



The President's Daily Brief

3 October 1972

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

3 October 1972

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

China's National Day was celebrated in low key on Sunday, but in contrast to last year, a major editorial was published. (Page 1)

After a tour of southern Lebanon, the [redacted] that the army is generally enforcing restrictions on the fedayeen. (Page 3)

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Another US air base was attacked in Thailand this morning. (Page 5)

At Annex, we discuss the motives of Philippine President Marcos for declaring martial law, and assess his prospects for success.

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CHINA

For the second year in a row there were no speeches, parade, or mammoth fireworks displays on National Day, 1 October. All of the active members of the ruling politburo normally residing in Peking turned out for the occasion, except for party chairman Mao Tse-tung.

It has now been over eight months since Mao publicly presided over an important domestic gathering, although his recently televised meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka clearly demonstrated that the aging party leader is mentally alert and reasonably healthy.

In contrast to 1971, this year a major editorial was published. It did not forecast an early resolution of China's domestic political problems nor did it provide any significant treatment of the sensitive issue of civil-military relations. It reaffirmed that the denunciation of Lin Piao is the primary task facing the nation, and repeatedly called on party cadre to intensify the examination of their own political attitudes in the light of Lin's perfidy.

Since early this year, cadre throughout China have been studying documents outlining Lin's unsuccessful coup attempt in September 1971. Greeted at first with shock and disbelief, the continuing anti-Lin campaign and the accompanying "rectification" movement have given rise to considerable anxiety and unrest in the provinces. Local political leaders--most of whom are military professionals--fear that they will be implicated.

Indeed, a number of military province chiefs have dropped out of sight in recent months, although no charges against them have been made public. To date no replacements have been named for the missing military provincial leaders, and it is possible that at least some of them will re-surface in good standing. Given the army's dominant political role in the provinces, a centrally directed purge of province chiefs, even on a selective basis, runs a serious risk of undermining the relative order achieved in the three years since the tumultuous Cultural Revolution.

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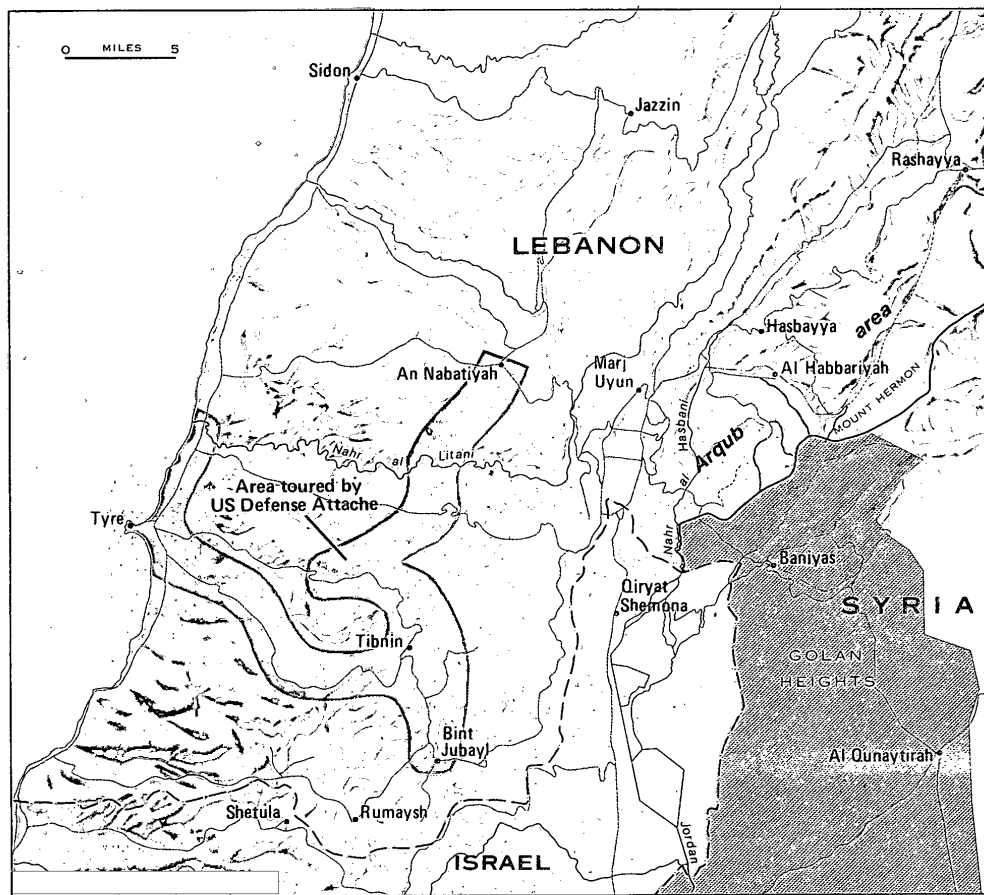
The primary theme of the foreign policy portion of the National Day editorial was that Soviet efforts to encircle and isolate China are being effectively countered by China's flexible approach in foreign affairs. Both the US and the USSR were criticized for increasing international tension through their continuing rivalry, but the primary target of the editorial was clearly the Soviet Union.



