



The President's Daily Brief

25 September 1971

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~~*Top Secret*~~

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Peking is trying to curb foreign speculation about a leadership crisis by fostering a "business as usual" image, while still offering no plausible explanation for the unusual events of the past two weeks. (Page 1)

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[REDACTED]
Pakistan

(Page 3)

Thieu's political opponents are continuing preparations for large demonstrations in several South Vietnamese cities this weekend, with scattered disturbances already taking place in Saigon. (Page 5)

Egypt

[REDACTED]
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The Soviets have proposed a formula for circumventing the current impasse in the inter-German talks. (Page 6)

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COMMUNIST CHINA

Since the period 12-15 September, when no top leaders were in evidence, Premier Chou En-lai has made almost daily appearances, even meeting on occasion with relatively low-level foreign dignitaries for several hours.

Several other civilian politburo members have made repeated public appearances in the past week, and Vice Premier Li Hsien-nien traveled to Hanoi on 24 September. Army logistics chief Chiu Hui-tso also turned up at a minor diplomatic function on 22 September--the first time that a military man on the politburo has surfaced since the major leadership meeting which apparently convened on 12 September.

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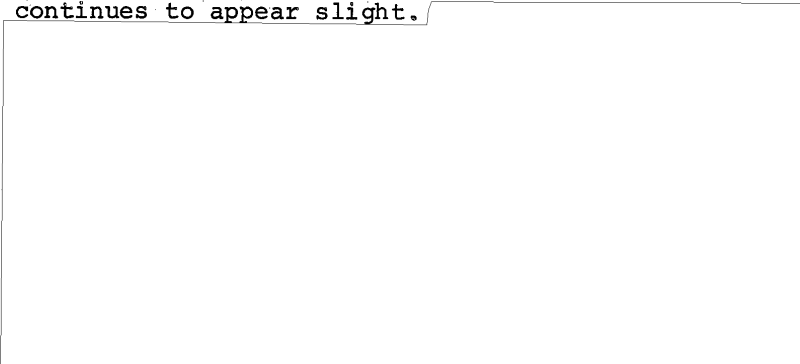


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Despite its efforts to curb foreign speculation by projecting a "business as usual" image, the regime has still failed to provide a plausible explanation for the curious chain of events of the past two weeks. It has yet to publicize an official disclaimer of the rumors that Mao is seriously ill, or to shed any light on the status of Lin Piao, which is also becoming a topic of foreign press speculation. According to the French Press Agency, however, a Foreign Ministry spokesman in Peking has told at least four members of the diplomatic corps that "in a few days they will receive the clue" as to why National Day parades have been curtailed.

The nationwide standdown of military flights is continuing.

The possibility that the current uncertainty in Peking is due to some perceived external threat continues to appear slight.



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There is still no evidence of a wide-scale deterioration of security within China. On the morning of 24 September, Chinese officials at the Hong Kong border were refusing to accept travelers destined for Amoy, a major coastal city in south-east China. Although the armed factional skirmishes which reportedly broke out in this area in August may be continuing, a more likely explanation is that transportation routes in the vicinity of Amoy were temporarily disrupted by the severe typhoon which hit the mainland coast yesterday.

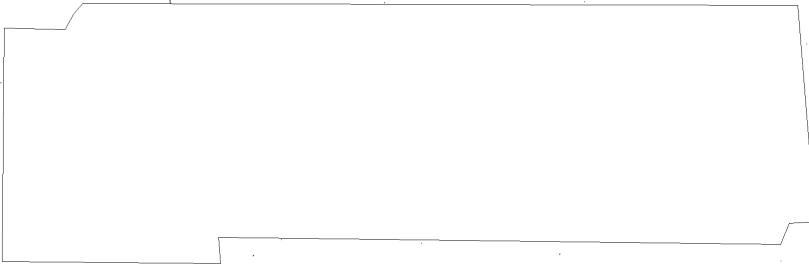
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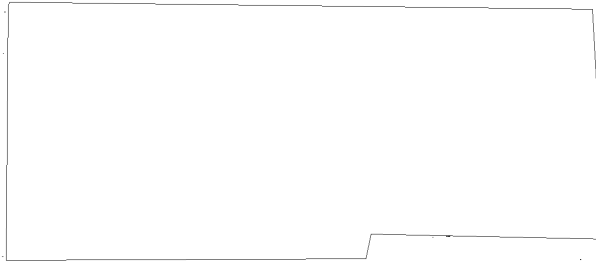
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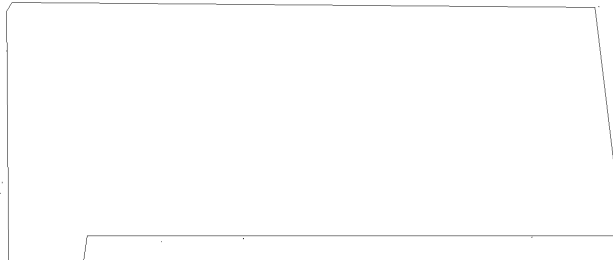
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In the revolt area, the UN relief operation is hampered by the thoroughly disorganized and inefficient government, which is reluctant to allow a large field staff into the countryside to supervise distribution. The head of the operation has also reported problems with disrupted communications and transport, passive resistance or non-cooperation from the civilian population, and violence and sabotage at the hands of the guerrillas. Yahya has told Ambassador Farland he is "amazed" to hear that officials in the East wing were placing obstacles in the way of a UN presence in the countryside. He said he would again make it clear to officials in Islamabad and Dacca that they were to offer all possible assistance to the UN.

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SOUTH VIETNAM

Opposition circles continue their plans to hold large-scale demonstrations this weekend in several major cities, [redacted]
The focus is to be on Saigon, where students and veterans have been arriving from the provinces and some disturbances are already reported. [redacted]

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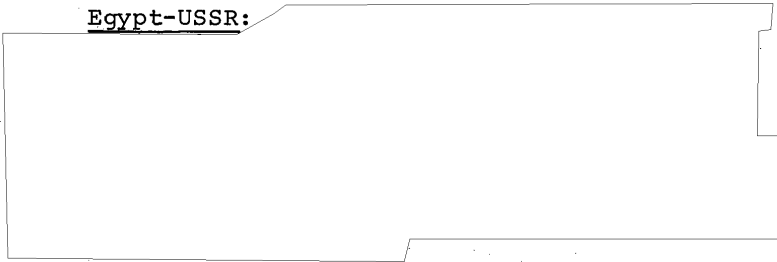
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NOTES

Egypt-USSR:



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East - West Germany: A ranking Soviet diplomat in East Berlin has put forward a formula for resuming the German talks. According to this scheme, each German state would stand by its own translation of the Berlin agreement and not question the wording in the other's version. This comes close to the solution which West German negotiator Bahr proposed to the East Germans in their last meeting on 22 September. At that time, it was rejected. Now, however, if Bonn agrees to the Soviet formula, the chances of proceeding to matters of substance will improve.

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