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The President's Daily Brief

June 15, 1974

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

June 15, 1974

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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There were few surprises in the pecking order of the campaign speeches for the Supreme Soviet this year. (Page 2)

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The Israeli press and public have reacted to President Nixon's rousing reception in Egypt with apprehension. (Page 4)

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Italian President Leone is convinced that relatively slight differences separate the coalition parties on key economic issues. (Page 6)

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USSR

General Secretary Brezhnev yesterday ended the Soviet leadership's series of Supreme Soviet candidacy speeches with a measured appraisal of US-Soviet relations. Referring to the coming summit, he acknowledged pessimistic forecasts in the West, but said the improvement of bilateral relations can and must continue.

Ruling out hasty decisions on questions not yet ripe for solution, Brezhnev seemingly cautioned against high expectations for the summit. The Soviet leader said US-Soviet relations must proceed on a stable basis, "not dependent on considerations of expediency." He said the most important and complex problems are those in the field of arms limitation, which have become the subject of heated debate. Brezhnev presumably was referring to debate in the US, but did not make this explicit.

In apparent response to Western charges that the USSR is aggravating the arms race with its current missile modernization programs, Brezhnev claimed that historically the arms race has been forced upon the Soviet Union. Praising the strategic arms agreements of 1972 and 1973, he called for further agreements to prevent the continuation of the arms spiral. Specifically, Brezhnev expressed willingness to limit underground nuclear tests "down to their full termination according to a coordinated timetable." Pending a halt to the arms race, Brezhnev assured his listeners that Soviet defenses would be maintained "at the appropriate level."

In reference to other issues, Brezhnev placed some emphasis on successfully completing the European security conference, with the participation of "top leaders" at its concluding stage. He strongly implied that Moscow would not meet Western demands for freer movement of peoples and ideas. The Soviet party boss did express willingness to take partial measures toward arms limitation in Europe, and hinted that one such step on force reductions might be in the offing.

Brezhnev said prospects had improved for eliminating the hotbed of war in the Middle East, but cautioned that only the combined efforts of participants at the Geneva conference could finally resolve remaining problems. He voiced continued support for this task.

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USSR

There were few surprises in the pecking order of the campaign speeches for the Supreme Soviet this year. These speeches are not meant to attract votes but to establish individual political platforms and to draw support for them.

In the matter of rankings, last is first, and pride of place again went to General Secretary Brezhnev. Podgorny and Kosygin also held onto their ranking as numbers two and three respectively. Kirilenko, however, made his speech the same day as did Suslov, in contrast to a much earlier delivery during the last Supreme Soviet election in 1970. Party secretary for agriculture Kulakov delivered his speech a week later than did Minister of Agriculture Polyansky, an indication of who is the top agriculture official. Party secretary for cadres Kapitonov moved up and could be in line for promotion to candidate Politburo member.

Candidate Politburo member Ponomarev delivered his speech ten days later than other candidate members and on the same day as full Politburo member Foreign Minister Gromyko. The pairing of the two suggests that they are considered equals. Ponomarev has assumed broader responsibilities in the foreign affairs field, from relations with nonruling communist parties to relations with countries in which communist parties are active.

The three top leaders were also set apart from the others by having their speeches televised live nationwide. Extensive summaries of the speeches of the other 23 members of the Politburo and Secretariat appeared in the central press and were carried by Tass in English and Russian. Full texts of most were carried in the local papers of their constituencies. These full texts revealed some differences--which are under study--in the way individual leaders treated some major subjects. The central press summaries smoothed out these differences, however, and emphasized two themes: support for detente and the primacy of Brezhnev.

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ISRAEL

The Israeli press and public have reacted to President Nixon's rousing reception in Egypt with apprehension. Many Israelis suspect Israel may have to pay for the new US standing with the Arabs in the form of additional territorial and diplomatic concessions when the Middle East negotiations are resumed.

The conservative press predictably has warned that the warm welcome accorded the President in Cairo should turn on a red warning light in Israel. Israel, it claims, will now have to mobilize all its powers of steadfastness in future dealings with the US concerning negotiations with the Arabs.

Prime Minister Rabin, speaking at an Israeli university's graduation exercises on June 12, expressed the hope that Washington will realize that its improved relations with Syria and Egypt should not be made at the expense of its intimate and traditional friendship with Israel. Rabin speculated that as a result of the improvement in Arab-US ties, differences of opinion between Israel and the US are quite possible. Rabin added, however, that he prefers the verbal arguments and the political struggle to military conflict.

On balance, the government has taken a positive view of the President's Middle East trip. It has sought to offset the Israeli public's concern over the reliability of the US commitment to Israel by showering the local press with glowing summaries of US-Israeli relations under President Nixon's administration.

Government officials are particularly playing up assurances they claim Israel received from Secretary Kissinger that the US will agree to a large long-term economic and military aid program for Israel. Government sources, the press claims, have said that such an aid program may be announced during the President's visit to Israel.

