

*The President's Daily Brief*



12 September 1969

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SOVIET UNION - COMMUNIST CHINA

We have nothing to confirm the Japanese Communist Party chief's assertion to the press that the initiative for yesterday's meeting between Kosygin and Chou came from Moscow, but the idea seems plausible.

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Thus, whatever the genesis of the meeting, the green light obviously came at the last minute.

The fact that the meeting took place at all is an index of the danger Moscow and Peking see in the growing tension between them. Given the shortness of the meeting, the lack of advance preparation, and the evident absence of any give on either side, it is unlikely that the two premiers achieved anything substantial. At the very most their talks may have put a temporary brake on the deterioration in relations.

COMMUNIST CHINA

Peking may be finding itself in the position of having cried wolf for too long on the subject of war threats, a theme it has played on for some time to shore up various unpopular domestic causes. Now when the regime seems more actively concerned to gird the public for possible conflict with the Soviet Union, its "war preparations" propaganda is encountering widespread apathy and skepticism.

Broadcasts from several provincial centers have criticized "certain individuals" and also local army units for

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their failure to "understand" the Soviet threat and have said that these elements must be re-educated. Other broadcasts have urged peasants not to become "benumbed by feelings of peace" or "slacken vigilance" in making preparations for war.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Ultraconservative pressures for the ouster of Dubcek and parliamentary leader Smrkovsky from their party and other official positions are becoming intense. Their fate--and that of other reformists--may be decided next week, when the central committee is expected to meet in plenary session.

President Svoboda still seems to be trying to hold off the attackers, but Husak is said to be wavering after earlier having said he would not tolerate purges or political trials. This may be Husak's last chance. If he caves in now, he risks becoming once and for all a captive of the ultras.

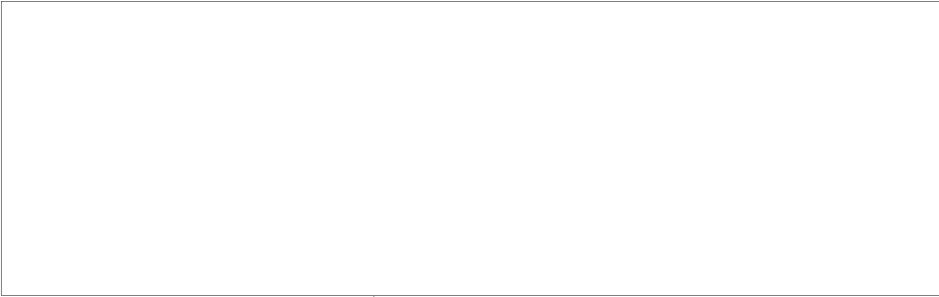
MIDDLE EAST

Moscow took a notably anti-US tack in its first comment on Tuesday's Israeli foray into Egypt. A Pravda article yesterday charged that the root of Tel Aviv's militarism lay chiefly in the US. It also claimed the raid showed the need for "urgent measures to eliminate the consequences of Israel's imperialist aggression." We read the article as a none-too-gentle effort to prod the US into extracting further concessions from the Israelis.

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SOVIET AFFAIRS

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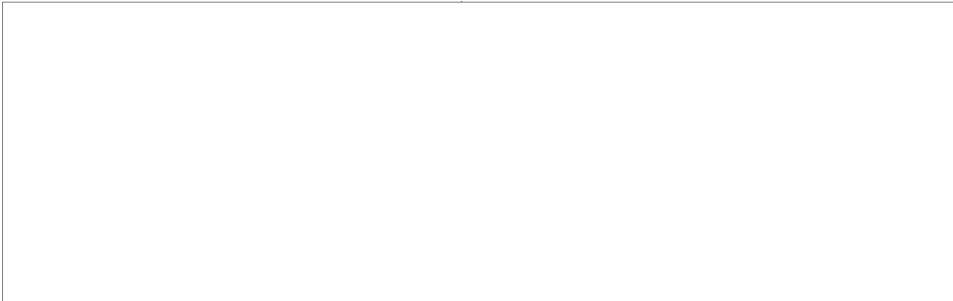
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CAMBODIA - NORTH VIETNAM

Sihanouk appears to have used the occasion of Ho's funeral to open new substantive talks with North Vietnamese leaders. On his return to Phnom Penh, he indicated that the talks had touched on the major issues that have been an increasing source of tension between the two sides over the past year. Without spelling out what was said, Sihanouk claimed that Pham Van Dong had made "many promises." He also made clear to his listeners his low estimate of the value of Vietnamese "promises."



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The Cambodians have been trying to get the North Vietnamese to sign a border agreement for almost five years. Hanoi's position has been that this issue must be settled with South Vietnamese Communists.

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The importance of Cambodia to the Communists' war efforts, and the fact that Sihanouk is now holding up arms and ammunition deliveries to Communist forces, may make North Vietnam more responsive to his urgings. In any event, this question presumably will be the major topic during Pham Van Dong's forthcoming trip to Cambodia.

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