



The President's Daily Brief

13 June 1970

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

King Husayn, his army, and the fedayeen are reassessing the situation in Jordan. *(Page 1)*

Hostility toward the US is growing in other Arab states. *(Page 3)*

North Vietnamese infiltration continues. *(Page 5)*

Some changes in the Cambodian Government may be pending. The Communists continue to harass the Cambodian Army. *(Page 6)*

Brezhnev is going to Bucharest to sign the Soviet-Romanian friendship treaty. *(Page 8)*

South Vietnamese dockworkers have scheduled a strike for Monday. *(Page 9)*

UN observers are forced to abandon two more of their posts along the Suez Canal. *(Page 9)*

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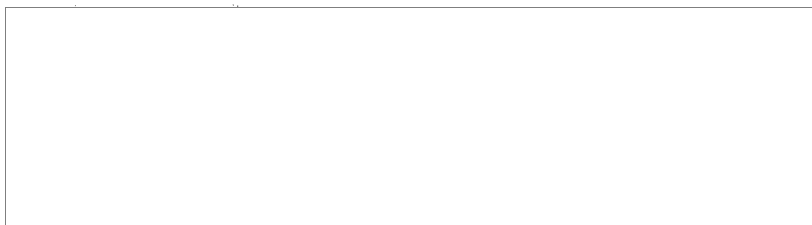
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JORDAN

An uneasy calm has settled over Amman and most of Jordan, punctuated from time to time by sporadic incidents triggered off usually by small, undisciplined groups of fedayeen bent on looting. Both sides seem to be conscious of the fragility of the present truce.

We present in the following paragraphs our preliminary assessment of the situation in Jordan.

Whatever authority rises from the shambles in Amman in the next few days and weeks, it is not likely to be one on which either the Arab world or the West can rely.



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Husayn will miss the support and the stiffening of the military commanders he was forced to dismiss, and the army may find itself divided among those still determined to crush the fedayeen and those either sympathetic to Palestinian aspirations or unwilling to stand between the fedayeen and the Israelis. The army in general and the elite units in particular have probably incurred popular resentment because of their indiscriminate shelling of the refugee camps.

A small but militant fedayeen group--George Habbash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)--has succeeded in defying the vastly larger forces of both the King and the "moderate" fedayeen organizations, bringing on exactly the kind of bloodbath both sides had been anxious to avoid in previous government-fedayeen confrontations. The PFLP has gained considerable short-run prestige and political power as a result; whether it can command the foreign subsidies and support that Yasir Arafat's more respectable politicking has produced is something else. The shadowy Habbash and his fanatical followers will certainly be emboldened, and more than ever will be a force to be reckoned with in Amman, in the other Arab capitals, and abroad.

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The debacle has been a major setback for Yasir Arafat, who has sought tirelessly to establish a single fedayeen authority under his command. His willingness to settle for terms less stringent than the PFLP's, and his cooperation with the Jordanian Army in trying to enforce the terms, have badly tarnished his image and made a mockery of his claim to speak for a united Palestinian movement. Arafat will try to catch up with the militants who have run away with his movement, but he cannot run too far without losing his more conservative--and wealthier--supporters.

None of Jordan's Arab neighbors has appeared anxious to take advantage of the situation, and most have tried to moderate it. Whether this restraint will continue depends, as does so much else, on what kind of regime the Jordanians and the Palestinians patch together in Amman. The 20,000-odd Iraqi troops in northern Jordan provide a ready-made intervention force, but many of its officers are there because they are distrusted by the Baghdad regime.

Israel, of course, is watching events closely. Tel Aviv has relied on Husayn and his army to restrict fedayeen cross-border activity to tolerable limits. If this restraint disappears, as seems likely, the Israelis will do their own policing of the frontier, even if they have to occupy parts of the East Bank.

Intervention by either Syria or Iraq would be opposed by Israel, and the Israeli Air Force would go into action against any sizable body of foreign troops moving into Jordan.

The events of the past week have turned one of the last islands of relative stability in the Middle East into quicksand. The United States may have lost anyone in Jordan with whom to negotiate an Arab-Israeli cease-fire, and the Israelis may have to turn more of their military attention to their eastern front.

