

The President's Daily Brief

20 July 1971

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Hanoi has expressed deep misgivings over the implications for Vietnam of recent developments in Sino-US relations. A hard-hitting editorial by the party daily Nhan Dan serves notice on Peking and Washington that the North Vietnamese are prepared to go it alone if necessary and that relaxed tensions between the two powers will not influence Hanoi to compromise its position. (Page 1)

Initial Soviet comments on President Nixon's planned trip to China indicate Moscow's concern that Peking and Washington are seeking to gain leverage in their dealings with the USSR. (Page 2)



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The military coup in Sudan appears to signal another turn to the left in that country's volatile political scene. (Page 4)

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NORTH VIETNAM

Breaking a three-day silence on last week's developments in Sino-US relations, the North Vietnamese party daily Nhan Dan yesterday published an unusually hard-hitting editorial which sharply criticized "socialist" nations that respond to Washington overtures and fall in with the Nixon doctrine. Although it did not directly mention China or President Nixon's coming visit, the editorial inveighed against big powers that gang up to make small countries do their bidding.

Hanoi's statement asserted that the Vietnamese Communists would hold to their present course and would not be bound by pacts or arrangements concluded behind their backs. The editorial reiterated that the US could disengage from Vietnam only by coming to terms with the Vietnamese and no one else: "Nixon has been running...in search of a way out. But he has gone to the wrong place. The exit door has been opened (i.e., the seven-point proposal), yet he has tumbled into an impasse."

The statement implied that the Vietnamese are prepared to go it alone if necessary. It recalled that through history the Vietnamese by themselves have defeated successive foreign "imperialists," leaving unsaid that the Chinese have been prominent among them.

North Vietnam's strong reaction and blunt language probably reflect a reawakening in Hanoi of latent fears that Vietnamese Communist interests in Indochina could become enmeshed in big-power politics, as they were under less favorable circumstances for the Viet Minh in 1954. Hanoi may think that by forcefully and quickly weighing in, it can deflect any notions the Chinese have that Vietnamese Communist interests can be sacrificed to their own. Perhaps more importantly, Hanoi may also hope to make it clear that Washington cannot count on relaxed tensions with Peking to lead Hanoi into compromises it would otherwise not make. Moreover, Hanoi probably views last week's announcements in Washington and Peking as taking the play away from its own seven points and removing a good deal of the pressure it felt the Viet Cong proposal had generated on Washington.

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USSR-CHINA-US

Initial Soviet comment on President Nixon's planned visit to China has been sparse, reflecting Moscow's stunned surprise at a move which it presumably views as an attempt by both countries to gain leverage in their dealings with the USSR. The Soviets have not taken public note of the President's statement that the development is not directed against any other nation. We expect soon to see comments along lines already taken by some of Moscow's East European allies--that the planned visit has "anti-Soviet" overtones.

Some Soviet propaganda comments have sought to fan apprehensions in Hanoi that Washington and Peking are dealing at North Vietnamese expense. Moscow has suggested that Washington will use the development to avoid replying to the new Vietnamese Communist negotiating proposal, and has implied that a sellout of Hanoi's interests is in prospect.

Such attempts to score propaganda points at Peking's expense, however, cannot obscure a more fundamental apprehension about the trend of Sino-US relations. The visit to China this spring of the US table tennis team made a strong impression on the Kremlin, but Moscow apparently concluded that development of political contacts would be slow in coming. Moscow must now be concerned that the new Sino-US move portends an eventual US-Chinese collaboration detrimental to Moscow's interests.

The projected visit is unlikely to have any immediate dramatic impact on Moscow's position on such issues as arms limitations, Berlin, and the Sino-Soviet border dispute, which have a logic and history of their own. The Soviets may, however, feel a need to adopt a firmer stand on contentious issues in order to demonstrate that Sino-US tactics cannot force concessions from the USSR. Over the longer run, Moscow may begin to feel under increased pressure to be somewhat more forthcoming in its dealings with either or both of its rivals in order to forestall a US-Chinese accommodation.

