



The President's Daily Brief

19 August 1969



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VIETNAM

Sporadic enemy activity marked the Vietnamese Communist holiday of 19 August. The attacks fell far short of what had been forecast in intelligence reports during the past few weeks. Allied spoiling operations may account for part of the shortfall, but the original Communist objectives probably were overinflated in many cases.

MIDDLE EAST

The Israeli Labor Party has approved nearly all of a draft platform plank on the occupied territories. One key paragraph still has to be ratified, but on the whole the plank appears to be a substantial victory for Dayan and his militants. Much is made of the need for setting up permanent settlements, and incorporation is clearly--although not explicitly--the goal.

All this confirms our belief that Dayan has no intention of bolting the party but that he intends to push as hard as he can to improve his faction's position within it. We note, incidentally, that Shimon Peres, his chief lieutenant, is now being mentioned for a cabinet post.

WEST GERMANY

Bonn has decided to go back to the US and UK for further clarification of the NPT. This move will improve chances that the treaty will not become an election campaign issue next month. Furthermore, Science Minister Stoltenberg, a frequent critic of the NPT, has said that

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it may be unwise to postpone a decision on signature much longer. This suggests that opposition may be lessening.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Prime Minister Chichester-Clark is to meet with Harold Wilson in London today for the first time since disorders broke out. They are expected to discuss a new division of authority between the provincial and national governments. Wilson will probably try to use Belfast's dependence on British troops as a lever to extract concessions to the Catholics.

Any new constitutional arrangements would require recalling parliament from its summer recess. Wilson is not eager to do this, because the government has gotten solid non-partisan support in the crisis up to now. Moreover, parliamentary debate might raise the issue of partition of Ireland and thus give Dublin a fresh opportunity to intervene.

London appears to have accepted the fact that the commitment of British troops could be only the beginning of a long-lasting and embarrassing responsibility.

SOVIET UNION - COMMUNIST CHINA

We have received from the Australians the text of a message sent by Moscow to the Australian Communist Party (and probably to other parties as well). The message gives details of alleged Chinese border violations and cites recent speeches by Brezhnev and Gromyko as proof

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of the Soviets' desire for peaceful negotiations with Peking. The document, claiming 233 violations in June alone, takes note of "war hysteria" in China and refers to Peking's "war preparations" campaign. It follows Soviet propaganda, however, in attributing this campaign to "internal considerations" of the Chinese leaders and says China does not want to risk a big war.

The message accuses Peking, nevertheless, of planning to turn the Sino-Soviet frontier into a "bleeding wound" of endless small armed conflicts. It adds that Moscow will take additional measures to safeguard its frontiers.

The language of the message raises the possibility that the Soviets are seeking to justify stronger punitive measures in border areas. It does not appear designed to justify larger-scale military action, however, given the statement that China does not want a larger war and the omission of any reference to Peking's nuclear program.

INDIA

The votes cast last Saturday in India's hotly contested presidential election will be counted tomorrow. The delay is the result of the complicated voting system, in which members of both the national and the state legislatures cast ballots. Sanjiva Reddy, the initial favorite, lost a good deal of ground to the candidate of Mrs. Gandhi's faction last week, and we expect the result to be close.

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PAKISTAN

Air Marshal Nur Khan and Vice Admiral S. M. Ahsan, who only recently had rejoined their respective services after serving four months as deputies to Yahya, have now been named governors of Pakistan's two provinces. The ambitious Nur Khan, who will be heading the West Pakistan government, may now have a better chance to establish an image distinct from Yahya's; Ahsan, meanwhile, is saddled with the virtually insoluble problems of the eastern sector. These appointments also suggest that a return to civilian rule will be slow indeed in coming.

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