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China's tough editorial line appears to mirror its stand in the Sino-Soviet border talks. A TASS report on a reception on 29 September at the Chinese Embassy in Moscow indicated that both chief Soviet negotiator Ilichev and Soviet Ambassador to China Tolstikov are at present back in Moscow.



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LEBANON-FEDAYEEN

The army is generally enforcing government restrictions against fedayeen activity in southern Lebanon. After a recent tour of the villages attacked last month by Israeli forces, the US defense attaché reported that Lebanese Army checkpoints and security posts in the area were markedly improved as compared to a year ago. Lebanese officials claimed that no fedayeen groups are located south of the Litani River, and the [redacted] activity in the areas he visited. His tour, however, did not include the Arqub sector of southern Lebanon, where in the past there has also been considerable fedayeen activity.

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Despite its controls on the location of the fedayeen, the army seems to be relaxing some other restrictions in order to avoid a confrontation. [redacted]

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PHILIPPINES

President Marcos' actions since his declaration of martial law on 23 September have been directed more at restoring his popular political backing than at rooting out the Communist security threat. Marcos wants to continue as chief executive after his present--and constitutionally his last--term expires in December 1973, but without popular support he could not rule effectively, even with military assistance. He hopes that the "New Society" reforms, announced with great fanfare last week, will capture the favor of the disaffected rural masses and quiet his critics among the urban middle class.

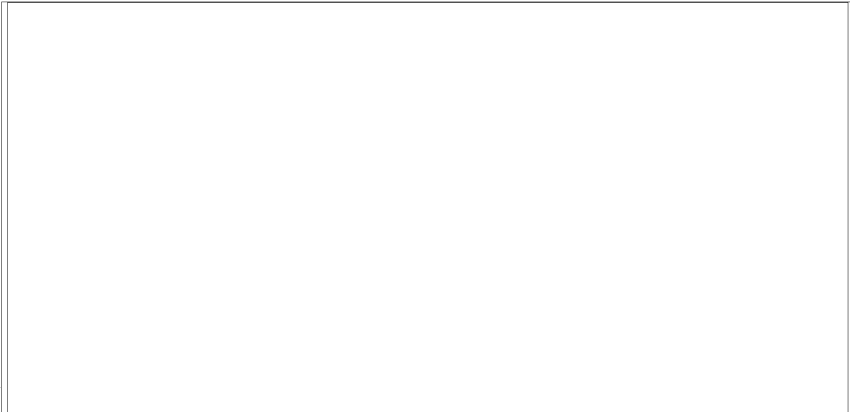
At Annex we examine Marcos' actions and his prospects in greater detail.

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NOTES

Thailand: Another US air base was the target of a small-scale attack early this morning. Preliminary reports indicate that a force of eight to 12 sappers attempted to penetrate Udorn air base in northeastern Thailand. One sapper was killed and one captured; two American servicemen were wounded slightly. Satchel charges and grenades were exploded during the fray but there was no damage to facilities or aircraft. Yesterday, Ubon air base took 35 mortar rounds which damaged some communications equipment. This morning's prisoner may shed some light on the origin of the attackers and about the Communists' plans for future action against US bases in Thailand.

Yemen (Sana) - Yemen (Aden): Adeni forces withdrew on 2 October from the Yemen (Sana) border town of Qatabah. The withdrawal may help to defuse a situation that seemed to threaten heavy border fighting between the two Yemens.



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West Germany - East Germany: The latest round of negotiations on a basic political treaty made no progress toward solving the key political issues. Each side apparently is taking a tough stand in an effort to extract maximum concessions from the other. Nevertheless, we believe that Bonn--and also Pankow to some extent--wants to conclude an agreement prior to West Germany's Bundestag elections next month. The talks will continue on 10 October.

Denmark: Voters overwhelmingly approved Danish membership in the European Communities yesterday. The pro-Communities forces were aided by a record turnout of nearly 90 percent of the eligible voters, 63.5 percent of whom cast ballots in favor of entry.

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THE PHILIPPINES--THE POLITICS OF MARTIAL LAW

[redacted] President
Marcos had been considering martial law for some time
as a tool for prolonging his hold on political power

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[redacted] It is quite possible that the Luzon floods
of July and August, with the attendant economic chaos
and the prospect of resulting popular unrest, accel-
erated his timetable. At any rate, his actions since
the imposition of martial law indicate that he is
following a carefully thought out plan.

