

The President's Daily Brief

8 December 1973

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

8 December 1973

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Only scattered incidents occurred on the Syrian and Egyptian fronts yesterday. The press and officialdom in both Cairo and Tel Aviv have been issuing conflicting reports on the inevitability of war and the likelihood of peace, presumably with the intention of pressuring the enemy and the superpowers and masking intentions. (Page 1)

[Redacted] Jordan
(Page 2)

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[Redacted] Korea
(Page 3)

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Moscow has begun to soften its polemical exchange with Peking, but Soviet leaders continue to insist that the Chinese must make the next move on the stalled border talks. (Page 4)

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The Yugoslav-Romanian [Redacted]
[Redacted]

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On Pages 6 and 7 are notes on South Vietnam's recapture of Kien Duc, Libya [Redacted]; President Pak's release of Korean students arrested in October, the agreement of major European Communist parties to meet next year, and results of the latest round of talks on reorganization of the inter-American system.

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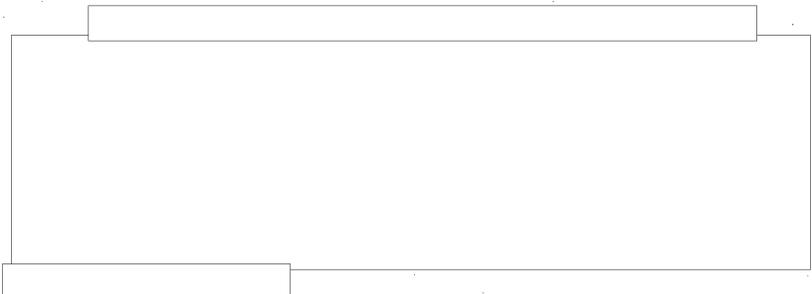
ARAB STATES - ISRAEL

Only scattered incidents occurred on the Syrian and Egyptian fronts yesterday. The Israelis continued to fly a number of reconnaissance missions along the Suez Canal. Israeli aircraft also were active along the Gulf of Suez in the general area of the air clash of December 6, but there is no evidence of any Egyptian attempt to challenge them.

The press and officials in Cairo and Tel Aviv have been conducting a war of nerves with conflicting reports on the inevitability of war and the likelihood of peace. These reports probably are designed partly to put pressure on the enemy and the superpowers and partly to mask intentions. They may also reflect genuine uncertainty about future policy.

The Egyptians appear to hope that the visits of Israeli Defense Minister Dayan to Washington and of Secretary Kissinger to the Middle East will produce some movement toward breaking the diplomatic impasse. Although the Egyptian press continues to carry reports that Cairo will not resume the disengagement talks, the public comments of official spokesmen leave open the possibility that the talks will reopen. Their comments indicate, however, that the Geneva peace conference could be convened without prior progress toward disengagement.

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In Israel, the press continues to stress the need to maintain a high state of alert but notes that there is only a slim possibility of an all-out confrontation.