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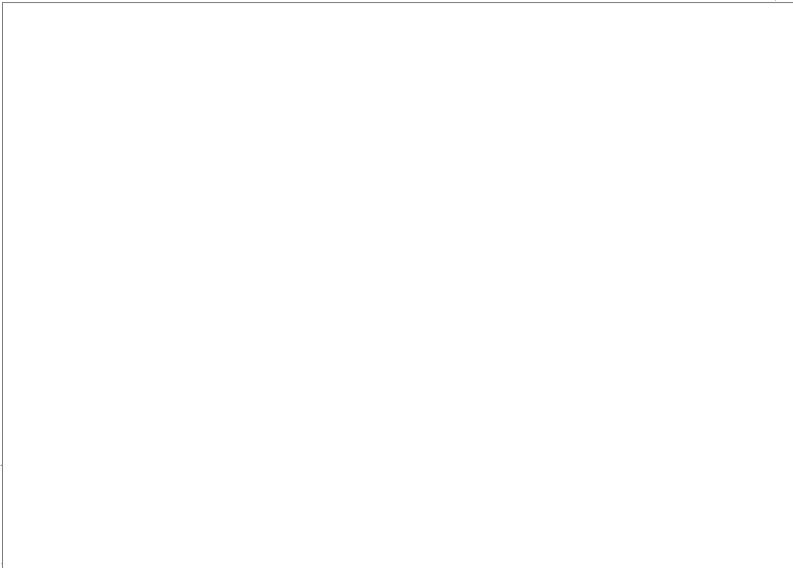
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IRAQ-USSR



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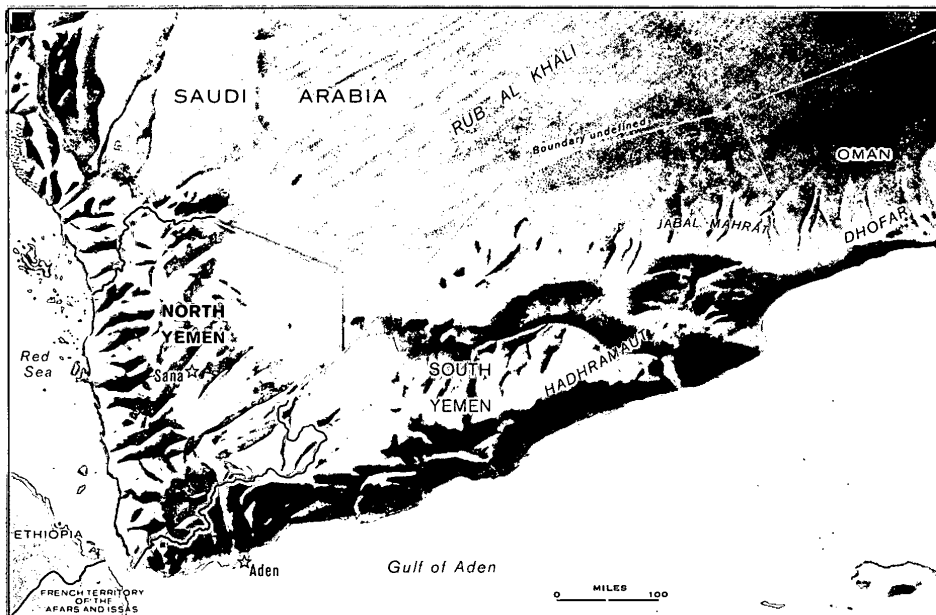
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ITALY

President Leone is convinced that relatively slight differences separate the coalition parties on key economic issues. He believes sufficient room exists for negotiation, and that the Christian Democratic and Socialist parties may become more amenable to compromise if the issues are debated publicly. Leone is prepared to instruct Prime Minister Rumor to submit the issues to parliamentary debate if the Prime Minister reports that he cannot resolve the differences between the Christian Democrats and the Socialists.

Meanwhile, organized labor may have given political leaders a short breathing spell. The labor federation, which represents all of Italy's unions, has reaffirmed its support for the Socialist position but has voted a temporary moratorium on politically motivated strikes. The Communist-dominated unions are following a policy calculated to convey a responsible image and thus support Communist leader Berlinguer's campaign for more formal consultations between the Communists and the government. The top Communist labor leader, for example, aided Christian Democratic labor leaders in their effort to beat back a Socialist attempt to pin responsibility for the current crisis on the Christian Democratic Party.

Rumor will probably convoke a meeting of the center-left party leaders this weekend to get negotiations started and to prepare for a possible Communist attempt to force a debate on the crisis when parliament convenes on Monday. Rumor is not likely to make much progress toward resolving the dispute, however, before next week's regional council elections in Sardinia.



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NOTES

North Yemen: The Command Council under Colonel Hamdi appears to be in control of the capital. It has yet, however, to receive pledges of support from powerful tribal elements in the north that on Thursday threatened to occupy Sana. Should clashes with the tribes develop, they could trigger intervention by the Saudis in support of the tribes. South Yemen also might be tempted in this situation to initiate military moves along the border.

USSR-Israel: Soviet journalists are telling their American colleagues in Moscow that the USSR is on the verge of re-establishing relations with Israel. Our Moscow embassy reports that, although there is no direct evidence to support these rumors, recent shifts in Soviet public treatment of the Middle East are consistent with a possible move toward Tel Aviv. Having taken the line that the US is seeking to regularize relations with the Arab world, the Soviets could assert that Moscow should do no less with Israel. Possibly with this in mind, Soviet party boss Brezhnev in his election speech yesterday said that progress toward a Middle East settlement "will create the conditions for the development of our relations with all countries" in the area.

Pakistan-France-China:

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Thailand: A nationwide radio appeal by Prime Minister Sanya, which was backed by prominent labor leaders, has restored a measure of calm to the streets of Bangkok following a tense week of labor protests. While the Sanya government seems to have weathered its first serious domestic challenge since forming a new cabinet two weeks ago, the demonstrations marked the emergence of a student-worker alliance that is sure to try again.

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