



The President's Daily Brief

16 December 1971

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

16 December 1971

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The Pakistanis have until 0530 Washington time to surrender their troops in the East. In the interim, the Indians apparently have ordered a stop to firing in East Pakistan. (Page 1)

The latest fedayeen assassination attempt is discussed on Page 3.

[Redacted]

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The insurgency in northern Thailand has sharply increased in intensity. (Page 5)

The Chinese [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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(Page 6)

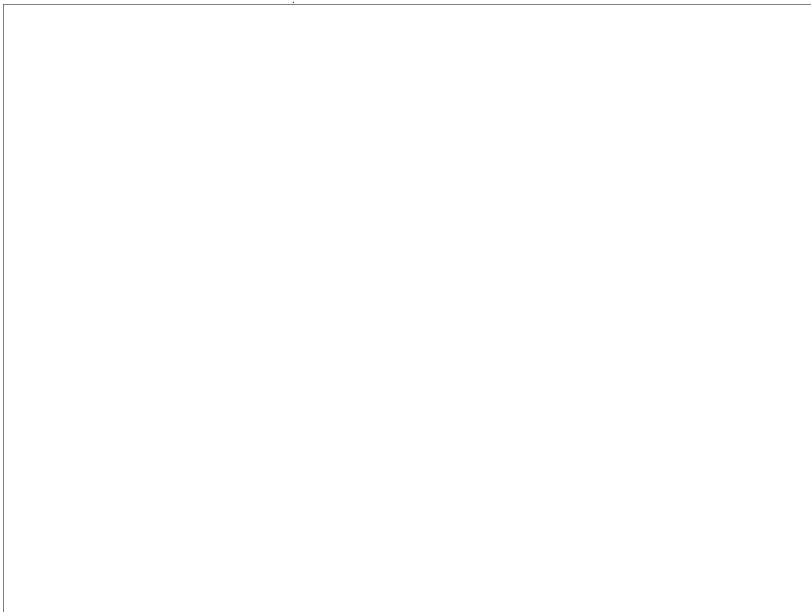
We examine on Page 7 the possibilities for closer relations between the USSR and Israel.

We discuss at Annex Yugoslavia's Croatian problem.

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INDIA-PAKISTAN

Indian Chief of Staff General Manekshaw has agreed to give Pakistan until 0530 Eastern Standard Time to surrender its troops in the East. The Indians have sent a senior officer to Dacca via helicopter to effect the surrender. General Niazi, the Pakistani commander in the East, may still, however, try to persuade the Indians to accept terms short of the unconditional surrender they have demanded. Further information on Pakistani plans with regard to the war and the domestic political situation may be revealed by President Yahya, who is to make a nationwide radio address this morning at 0915 Washington time.



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In the West, the Indians reportedly bombed Karachi yesterday for the first time in several days. Lahore was also attacked from the air. Land and air action was reported at several other places on the western front, but there apparently were no important new gains by either side.

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[redacted] an Indian Army reserve division was airlifted from Calcutta on 11 December to the western front.

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Anti-American demonstrations are continuing in Indian cities. There were six such demonstrations in Calcutta on 14 December, the largest with about 2,000 participants. More such actions are expected in Calcutta over the next few days. According to US officials in the city, the demonstrations reflect a popular rather than merely a partisan mood, and the attitude of the demonstrators is the angriest seen there in the past two years. A number of anti-US demonstrations also took place yesterday in New Delhi, including one in which a number of members of Parliament of various political persuasions protested in front of the US Embassy.

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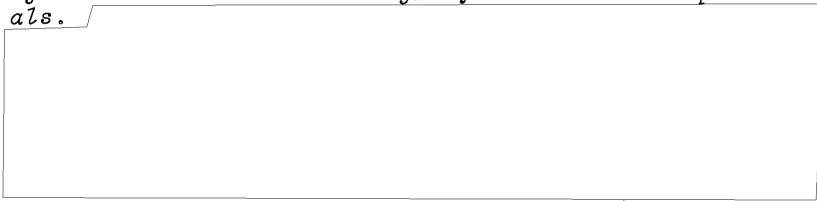
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JORDAN-FEDAYEEN

The attempted killing of Jordan's ambassador in London yesterday underlines the Palestine liberation movement's intention to eliminate the Jordanian regime by assassination. Zaid Rifai, who served King Husayn as chief of the royal court during the bitter contests with the fedayeen last year, was wounded in the hand by submachine gun fire near his embassy. The assailant, who escaped, was presumably a member of a group similar to the Fatah special action squad that assassinated Prime Minister Wasfi Tal in Cairo late last month.

