



The President's Daily Brief

24 September 1971

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Several new reports strengthen the impression that Peking is in the midst of a leadership crisis.

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Lon Nol yesterday sacked In Tam, his energetic First Deputy Prime Minister. (Page 4)

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COMMUNIST CHINA

[redacted] reports strengthen the impression that Peking is in the midst of a leadership crisis.

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[redacted]

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[redacted] the leadership in Peking held an urgent meeting there on or about 12 September. The meeting may have begun on the 12th and perhaps lasted for several days, since Chou En-lai interrupted meetings with foreign visitors from 12 to 15 September.

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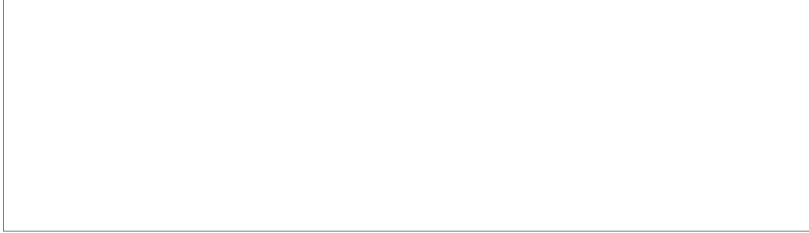
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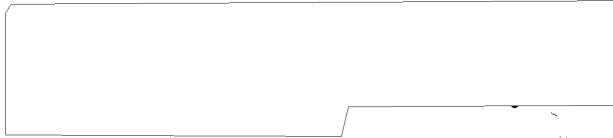
If Mao is dead or incapacitated, China's unsettled leadership would have difficulty in immediately rallying around Defense Minister Lin Piao. Despite Lin's designation as Mao's successor, there are serious questions about the extent and depth of support for him in important military and civilian circles. Although Lin's position as head of the military establishment is an important one, his ultimate source of authority has always been Mao.

There continues to be no evidence of a deterioration of security in the capital or elsewhere in the nation.

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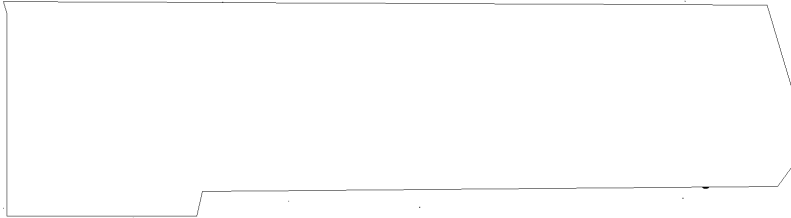
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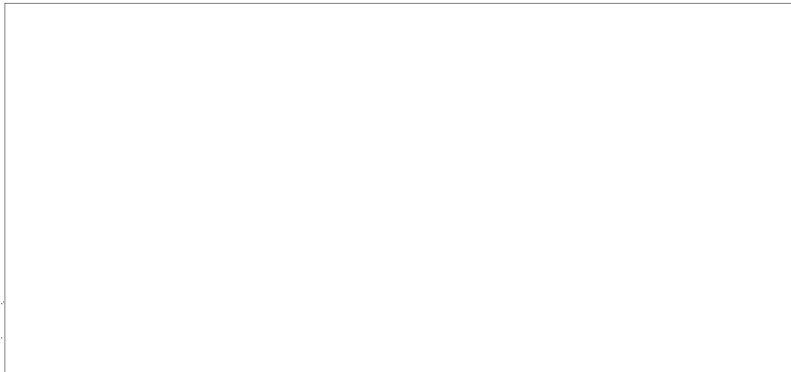
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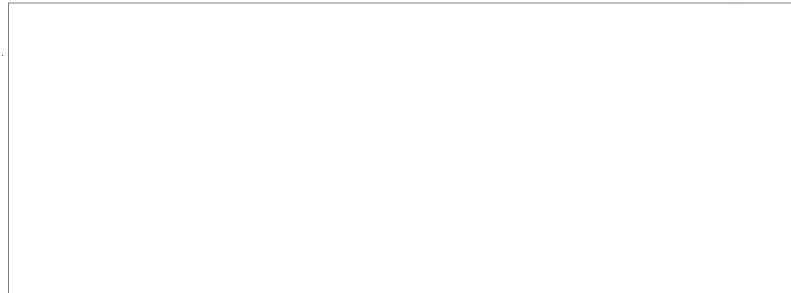
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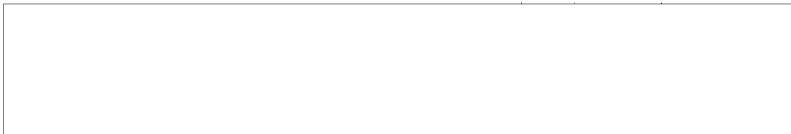
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CAMBODIA

Lon Nol yesterday dismissed First Deputy Prime Minister In Tam. [redacted]

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In Tam was neglecting his duties in the capital and that his frequent trips to the countryside were primarily designed to build his own political base among the peasantry. [redacted]

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The able and energetic In Tam was the leading force behind the government's efforts to extend its control in the countryside. Several times he threatened to resign when Lon Nol and Matak blocked his efforts to mount an effective pacification program. Now In Tam presumably will return to the National Assembly, where he may well use his influence to stir up further opposition to the government and its policies.

The next important head to roll may be that of Third Deputy Prime Minister Hang Thun Hak, whom Lon Nol has accused of trying to denigrate Matak. [redacted]

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NOTE

USSR: The Soviets are preparing for another unmanned lunar landing mission that is likely to be launched next week. The only other Soviet lunar launch this year--Luna 18--crashed while attempting a soft landing on the moon earlier this month. Luna 18 apparently was intended to return lunar soil samples; the mission of the upcoming probe cannot yet be determined.

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