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JORDAN

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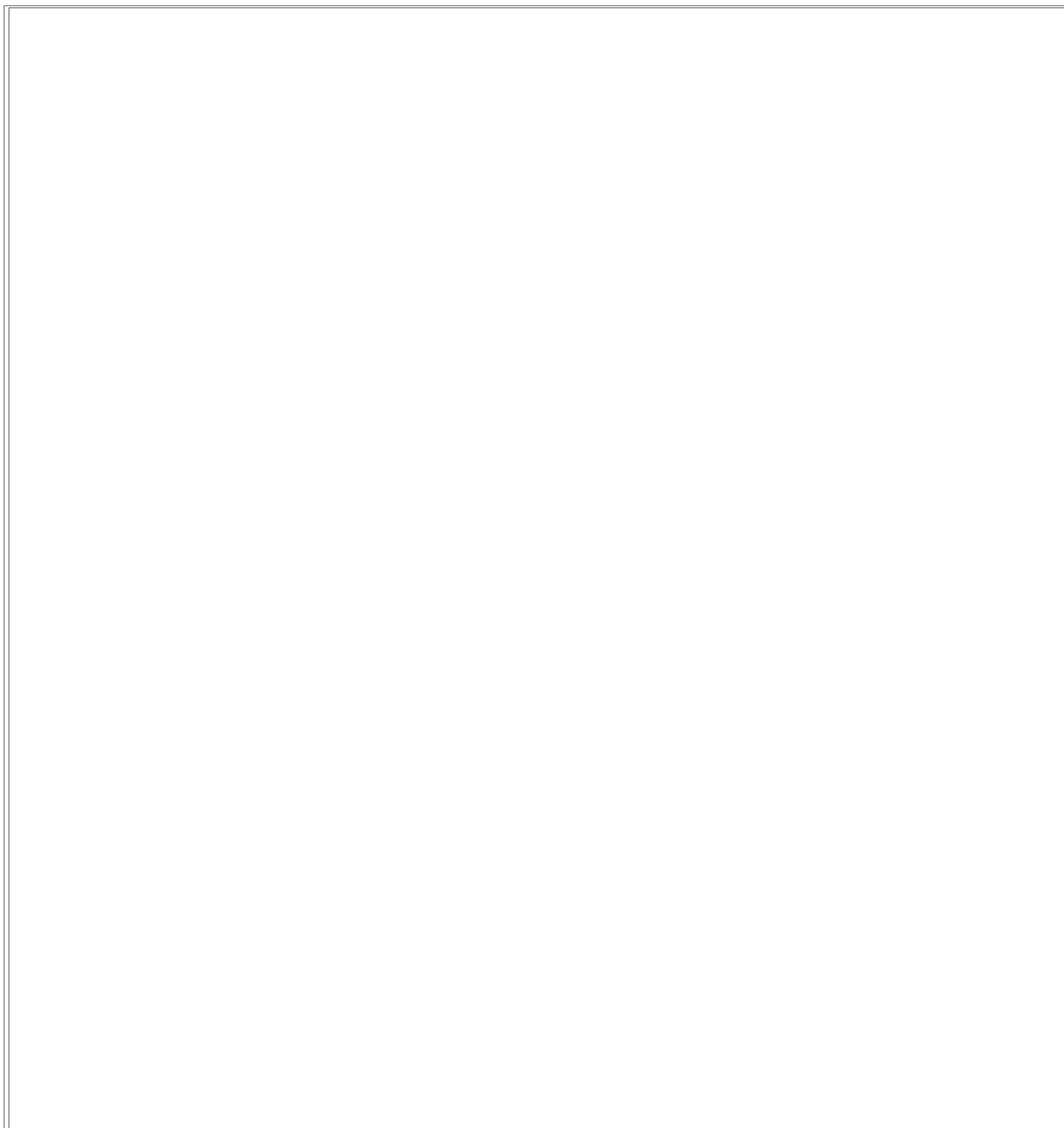
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KOREA



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USSR-CHINA

Moscow has begun to soften its polemical exchange with Peking, although Soviet leaders continue to insist that it is up to the Chinese to make the next move on the stalled border talks.

This latest shift from the superheated rhetoric and personal attacks that reached a peak in the months following the Chinese 10th Party Congress may be Moscow's response to signs that Peking too is willing to use cooler words. In early November, the Chinese sent National Day greetings to Moscow that referred to the border question and avoided the usual attempt to play off the Soviet people against their leaders. The Soviets in turn took the unusual step of publishing Moscow's thanks for the Chinese greetings.

Another recent sign that the Soviets are easing their criticism of the Chinese was the failure of Pravda to print a sharp attack on Peking that was contained in a speech in late November by Politburo member Suslov. This deletion coincided with Pravda's commemoration of Albania's National Day, which for the first time in years did not blame Peking for Tirana's move out of the Soviet orbit.

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YUGOSLAVIA-ROMANIA

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NOTES

South Vietnam: South Vietnamese forces retook the district capital of Kien Duc in Quang Duc Province yesterday. Enemy resistance was light, suggesting that North Vietnamese units had moved away from the town.

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Libya:



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South Korea: President Pak has released most of the students arrested during the campus demonstrations that began in early October. Pak's move, which comes on the heels of a cabinet shuffle and the ouster of the South Korean CIA chief, is another conciliatory gesture toward those calling for political reform. It may help dampen protest for the present, even though dissidents are likely to continue to agitate for the freeing of other imprisoned students. Campus disturbances in Seoul have subsided, and the closing of schools for the winter break together with the onset of cold weather will ease the government's efforts to handle domestic unrest.

USSR - Communist Parties: All of the major European Communist parties evidently have now agreed to meet next year, thereby giving Moscow an opportunity to coordinate their activities and to line them up behind Brezhnev's detente policy. The willingness of the Romanian and Yugoslav parties to attend suggests that Moscow has agreed to play down the China issue. The Soviets may be willing to give ground on this question in order to ensure a successful European session, which in turn could pave the way for a world party congress later.

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Western Hemisphere: As the third round of talks on reorganizing the inter-American system concluded, OAS representatives recommended a few revisions of the OAS Charter and the Rio Treaty, but defeated sweeping reforms urged by the more radical delegates. The proposal to revise the Rio Treaty calls for collective security against "economic aggression"; this is aimed at limiting the influence of US and multinational corporations. Unlike earlier rounds, however, the latest talks in Lima were characterized generally by a desire for constructive dialogue with the US.

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