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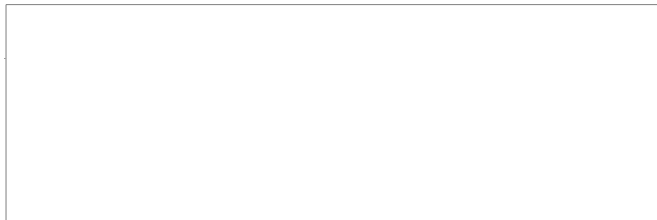
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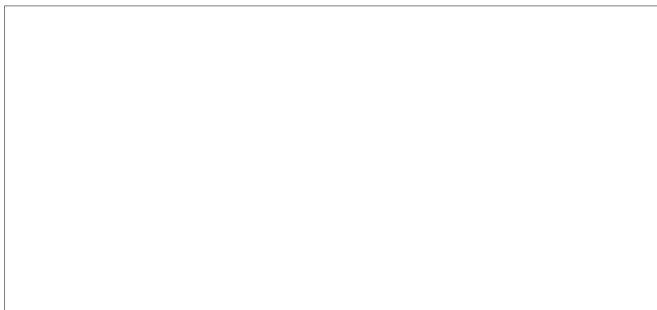
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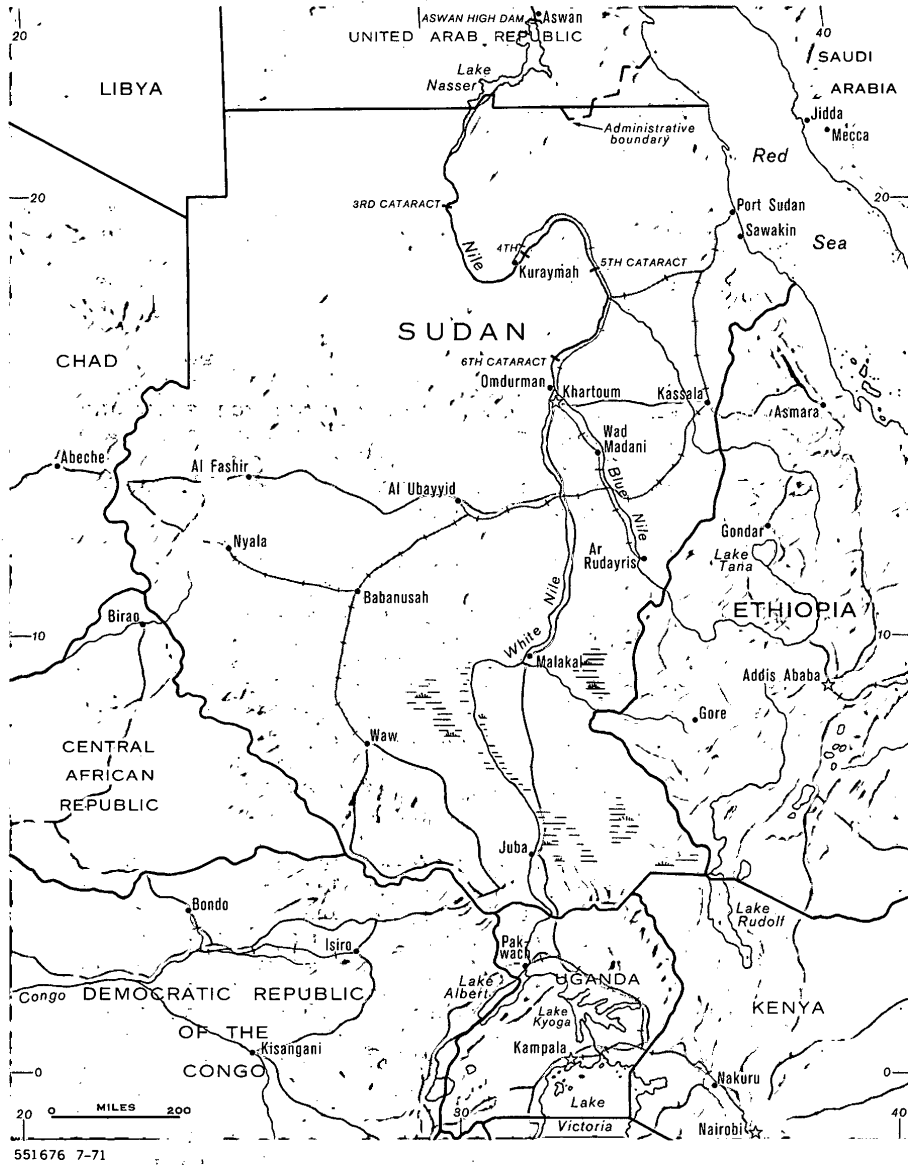
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**SUDAN**

