



The President's Daily Brief

18 November 1971

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The reassumption of full power by Thailand's military leaders will have little effect on domestic or foreign policies. (Page 1)

Prime Minister Gandhi hopes that outside pressures on Islamabad will impel the Pakistanis toward an accommodation. (Page 2)

We discuss on Page 3 the impact of China's leadership struggle on the country's armed forces.

[Redacted] Japan [Redacted] 50X1
[Redacted] China [Redacted] (Page 4)

[Redacted] East Germans [Redacted] 50X1
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[Redacted] Panama [Redacted] 50X1
[Redacted] (Page 6)

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THAILAND

The reassertion of full power by Field Marshal Thanom and the Thai military establishment will not have a dramatic effect on the way Thailand is governed nor on the country's domestic or foreign policies. Nor do the changes appear to be a direct consequence of arguments over substantive policies, either domestic or foreign. There is no evidence that issues of direct interest to the US figured in the considerations that led to the government's moves.

The military had become increasingly exasperated over its difficulties with political opponents and particularly with a sometimes recalcitrant parliament, which was abolished with the annulment of the constitution that created it.

The suspension of the constitution and parliament will be popular throughout the military and will temporarily provide a sense of decisiveness and direction that has been absent at the top.

There seems little doubt that the military will bring off its reassumption of full power with a minimum of difficulty. It seems unlikely that any troop commanders will challenge the leadership, particularly since the immediate targets of the government are civilians. There will be considerable grumbling among the Bangkok citizenry, but any demonstrations should be easy to contain.

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INDIA-PAKISTAN

Prime Minister Gandhi has adopted a restrained posture since coming home last weekend from Europe and the US. She told Parliament she still hopes Western countries will be able to bring Pakistan to negotiate with imprisoned Eastern leader Mujibur Rahman. She told her own party's deputies that India must not act "in haste or anger" but instead should continue to explore all possible avenues to a solution.

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For the moment, Mrs. Gandhi apparently wants to see whether Western pressure on Pakistan will force Islamabad in the direction of accommodation. She is also counting on growing pressures upon Islamabad from the Mukti Bahini guerrillas, who with Indian support are making increased inroads in many areas of East Pakistan.

There have been signs that President Yahya may be attempting to test West Pakistani public attitudes toward the idea of releasing Mujibur Rahman. During the past two weeks the government has allowed West Pakistani opposition groups to call publicly for Mujib's release

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There remain, however, serious obstacles to any attempt by Yahya to deal with Mujib. Most of the West Pakistani public would probably acquiesce, but the reaction of military leaders is less predictable since many officers believe Mujib is responsible for the massacre last March of Pakistani troops and their families. Moreover, it is unlikely that either Mujib or Yahya could make significant concessions and still maintain their positions of leadership.

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COMMUNIST CHINA

The political role of the armed forces is being downplayed in the wake of the leadership upheaval. For years the armed forces were touted as a model for nationwide emulation. Since the fall of Defense Minister Lin Piao and other military leaders, however, radiobroadcasts have emphasized the necessity for the military to subordinate itself to "collective leadership" under the party. In addition, the army's performance in the many civil governing tasks it inherited as a result of the Cultural Revolution is getting less public attention. Finally, there have been a number of warnings to army units to observe strict discipline and obey all orders.

Peking is concerned lest the political upheaval spread outward to the regions, where military commanders have in the past been faced with local manifestations of the factionalism at the center. Beyond that, however, there have been indications since last summer that some among the leadership in Peking have been arguing for a reduction of the overwhelming influence of the army. Premier Chou En-lai has publicly expressed concern that China had assumed the image of bureaucratic military dictatorship. Privately, he has said that some institutional changes wrought during the Cultural Revolution are likely to be only temporary, implying that he foresees a further lessening of military influence. This may mean more civilians in top jobs. One veteran civilian cadre, the Hunan provincial party boss, has recently turned up in Peking, where his ranking just below the active politburo members in a recent leadership turnout suggests that he is slated for a high post.

The process of rectifying the present imbalance between military and civilian authority will not, however, occur overnight nor result in a broad purge of the present military administrators. The military was well represented among the large turnout of party and government figures in Peking last week, and on 13 November a former army political commissar was identified as the new head of an important ministry. He is the sixth military man in the past year to be named chief of a central ministry.

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USSR - EAST GERMANY

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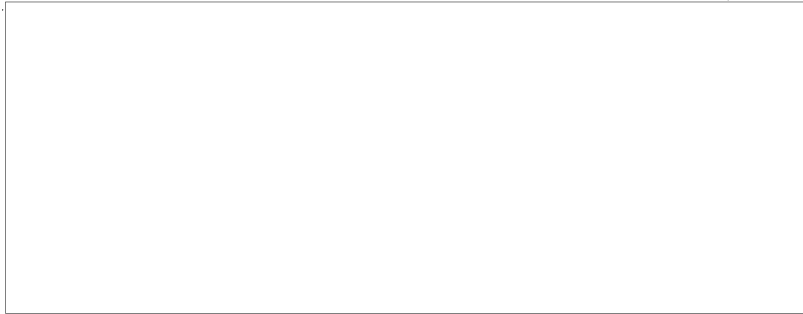
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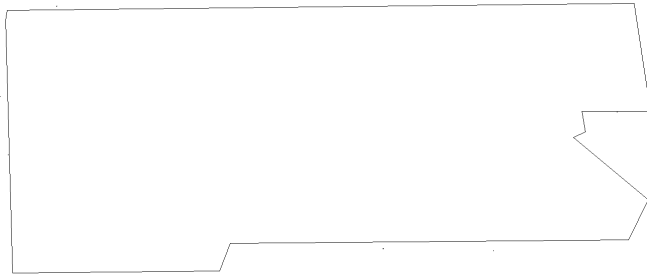
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PANAMA



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