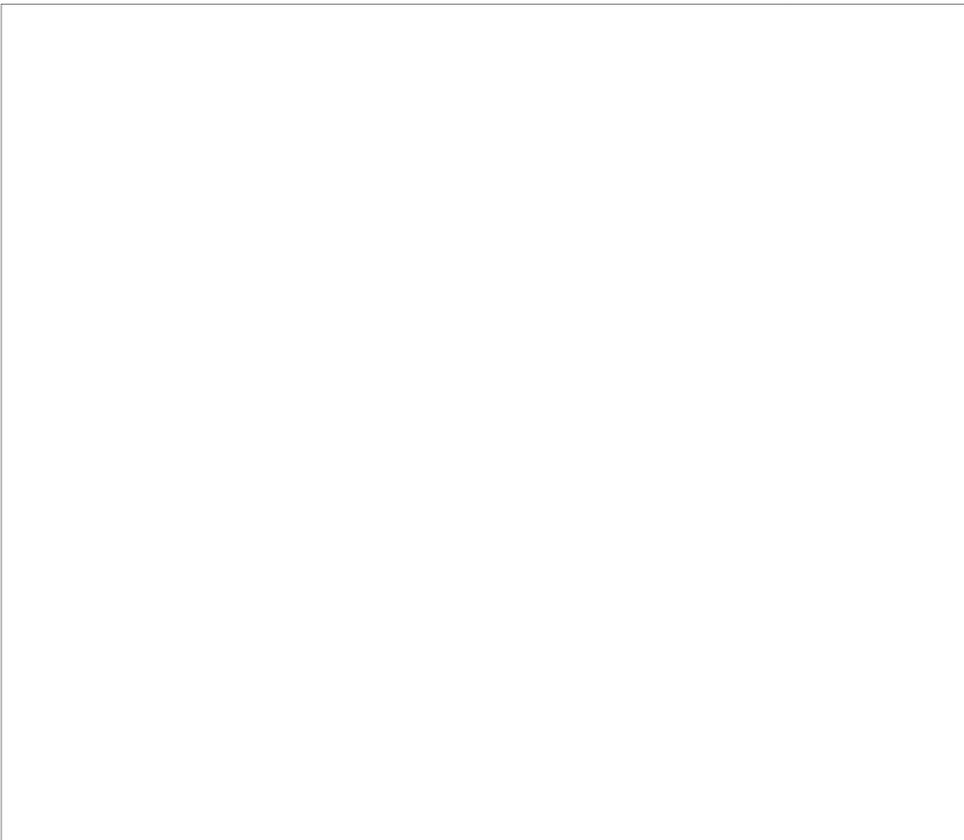
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SOVIET AFFAIRS

Gromyko's speech to the Supreme Soviet yesterday combined warnings to China with a conciliatory line toward the US and the West. According to a TASS summary, Gromyko indicated that Moscow is ready for early talks with the US on strategic arms limitation.

Seeming to swallow any displeasure over President Nixon's planned visit to Bucharest, Gromyko went back several months to refer approvingly to the President's statement favoring a "well prepared" summit conference. He took a moderate stance on West European affairs and, according to press reports, made

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a carefully hedged expression of willingness to discuss Berlin with the three Western powers with a view to preventing future crises there.

The Soviet foreign minister gave the first public indication that the Sino-Soviet border navigation talks in Khabarovsk are not going well. His references to "certain statements" by Chinese representatives and the "recent new provocation" on the Amur River suggest that the USSR anticipates a breakdown of the negotiations.

Gromyko reiterated the idea of a collective security system for Asia, which Brezhnev broached in June, but TASS mentioned no clarification. In recent weeks, Soviet diplomats have touted this vague scheme but have provided no details.

Gromyko had nothing new to offer on the Middle East. While decrying the dangers to peace in that area, he made it clear that Moscow still considers Israeli withdrawal from occupied areas as a prerequisite for a settlement, along with recognition of Israel's right to exist.

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The Soviets are getting ready for a major space launch, probably another unmanned lunar attempt. Support ships did not move very far from station after the failure of the attempt on 3 July.

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MIDDLE EAST

Israel announced yesterday that agreement had been reached with Aramco on the repair of Tapline, which was sabotaged by Arab fedayeen on 30 May. In return for being allowed to begin work on the line, which carries oil through the Golan Heights from Saudi Arabia to the Mediterranean, Aramco promised to compensate Israel for pollution damages and pledged to provide maximum safeguards against any additional pollution of Israeli water supplies. How much all this will cost Aramco is not specified

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EUROPE

While the Italian Christian Democratic Party's national council is considering its next move in the present crisis, the Communists seem to be playing a waiting game. Although the Communists would probably welcome a breakdown of the political system, there is no sign that they are encouraging strikes or disorders.

Top party leaders are appealing to factions of the socialist left to join in a Communist-led coalition, hoping thereby to win a large vote in the next election--which may come as soon as late fall or early next year.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

There is nothing significant to report.

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