



The President's Daily Brief

27 October 1970



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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

A draft new constitution for Communist China provides a codification of changes wrought by the Cultural Revolution, and is being circulated pending ratification by the long-delayed National People's Congress. (Page 1)

On Page 2 we comment on recent shifts in the Italian Communist Party leadership.

The first report on the status of the American and Turkish officers whose plane landed in the USSR last week appears on Page 3.

At Annex, we review major trends in Cambodia since Sihanouk's fall and look a bit into the future.

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COMMUNIST CHINA

A new state constitution was approved by a Chinese Communist Party plenum last month and is now being given local circulation pending ratification by the long-delayed National People's Congress. [redacted]

[redacted] appears to be a greatly shortened version of the original 1954 version--30 articles compared to 106--but departs from the original on several counts. It amounts to a highly generalized codification of the changes wrought by the Cultural Revolution.

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Unlike the 1954 version, which mentioned neither Mao Tse-tung nor the army, the new constitution enshrines Mao and heir-designate Lin Piao as China's personal rulers and notes specifically that they are supreme commander and deputy, respectively, of all of the nation's armies. The army's role in politics is further legitimized by a provision authorizing its participation, along with veteran civilian cadres and former revolutionaries, in the newly established Revolutionary Committees, which are formally described as local organs of government.

In addition, the new constitution makes no provision for a head of state--the office last held by the disgraced Liu Shao-chi, ignores the several legislative powers of the National People's Congress, and gives short shrift to the judiciary system. The judiciary is no longer authorized to operate independently, subject only to state laws. China is, for the first time, declared a socialist state and all references to private property rights are eliminated, with the significant exception of "small-scale" peasant land holdings.

The new constitution is, in effect, a political manifesto rather than a legal instrument, and contains no real surprises. It affirms the major role of the military in Chinese politics, while leaving Mao as the sole head of the party, government, and military apparatus. [redacted] as a whole, however, is a series of loosely worded propositions and may have been deliberately designed to allow varying interpretations. The section dealing with the sensitive subject of economic policy, e.g. peasants' private plots, is especially general in its wording and smacks of controversy and compromise.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**ITALY**

Shifts in the Italian Communist Party leadership announced last week suggest that neither of the principal rivals for the right to succeed ailing Secretary General Luigi Longo has yet gained a clear edge. A strongly anti-Soviet ally of Enrico Berlinguer, Longo's deputy, received one key appointment, while another went to a backer of Giorgio Amendola, who has adopted a pro-Soviet stance. At the same time, Amendola has for the second time in a little over a year publicly stated his wish to see the party participate in the government.

Amendola's statement probably is a ploy designed to aid him in the leadership struggle, for there are no early prospects that Premier Colombo's government will invite the Communists in. An Amendola victory, however, would result in a stronger effort by the party to evolve into an acceptable coalition partner. It would also lessen the chill between the Italian and Soviet parties that has prevailed since the Italians criticized the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

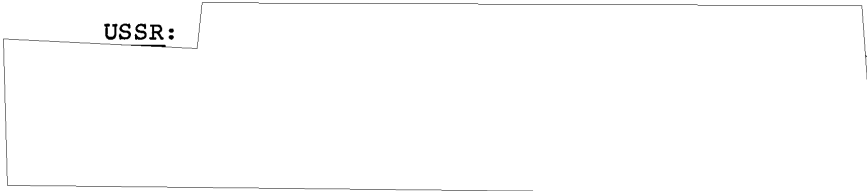
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NOTES

USSR-US-Turkey: The three American officers and the Turkish colonel whose plane landed in Soviet Armenia last week are being detained together, according to the US consuls who visited them yesterday. Apparently no effort has been made to drive a wedge between them as a possible bargaining device in seeking the return from Turkey of two Lithuanian hijackers, but the consuls reported their strong impression that the Soviets do intend a linkage between the officers and the hijackers. The Soviet official present at the interview stated that the officers were being investigated under an Armenian civil air statute, and when queried on the time involved said only that the investigation would be completed as soon as possible.

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CAMBODIA

In this annex we take another look at major trends in Cambodia and offer a few projections into the months ahead.

From a strategic point of view, in the first few months after Sihanouk's fall the Communists achieved at least their minimum tactical objectives. They protected the rear areas of those forces that had been based on the Cambodia - South Vietnam border and brought under their control a swath of Cambodian territory that could be used for a southward extension of the Laotian infiltration corridor. They established enough of a presence in the populated areas of Cambodia and began the exceedingly difficult work of building and generating a Communist movement.