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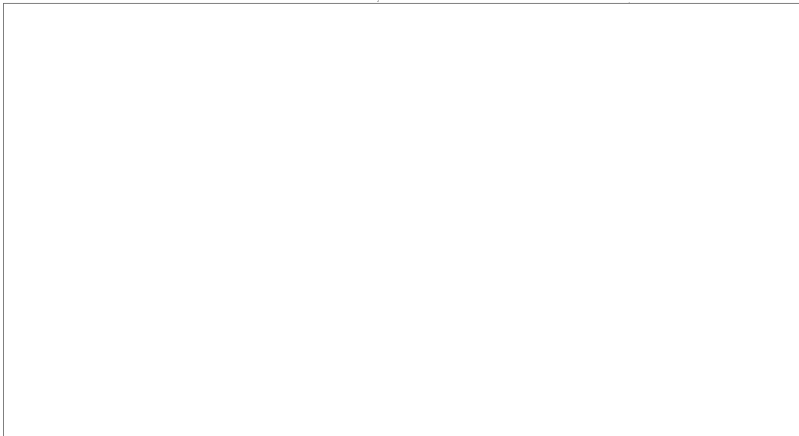
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ARAB STATES

Broadcasts from Cairo and Damascus accuse the US of instigating the Jordanian Army to smash the Palestine liberation movement and the fedayeen organizations. The chief source has been the Voice of Fatah in Cairo, which has also accused the government of Jordan of coordinating its repression of the fedayeen with "the Zionist forces" and of seeking "the help of the US Sixth Fleet." These accusations feed on the atmosphere in the Arab world brought about by controversy over the Phantom aircraft.

Cairo and Damascus broadcasts are widely heard in the Middle East, and the known close relationship between the US and King Husayn will make the present propaganda more credible to Arab listeners. Growing sympathy for the fedayeen cause and the general tension raised by the hardening Israeli military posture are additional factors that build popular hostility to Americans and to US-owned interests in the Arab states. Any serious incident involving Americans might therefore be the catalyst for releasing a violent outburst of anti-American acts.

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Pro-fedayeen demonstrations in Beirut could lead to a situation similar to that in Jordan. A group of fedayeen sympathizers, said to have been led by the PFLP, forced their way into the Jordanian Embassy yesterday and set it afire. Earlier in the day slogan-shouting demonstrators marched through the streets of the Lebanese capital demanding the overthrow of King Husayn and the establishment of a Jordanian republic. Other fedayeen groups, meanwhile, were said to have begun digging trenches around the refugee camps in Lebanon and emplacing weapons.



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NORTH VIETNAM

More southward movement in the infiltration pipeline has been detected. On 11 June, a major station in the northern end of the system radioed that five groups amounting to at least 1,800 men would be passing through during the next week. Only part of the message was intercepted; additional groups could have been listed in the missing section.

Two of the groups, about 650 men, are headed for the provinces of Quang Tri and Thua Thien in northern South Vietnam. Two others, 670 men, probably are en route either to the DMZ area or to southern Laos. Details on the fifth group are incomplete, although it appears to be part of the regiment previously reported to be moving south (see The President's Daily Brief of 10 and 4 June).

About 3,300 North Vietnamese troops have entered the pipeline so far this month-- a relatively large number for the rainy season.

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Cambodia: Current Situation



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CAMBODIA

Some younger politicians in the National Assembly and elsewhere may be given more prominent roles in the government, according to the Phnom Penh rumor mill. Such a move presumably would be designed to strengthen government support among younger people, who have been somewhat disappointed because fundamental reforms have not resulted from Sihanouk's ouster almost three months ago.

There is also a possibility that Foreign Minister Sambaour may be asked to give up his additional posts of minister of justice and minister of public health. Such a step presumably would be taken in the name of greater efficiency, but another reason may lurk behind Sambaour's recent statement that his effort to combat corruption in the judiciary was running into strong opposition. Sambaour's position in the government is becoming increasingly anomalous. Although he ranks number three behind Lon Nol and Matak, he has been increasingly critical of the performance and the policies of both leaders.

