

The President's Daily Brief

7 June 1969

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I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

Last night Da Nang city and air base were hit by several dozen rounds of rocket fire. Nearby military installations also were shelled. There were a number of military and civilian casualties. These attacks followed the widespread ones of the night of 5-6 June which evidently launched the "June phase" of the Communists' summer offensive.

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Vietnamese Communist spokesmen are coming down hard on the line that the talks are deadlocked and that there is no prospect for an early break unless the US changes the guard in Saigon. Le Duc Tho took this position in his session with Ambassador Lodge on 31 May

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It is not clear why Soviet diplomat Tcherniakov, in a chat with Assistant Secretary Green, got out of step with the current line. He said Thieu did not have to step down, just agree to a coalition. This seems much closer to the position the Communists will ultimately take if the US makes it clear

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that Thieu must stay and be dealt with. But it is equally clear that Hanoi is not yet ready to retreat to this position. 50X1

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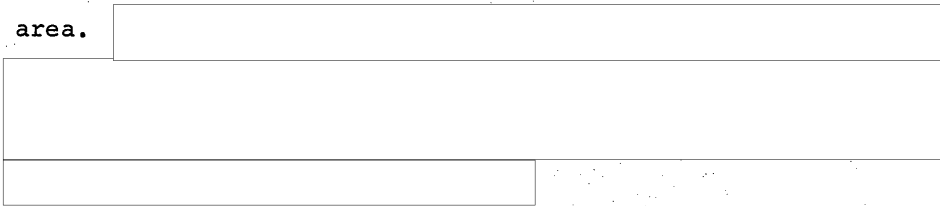
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MIDDLE EAST

The second anniversary of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war was marked by Pravda with an article strongly advising the Arabs against any action which might risk another war. The article, one of Moscow's bluntest public statements, warned those Arabs who want to recarve the map of the Middle East that such efforts are a boon to Israel and a threat to "progressive Arab regimes." The article seems aimed both at recent fedayeen actions against the oil line in the Golan Heights and any disposition on Cairo's part toward rash activity in the canal area.



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SOVIET AFFAIRS

In a move clearly timed to undercut Moscow's position in the world Communist conference, Peking yesterday rebutted recent Soviet charges of border provocations by issuing lengthy allegations of its own.

The Soviets will feel compelled to respond in full, although they obviously would prefer not to become involved in full-scale acrimony during the sensitive proceedings of the conference. A preliminary foreign ministry statement yesterday maintained that the frontier is "absolutely quiet."

Moscow's sensitivity to this sort of friction, however, is evident from the high level of Soviet military activity

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along the border since early May. In addition, the Soviets appear to be preparing for a large-scale combined forces exercise, perhaps to emphasize their military superiority in the area.

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There already has been discord in the Communist conference over the Chinese question. Two speakers--Poland's Gomulka and the Paraguayan delegate--lashed out at Peking. It can be taken for granted that they had the Russians' blessing. The Rumanians, who had been given to understand that this would not happen, lodged an immediate protest. On past form, the Rumanians should walk out if the issue is pressed too hard. By sticking together, however, they and such others as the Italian and British party delegates could yet succeed in getting the Russians to back down. Brezhnev's speech, scheduled for this morning, should point the way.

EUROPE

Poher's supporters are slipping away. The small right-wing Republican Alliance Party has decided to endorse Pompidou, and the National Center of Independents, which also endorsed Poher originally, is sharply split. Other center leaders are either privately leaning toward Pompidou or keeping silent.

In the most recent poll, only 42 percent of those who have made up their minds to vote support Poher, while Pompidou polls 58 percent. Of Poher's supporters, 25 percent said

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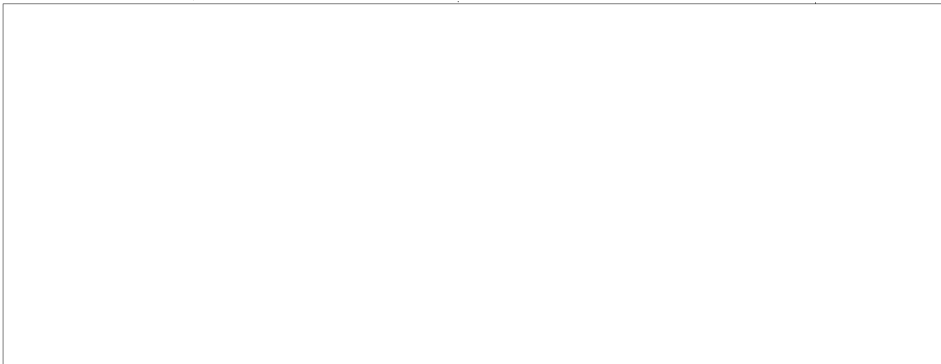
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they might change their minds before 15 June; only 9 percent of the Pompidou backers were not firm in their decision. Furthermore, the poll showed that 51 percent of those who supported Duclos on the first ballot are planning to abstain. Although the polls erred by a fairly wide margin last Sunday, they are likely to be more accurate this time because the voters have only two choices.

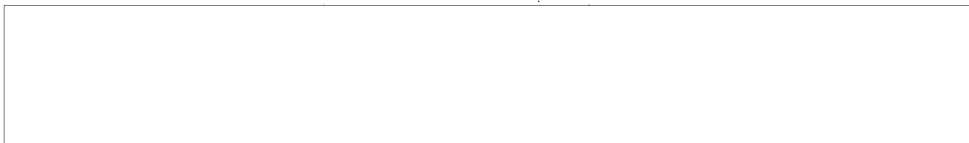
II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

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NIGERIA



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