

The President's Daily Brief

27 October 1972

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

27 October 1972

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Both President Thieu and the Communists are making preparations for a cease-fire in South Vietnam. (Page 1)

North Vietnam is preparing to move unusually large amounts of supplies to the south. (Page 3)

Laotian irregulars may not have time to force their way onto the Plaine des Jarres before the Communists reinforce and resupply. (Page 4)

Soviet [redacted] (Page 5)

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Japanese Foreign Minister Ohira made little progress toward a peace treaty during his visit to Moscow. (Page 6)

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We discuss the resignation of Egyptian War Minister Sadiq on Page 7.

Israel [redacted] (Page 8)

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President Allende is negotiating a truce with strike leaders in Chile. (Page 9)

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SOUTH VIETNAM

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President Thieu issued orders on Monday concerning preparations for a cease-fire. [redacted]

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[redacted]

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[redacted]

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[redacted]

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[redacted]

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[redacted]

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[redacted]

* * *

The Communists are also laying the groundwork for expanding their control during the earliest stages of a cease-fire. [redacted]

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[redacted]

The COSVN directives acknowledge that Communist assets are limited and that procedures will vary from place to place. Cadre have been told to get out of their mountain and forest strongholds and to get into the villages and hamlets. Weak cadres have been told to take on only as many tasks as they can effectively handle and to effectively supervise new recruits. All areas have been charged with assessing how many people could be mustered quickly for antigovernment demonstrations.

(continued)

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In early October, COSVN asked each province to assess prospects for Communist success in "seizing land, controlling people, and putting up flags." Other directives have ordered cadre to study experiences following the 1954 and 1962 Geneva Accords and to "learn from past mistakes."

Most of these reports have been vague on the timing of the cease-fire. Two recently captured documents, however, ordered preparations for a cease-fire on 28 October. The same date has appeared in intercepts. Given the time differential between South Vietnam and Paris, a cease-fire on the 28th would be very close to 30 October (our time).

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NORTH VIETNAM

The North Vietnamese are preparing to move unusually large quantities of military goods to the south as the new dry season resupply campaign gets under way. In the North Vietnamese panhandle, for



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On 23 October, a large-scale movement of vehicles into southern Laos was detected for the first time since the 1971-1972 dry season ended last spring.

The trucks arrived following several weeks of repair work on the rain-damaged roads into and through southern Laos. The present good condition of the Laotian roadnet and the availability of supplies in southern North Vietnam would enable an early start to the annual resupply effort in this area.

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LAOS

Vang Pao's task force on the southern tip of the Plaine des Jarres, recently augmented by 2,000 fresh troops, was hit yesterday by a strong North Vietnamese ground attack, supported by tanks and artillery. Preliminary reports indicate that most government units have abandoned their forward positions and may have suffered significant casualties.

The beginning of peace talks in Vientiane lends additional urgency to the government's efforts to re-establish a foothold on the Plaine. If Vang Pao's troops have been severely handled, it is unlikely that he will be able to organize another major push onto the Plaine before improving weather enables the Communists to re-inforce and resupply. An intercepted Communist message indicates that one North Vietnamese infiltration group is already heading for north Laos.

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USSR



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USSR-JAPAN

Foreign Minister Ohira's visit in Moscow earlier this week brought no progress toward a peace treaty. The stumbling block remains Japan's effort to regain the four northern islands lost to the USSR after World War II. Ohira has stated publicly that the USSR is not prepared to go beyond its earlier offer to return the two southernmost islands. Although the Soviets expressed anew their willingness to discuss the territorial issue, neither side appears in any hurry.

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EGYPT

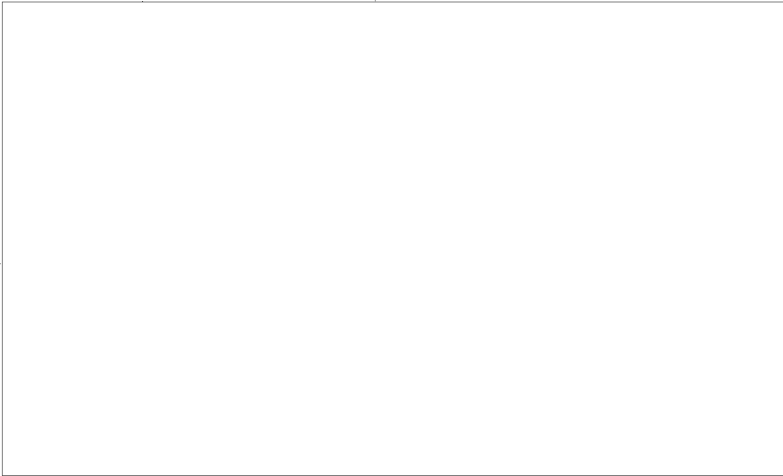
We consider the sudden resignation of War Minister Sadiq as another reflection of President Sadat's domestic troubles. Sadiq was believed by most Egyptians to be loyal to Sadat, and in addition to being a deputy premier, he held every key portfolio in the government concerning the armed forces and war production. Sadiq's feuds with other officials close to Sadat may well have figured in his resignation, but additional factors may also have come into play. For example, Sadiq quarreled frequently with Soviet officials, and he may have been an impediment to better relations with Moscow.