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Yesterday, Communist forces attacked the provincial capital of Kompong Speu for the first time. Although there is no information on the number of enemy troops involved, they may include elements of the North Vietnamese 101D Regiment, whose headquarters was located some ten miles south of the city on 9 June. A government spokesman in Phnom Penh claims that an armored unit will reinforce the defenders of Kompong Speu.

In Siem Reap, fighting has subsided, but Communist forces apparently are still entrenched in the Angkor Wat complex. Cambodian Army troops refuse to attack for fear of damaging the ruins. An army message indicates the government has taken relatively heavy losses in the fighting at Siem Reap.

Enemy action against the city of Kompong Thom yesterday was confined to harassing artillery fire. Communist forces near the key Mekong River town of Kompong Cham are increasingly active, however. Fighting has also flared again on the east bank of the Mekong near Tonle Bet, where Khmer Krom troops are maintaining a foothold.

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A potential threat to Phnom Penh has developed in an area some 20 miles east of the city. Communist forces supported by heavy rocket and mortar fire captured a government administration post in northeast Kandal Province on 11 June. Cambodian commanders report large numbers of enemy forces in the area. Elements of the Viet Cong's 271st Regiment may be involved in the fighting, and there is tenuous evidence that the headquarters of the North Vietnamese 88th Regiment has moved into an area some 12 miles south of Phnom Penh.

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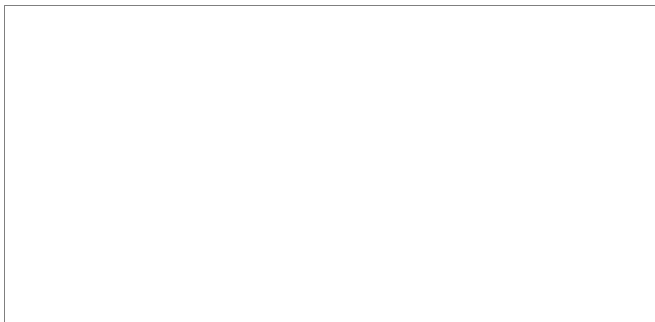
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USSR-ROMANIA

After long delay, the Soviet-Romanian friendship treaty will be renewed early next month. TASS has announced that Brezhnev will head a party-government delegation to Bucharest to sign the treaty.

The new accord will replace the 20-year mutual assistance pact which expired in 1968, but which nonetheless remains in effect under an automatic five-year renewal clause. Though the new treaty was initialed in 1968, its formal signing was twice postponed--first as a result of the Czechoslovak crisis, then as a consequence of Soviet irritation over President Nixon's visit to Bucharest last year. Final agreement to sign the treaty was probably reached during the visit of Romanian party leader Ceausescu to Moscow on 18-19 May.

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This represents a victory of sorts for Bucharest. The Romanians have almost certainly resisted Soviet pressures for closer ties and obligations to Moscow. The true measure of the Romanian "victory," however, depends on the concessions that Bucharest has made. For instance, the Soviets probably demanded and received Romanian agreement to closer economic and military cooperation. The Soviets may have insisted on holding Warsaw Pact maneuvers on Romanian territory, something Bucharest has resisted since 1962. Nevertheless, the Romanians can be counted on to pursue their own independent course.

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NOTES

South Vietnam: Local leaders of the Vietnamese Confederation of Labor (CVT)--the country's largest union--have called for a 24-hour general strike on Monday in support of striking dockworkers. The CVT leaders also announced that the strike might be extended "if the situation demands it." Some militant CVT leaders are pressing for a protracted work stoppage to dramatize their opposition to the government. CVT national chairman Tran Quoc Buu, a political supporter of President Thieu, probably will intervene to limit the strike. Last January, Buu succeeded in persuading local labor leaders to end a similar walkout after one day.

UN-Suez: In The President's Daily Brief of 26 May, we reported Secretary General Thant's efforts to provide security for UN observers along the Suez Canal. Thant's efforts have not been successful. Two more observation posts shut down this week, and Thant has warned the seven nations supplying observers that their representatives are in greater danger than at any previous time. He stated he could no longer guarantee their safety. Egypt's indifference toward the observers is not likely to be altered by any UN action.

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