Further assassination attempts or Jordanian reprisals could occur in almost any city where senior Jordanian or Palestinian leaders are present. Beirut, the effective headquarters of Palestinian resistance activity, is likely to be the main arena.

Syria could be another target for Jordanian reprisals.



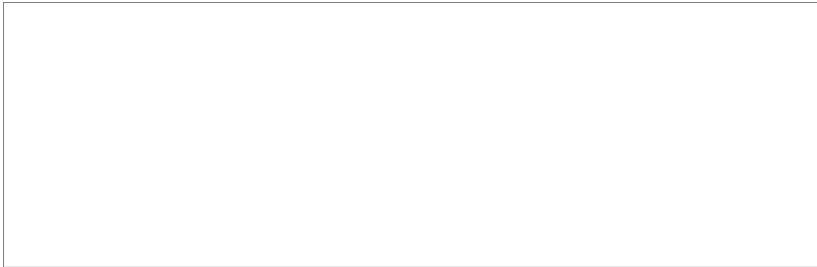
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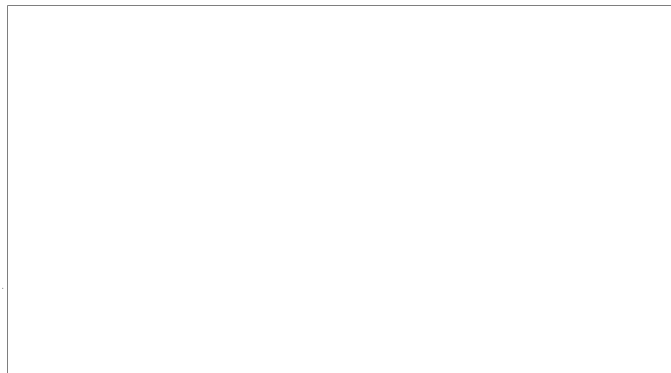
EGYPT-USSR



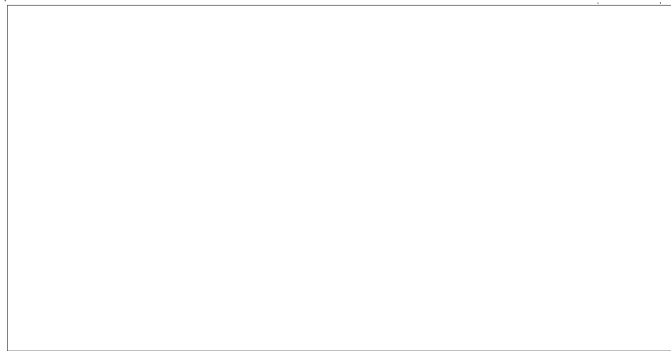
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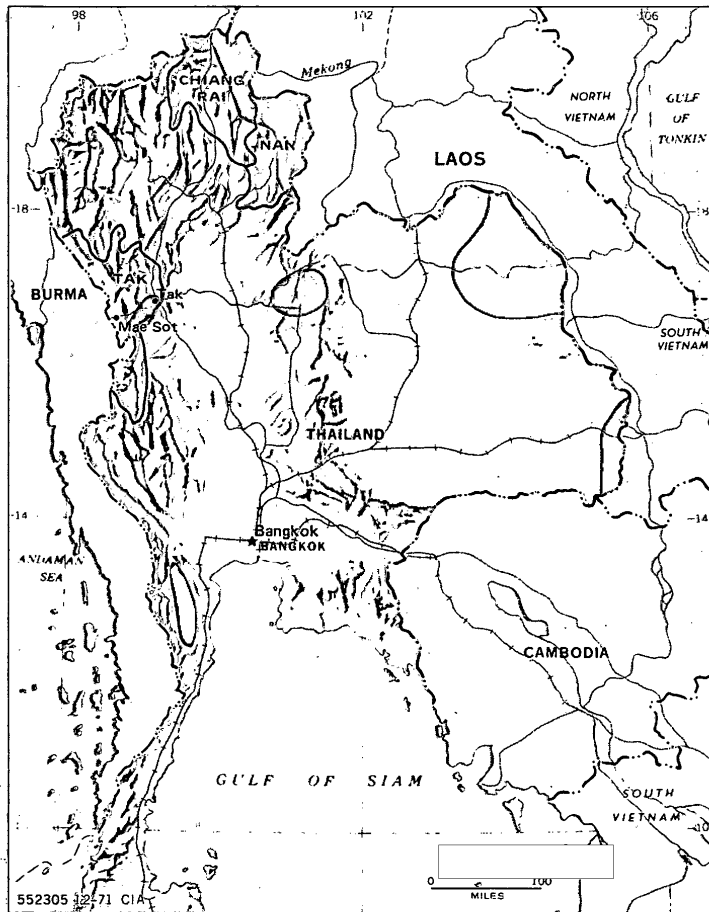
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THAILAND