Whether Sadiq resigned voluntarily or was forced to do so, Sadat must have carefully weighed the consequences of alienating so formidable a figure. Sadiq undoubtedly has support in the armed forces, if only because of his outspoken attitude toward the Soviets.

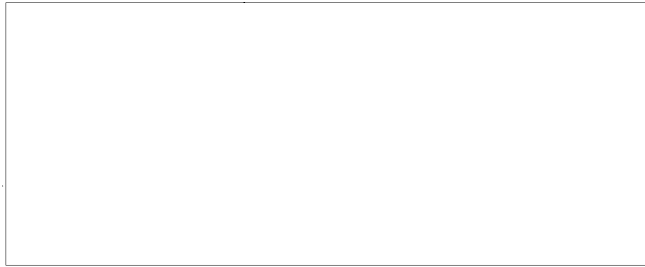
The new war minister and commander in chief of the armed forces is General Ahmad Ismail Ali, chief of Egypt's intelligence organization. Ali is one of Sadat's close advisers and has known him since they were classmates at military school. He is loyal to Sadat, and his intelligence ties will help them both to control Chief of Staff Shazli, a highly ambitious officer who may well resent not being given Sadiq's top posts.

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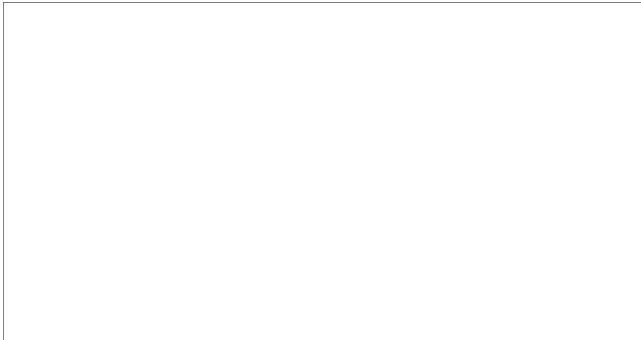
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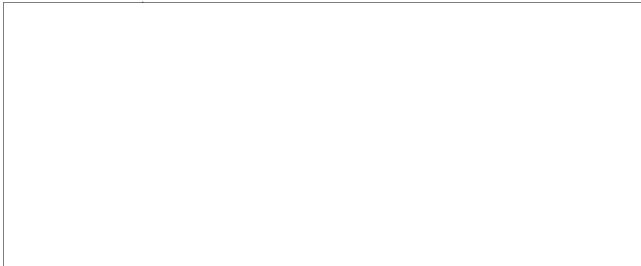
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CHILE

President Allende is negotiating a settlement with leaders of the waning protest movement. [redacted] the talks are snagged over the opposition's desire for guarantees to be built into the agreement.

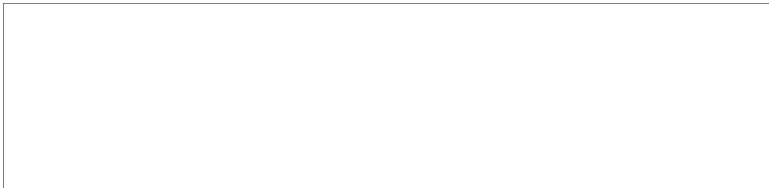
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We expect Allende to avoid punitive measures except against the most flagrant protesters. This would be consistent with his style of appearing to compromise. Actually, he has gained tactical advantages from his handling of the crisis. At least for now, he has strengthened his authority within his own fractious political coalition. Also, he has laid the groundwork for blaming his opposition for the damage to Chile's battered economy. Moreover, the prolonged shutdowns have allowed the government to take over a number of commercial, transport and industrial firms, some of which will be retained under government control.

A key to Allende's success was his confidence that he could rely on military support. The readiness of the armed services to carry out their responsibilities under the state of emergency reaffirms their commitment to support constitutional government. Although some officers were sympathetic to the protest movement, we have seen no evidence that any officers dragged their feet in taking measures to minimize its effects or in containing the attempts to incite violence.

Cabinet changes are expected soon and Allende is now in a stronger position to create the kind of cabinet he wants.

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