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*The President's Daily Brief*

20 August 1969

1

~~Top Secret~~

SOVIET AFFAIRS

Riot police are patrolling in central Prague today to prevent demonstrations similar to the minor ones which were quickly snuffed out yesterday afternoon and evening in Wenceslaus Square. The police were overzealous in trying to avert a major disturbance, using tear gas to break up a passive and apparently unorganized crowd estimated at several thousand. Such overreaction by police could lead to more serious conflicts before the anniversary period is over tomorrow.

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There is no evidence [REDACTED] of additional Soviet troops either moving into Czechoslovakia or even close to the Czech borders from the USSR, Poland, Hungary or southern East Germany. Some of the Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia may have moved closer to the cities, however, to handle any disturbances that the Czech army or security troops cannot control.

There are rumors that pro-Soviet hardliners plan to generate disturbances designed to bring about military intervention and ouster of Husak. We consider it unlikely that conservatives would initiate or provide the impetus for spontaneous acts of violence but they might try to take advantage of unrest to strengthen their positions.

\* \* \*

The Chinese chose the eve of the anniversary of the Soviet invasion to issue another lengthy attack on the USSR as the aggressor in the prolonged border dispute. The

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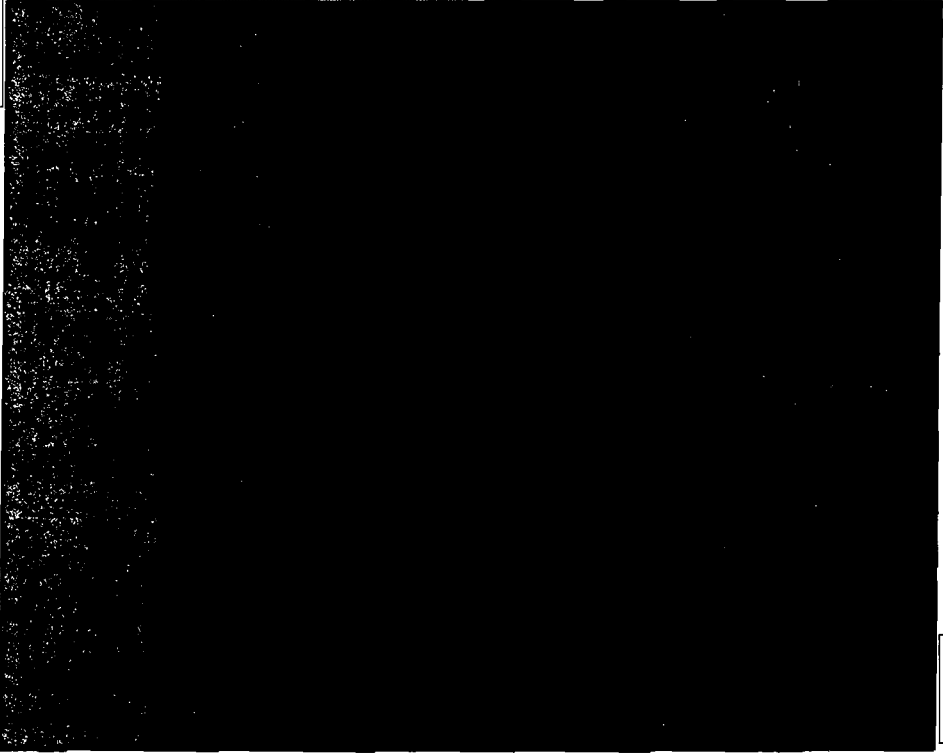
note charges the Soviets with more than 400 provocations during June and July, and denounces Moscow for talking about normalizing the situation while actually adopting measures which intensify tensions. Moscow meanwhile pointedly commemorated the thirtieth anniversary of a victory over the Japanese on the Manchurian border.

\* \* \*

A Soviet space official says the USSR will try to land an unmanned probe on Mars before the US. The Soviet Mars shot that failed last March may in fact have been such an attempt. The next opportunity for Moscow will come in the spring of 1971, two years before the US Viking.

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