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Martial Law

In the first few days under martial law, the
Philippine constabulary, in a series of well-coor-
dinated sweeps based on detailed arrest lists, seized
Marcos' major critics--including politicians of both
parties, proponents of social reform, activist priests
(both Filipinos and foreigners), students, journal-
ists, publishers and some elected officials. All
mass media were immediately closed, and those subse-
quently allowed to reopen have been subjected to
stringent censorship. After the initial series of
political arrests, the constabulary began picking up
notorious criminals and well-known political war-
lords and also began the difficult task of disarming
the various private armies that abound in the Phil-
ippines. The president has said that military courts
are being established to try the cases of those de-
tained, but he has not spelled out the charges or
punishments which will be sought.

None of this has really impinged on the daily
affairs of the average citizen. Nor has the mili-
tary presence been obvious or oppressive. The long-
suffering man-in-the-street in Manila has, in fact,
been gratified by improved conditions of law and
order.

Marcos has been careful to stress the legality
of his actions under the constitution and to empha-
size that the country is still under civilian, not
military, rule. The military is being used to as-
sure law and order and to carry out specific tasks
on behalf of the president, but otherwise most daily
activities of the civil administration and the judi-
ciary continue unaffected. To underscore his con-
tention that martial law is a temporary solution,
Marcos has directed the constitutional convention
to speed its deliberations on a new draft. The next
constitution will replace the presidential system

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with a parliamentary form of government--a change that could allow Marcos to maintain power indefinitely as prime minister.

Marcos as the Man of Destiny

The reform program announced under the rubric of the "New Society" is long overdue in the Philippines. There is, however, ample reason to question Marcos' credentials as a reformer as well as his ability to make significant headway against powerful political and economic interests defending the status quo. Although the tactics have changed, the president's current strategy is similar to the one he used in 1969 to overcome public disenchantment and win election to an unprecedented second term--dramatic calls for reform, charges that bureaucratic ineptness and entrenched interests were thwarting his programs, and some showcase public works projects. The rural countryside today is still crisscrossed by unfinished sections of concrete roads and half-built bridges begun during the 1969 campaign and abandoned soon after. The 1969 wave of "reform" brought the country to the point of bankruptcy but did nothing to alleviate endemic corruption, warlordism, and social injustice.

Early signs suggest that Marcos will not go much further this time in actually implementing basic reform. The highly touted land reform decree issued last week, when examined closely, seems to call only for implementation of the 1963 land reform code--a moderate reform which, even so, would be prohibitively expensive to carry out and which would require more government pressure on the landlord class than Marcos may be willing or able to employ. Marcos' past behavior makes us skeptical, too, that the purging of the civil service will do more than replace one set of inept and venal bureaucrats with another. The arms thus far confiscated are insignificant in number compared with total civilian weapons.

The public is generally skeptical that Marcos is willing or able to do what he says he will. Nonetheless, most Filipinos seem ready to give him the benefit of the doubt in the hope that he will carry out at least some of the reforms he has promised. Because Marcos now tightly controls the press, the public will find it hard to determine the actual progress of reform.

The Future

The president's tactics have so far kept the various anti-Marcos groups in disarray. Many opposition leaders are in jail or in hiding. The most

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likely sources of open opposition to Marcos in the near future are the left-wing student organizations, which are already discussing how best to challenge martial law. The rural Maoist New People's Army, already becoming a haven for many radicals on the arrest list, will doubtless try to step up its insurgent effort, especially now that security forces are partially tied down administering martial law. Some minor skirmishes have already taken place--on Luzon with the Communist insurgents and on Mindanao with Muslim rebels--but thus far these have not differed in form or size from the past insurgent practice of harassing the constabulary as opportunity arises. In the new situation, however, certain members of the anti-Marcos establishment might now be willing to support extremist challenges to the president.

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Over the short term, it seems more likely that Marcos, by making some surface reforms in Philippine society and maintaining public harassment of corrupt entrenched interests, will be able to improve his public image, retain the crucial loyalty of the military, and overcome any opposition that might develop. Under these circumstances, Marcos could reasonably expect to end martial law in a fairly short time--perhaps six months to a year--and return to constitutional government claiming a broad popular mandate.

Even assuming such smooth sailing, however, the imposition of martial law has permanently changed the political equation. Marcos apparently now sees himself as an indefinite strongman--whether as president, prime minister, or commander in chief--and in the future he will always be tempted to fall back on martial law again whenever his political control seems threatened. At the same time, Marcos' challengers--both within and outside the Filipino establishment--may be pushed to the conclusion that conspiracy and violence are the only means to achieve power. Communists and other extremists have long been advocating this line, and their credibility will now be enhanced.

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