By mid-summer, however, the Communists' offensive was clearly running out of steam. Since the action against Prek Tameak in August, when large numbers of Cambodian Communists were turned back with heavy losses, the Communists have avoided large-scale ground assaults. Harassments by fire and small-scale probes continue on an almost daily basis, but the large cities have been free from the intense pressure they were subjected to several months ago. Even in the countryside, where much of the Communist effort has been focused since early summer, there has been a discernible decline in Communist attacks.

The ebbing of Communist military activity is directly related to the monsoon season. The enemy finds it difficult to pre-position supplies and move troops through an inundated Indochinese countryside. This is particularly so in Cambodia, where the enemy is operating in an unfamiliar and largely hostile environment, and where there is no long-established local organization to facilitate the operations of large combat units. Some fall-off in the pace of the war during the late summer and early fall was, therefore, not unexpected.

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The combination of Cambodian tenacity and allied air support has also played a role in determining the enemy's current tactics. Cambodian reports of Communist casualties are probably exaggerated--just as Cambodian estimates of enemy combat strength are not noted for their conservatism--but there is little doubt that the Communists have taken some substantial losses. No Communist commander can assume that an important Cambodian target will fall without the risk of substantial casualties. The Communists, with most of their immediate objectives in Cambodia already achieved, may have estimated that the reversion to more economical tactics--especially in view of possible logistic restraints--was the most prudent course, at least until the dry season.

The North Vietnamese can take considerable satisfaction from the gains they have already made in Cambodia, but there are many aspects of the situation--particularly over the past several months--which must be of concern to them.

With each day, the Cambodian Army gets a bit stronger, the government in Phnom Penh more entrenched, and, if possible, more confident about the future. The Cambodian attitude was summed up best by the radio commentator who, speaking of the war, said "we have this indestructible faith."

Although it may be only a temporary phenomenon, some of the military initiative has now passed to the Cambodians and, for the first time in the war, the Cambodian Army has taken the action to the Communists. Large sweep operations south of Phnom Penh and Battambang in recent weeks and the massive deployment along Route 6 are operations that--despite their considerable deficiencies--would have been unthinkable in the dark days of May and June.

The leadership in Phnom Penh appears to be demonstrating a facility in turning adversity to its own advantage. The Route 6 operation is a good case in point. By most criteria, i.e., weighing its achievements against its costs and risks, it would be chalked up as a failure. The operation was designed to open

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a land route to Kompong Thom city. The size of the force committed to the operation has swelled from eight to about 20 battalions. After almost two months on the road, and casualties numbering in the hundreds, the task force has moved but 15 miles from its starting point. The objective of reaching Kompong Thom city at any time in the near future has been all but abandoned. But the Cambodians are convinced that the operation has been a great success. And to the extent that it has lifted morale and has proved that it is possible to retake territory once under Communist control, the Route 6 operation has been a success.

Making success out of seeming failure is only one of the achievements of the Lon Nol leadership. More important has been its ability to turn the sense of elan that permeated "progressive" and opposition elements into support for Lon Nol--a figure who long had been closely associated with Sihanouk, who had personally profited from the arms deals with the Communists, and who had himself once been the target of the intellectuals and students. In this area, the war was of great assistance to Lon Nol. With the Vietnamese tiger at the gates, opposition elements have not felt the time propitious to press for changes in the way Cambodia is ruled. We have some doubts about Lon Nol's long-term prospects--quite apart from what the Communists may do militarily--but at this juncture there is no evidence that he is in serious political trouble with any powerful segments in Phnom Penh or that his rule will be seriously challenged in the near future.

None of this means that the Cambodians are out of the woods. On the contrary, if the Communists became convinced that the trend of events in Cambodia was running strongly against them, they would probably move quickly to rectify the situation. We think that how things go in Cambodia still depends for the most part on the North Vietnamese. What does seem reasonably clear, however, is that if the Communists want to bring down the Lon Nol government, they will have to do a great deal more than they have been doing; they will have to commit far more troops and accept far greater losses than up to now; and they will almost certainly have to move--in some fashion--against Phnom Penh itself.

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There is no hard evidence--either from documents or prisoners or intercepted messages--that provides the basis for a compelling argument about what course the enemy is most likely to pursue in the next few months. The recently reported COSVN Directive [] (noted in the Daily Brief of 26 October) suggests that the Communists are now working toward an early show-down, but this is far from conclusive. What can be said is that the Communist capability to step up the fighting should improve in the coming months. With improving weather, the Lao infiltration complex will begin to disgorge supplies into Cambodia; fresh North Vietnamese units and replacements, some probably slated for action in the Cambodian theater, are already making their way south, and cross-country movement within Cambodia should become a good deal easier.

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