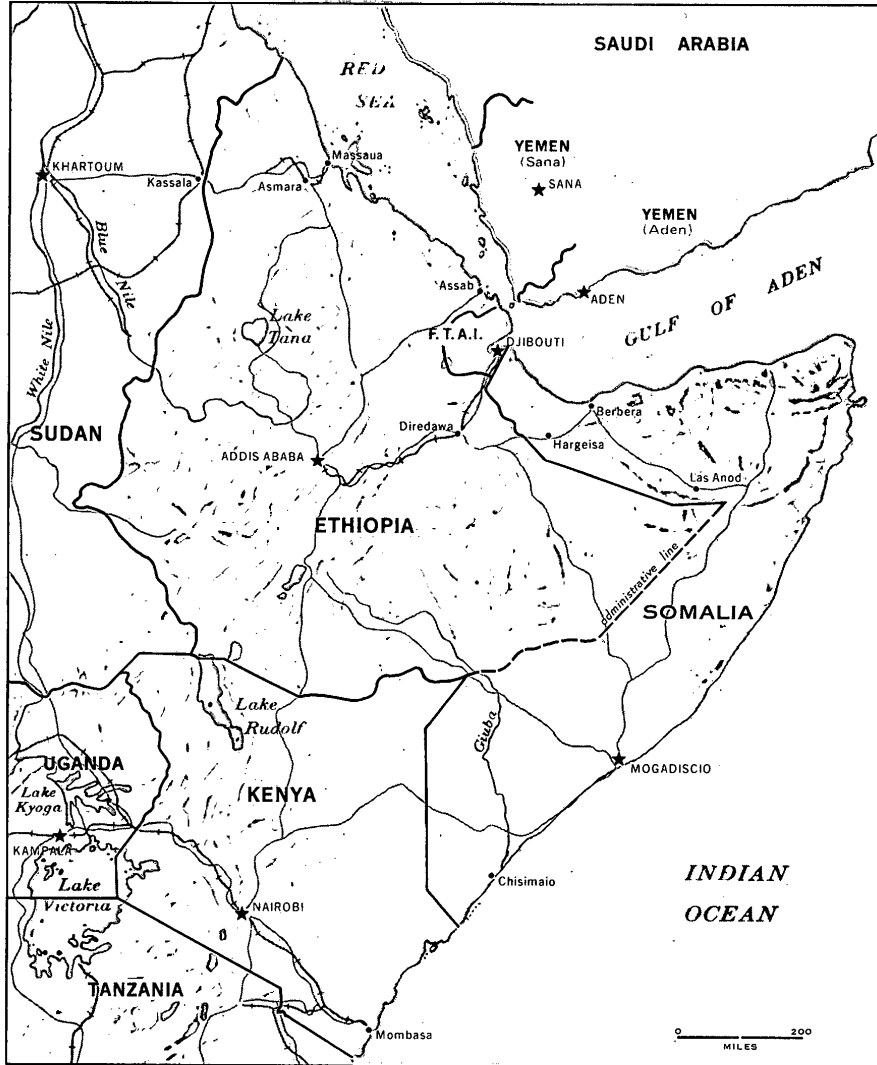
A group of military officers led by a former member of the ruling Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), Major Hashim al-Atta, has overthrown the government. Atta as president of a new ruling council announced over the Sudanese radio yesterday that the former regime had been ousted because it was dictatorial. He said that the coup leaders would cooperate with all democratic and nationalist elements and create a new government that would "liberate Sudan from an alliance between foreign and local capitalism." He spoke favorably of continued relations with the Soviet Union and indicated Sudan would strongly oppose Israel and support the cause of the Palestinian resistance.

The ousted regime of RCC Chairman Numayri had been in difficulty almost from the moment it took over in a May 1969 coup. Frictions between conservative military officers and left-leaning nationalists led to periodic purges of Communists. Atta himself, at one time an organizer for the Sudanese Communist Party, was purged from the government in late 1970, despite his record as a brilliant officer and talented technician.

In a bid to gain strong support for the new government, Atta promised to tackle some of Sudan's more plaguing problems. For example, he proposed eventual home rule for southern Sudan, thus holding out hope for an end to the costly military campaign to maintain Arab hegemony over the Negro tribes in that area.

Following Atta's radio address, the Sudan radio broadcast messages of support from political, social, and military groups in northern Sudan, and Radio Baghdad announced Iraqi recognition of the new government.

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NOTES

Lebanon-Fedayeen: The mauling taken by fedayeen units in Jordan last week should also make it easier to keep them in line in Lebanon. Early last week, the Lebanese Government--which presumably knew of the imminent Jordanian drive--warned that henceforth the army would fire on any local fedayeen who failed to obey regulations. [redacted]

[redacted] Beirut has ordered the guerrillas to stop at checkpoints, turn over their weapons upon demand, follow the orders of the southern military commander, and do nothing that would provoke the army. With their movement in disarray and with support waning elsewhere in the Arab world, the guerrillas have little choice but to comply.

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Communist China - Somalia: Peking will provide substantial new economic aid to Somalia, perhaps amounting to as much as \$110 million, under an agreement reached in Peking early last month. As much as half of the new credit may be devoted to building a 600-mile road between Mogadiscio and northern Somalia. The rest is to be used for agricultural and light industrial projects. Other Communist countries have given little economic aid to Mogadiscio since the leftist military coup of October 1969, and this latest deal would make China the most active Communist aid donor in Somalia.

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