The Communist insurgency in the north has taken an increasingly adverse trend. In a recent series of skillfully conducted ambushes, Communist guerrillas have demonstrated sophisticated tactics, including the ability to use relatively large units. They initiated three separate incidents on 6 December along key roads in Nan and Chiang Rai provinces and later conducted a daylight ambush on the important Tak - Mae Sot highway in Tak Province. Government casualties in these encounters were over 100. The ambushes, plus increased harassment of road-building crews, suggest a growing focus on interdiction of major roads.

The northern insurgency is expanding more rapidly than the longer-lived one in the northeast and has become more worrisome to the Thai Government. Over the past year, insurgents in the north have increased from a strength of under 2,000 to about 2,300 to 2,700. They are supported by a regional command in a Communist-controlled section of Laos and are being outfitted with Communist weapons. The insurgents originally concentrated on subverting hill tribes long neglected by the Thai Government, but over the past year they have moved into the contiguous Thai-populated lowlands. These forays until recently were limited to recruitment, propaganda, and acquisition of supplies, but the temporary seizure last month of a lowland village may portend an effort to expand base areas into the lowlands.

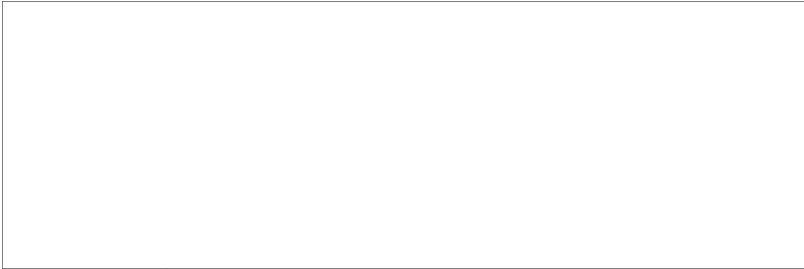
Thai counter-insurgency efforts in the north have been hampered by the difficulty of the terrain and the wariness of hill tribesmen. These efforts have also suffered from a lack of initiative. Even well-executed operations have been nullified later by the failure to maintain a government presence. A recent government decision to emphasize small-unit patrols in frequent contact with rural villages is encouraging, but this new tactic also may suffer in implementation.



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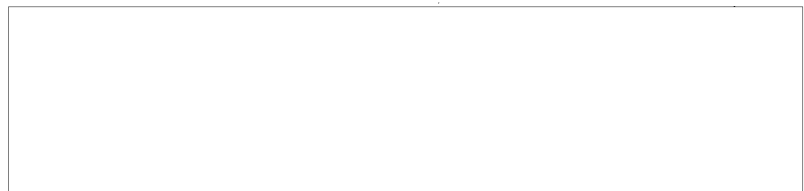
COMMUNIST CHINA



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USSR-ISRAEL

The Soviets are still encouraging speculation about the possibility of a rapprochement between the USSR and Israel. Soviet journalist Victor Louis, a man often used by Moscow to float trial balloons, wrote in one of Israel's most widely read newspapers on Monday that increased emigration of Soviet Jews to Israel "might require" the creation of Soviet and Israeli interest sections in other nations' embassies in Moscow and Tel Aviv. The Israeli Foreign Ministry responded with a statement that the USSR has not made such a proposal, but that Israel would be willing to discuss it if the matter were raised.

The Soviets, because of the sensibilities of their Arab allies, appear to want a regularization of their unofficial contacts with the Israelis, rather than resumption of diplomatic relations. They undoubtedly worry that reopening the Soviet Embassy in Tel Aviv would invite the Arabs to permit a greater US presence in their capitals. In any case, the Soviets would like to be able to show the Arabs that their resumption of ties with Israel would result in a more conciliatory negotiating position in Tel Aviv. Such a result would be difficult to obtain from the Israelis. Nevertheless, even unofficial contacts would provide Moscow a useful channel of communications at a time when Egypt is threatening to resume the war and would help cut into the US monopoly of influence in Tel Aviv.

Up to now, the Israelis have held out for re-establishment of formal relations with the USSR. The Foreign Ministry statement, however, raises the possibility that Israel might settle for something less, if the prospect of continued emigration of Soviet Jews were part of the bargain. In fact, the number of Jews emigrating from the USSR to Israel in December has been abnormally high--1,200 in the first 11 days of the month, according to a Foreign Ministry official. The total for 1971 could come to as many as 14,000. The figure for 1969 was about 3,000 and for 1970 only about 1,000.

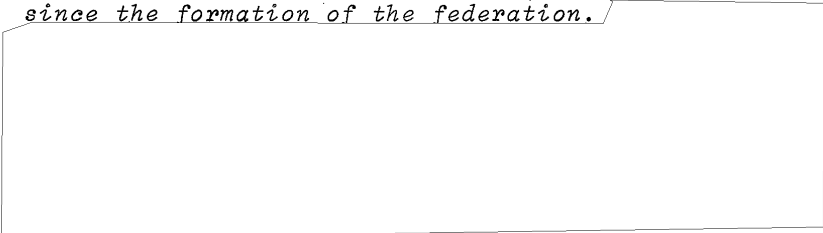
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CROATIAN NATIONALISM SURFACES IN YUGOSLAVIA

By his sweeping purge of the Communist Party's leaders in Croatia last Sunday, Tito means to reinforce the principle that excessive republican nationalism cannot be tolerated in the federal structure. Although the message was clearly received, it does not seem to have convinced many important Croats, and Tito is embroiled in one of the more serious challenges to his authority since he took power.

Indeed, the Croats have not yet given up the fight. The Croatian party central committee has not fully acknowledged--as was expected of it--its culpability for mistakes leading to the purge. A large number of Croats have resigned from party, army, and press posts, but no new people have been appointed to fill most of these positions. Some of these resignations were directed by Tito, but the large number of local officials who have resigned since Sunday suggests that many are acting in protest against the central authorities. These developments strongly suggest that the majority of Croat leaders are basically in agreement with the views of the ousted nationalist leaders and are unwilling to accept official posts in the current circumstances. The appointment as new party head of Mrs. Planinc, who is of Slovenian origin although she grew up in Croatia, indicates a certain difficulty in finding Croatian candidates for the job.

Croatian nationalism has been a subterranean issue since the formation of the federation.



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Today's crisis grew out of the Croatian party's lenient handling of a student strike that lasted from 23 November to 3 December at Zagreb University. The students were looking for autonomy from federal control and seem to have received the sympathy of party leaders who, in turn, got student support for their fight with Belgrade over control of the republic's economy. The strike is over, but after the purge began the students mounted small defiant demonstrations in support of the ousted leaders. These were swiftly put down; the majority of students are back in school today, and some are in jail.

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Neither the students' strike nor their demonstrations attracted support from other segments of the population, and it is likely that Tito can face down the present "strike" of Croatia's politicians. We expect that party discipline and at least a surface unity will be restored in time for the second national conference of the Communist Party in late January. The meeting was called to discuss the role of the party under the new federal constitution, which gives republic governments a great amount of autonomy. Although there has been some argument that the party also should be decentralized, it is now almost a foregone conclusion that a monolithic party structure will be retained. If taken too far, however, the application of the power inherent in such a structure could render irrelevant the role of autonomous governments and open new tensions between the republics and Belgrade.

Nationalism, based on ethnic and religious differences among the 15 differing peoples who reside in Yugoslavia, is not restricted to Croatia. In recent days, for example, federal Vice President Crvenkovski has been charged with being a Macedonian nationalist, and so have professors and students of Albanian origin at Pristina University in Kosovo. Although there is an element of settling old scores in these charges, there also is an element of truth.

Tito is racing the clock. He is trying to create federal and republic institutions that will be strong enough to survive his death or incapacitation. After the forthcoming party conference, he will consider this phase of his work largely done. With his tremendous prestige, Tito has imposed cooperation among competing republics and a truce among hostile nationalities, but he has not been able to instill trust among them. For this reason, we expect such animosities to flare again, perhaps with Croatia leading the way, when Tito is no longer available to impose solutions.

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