

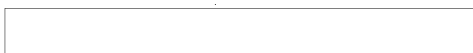
The President's Daily Brief

19 February 1973

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

19 February 1973

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Egyptian President Sadat's adviser for national security affairs will begin official talks in London today on a Middle East settlement and will come to Washington on Friday. (Page 1)

The South Vietnamese have recaptured the town of Sa Huynh in southern Quang Ngai Province but have not yet cleared the major north-south road in the western highlands. (Page 2)

Argentine

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(Page 3)

The Soviet naval task force that has been operating in the vicinity of Cuba since early December is now on a northerly course off the southeastern US and appears to be returning to the Northern Fleet area of the USSR. (Page 3)

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EGYPT

President Sadat's adviser for national security affairs, Hafiz Ismail, will begin official talks in London today on a Middle East settlement and will come to Washington on Friday.

Ismail's trip puts Egypt's self-proclaimed "diplomatic offensive" into high gear. He has just returned from Moscow, where he apparently had some success in establishing a basis for a more stable bilateral relationship.

For now, the Egyptians appear to be concentrating on the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. On Saturday, Foreign Minister Zayyat met with the Soviet ambassador, who is said to have invited him to Moscow. Both Zayyat and Ismail met this weekend with China's ambassador, and appear to be angling for an invitation to Peking. Ismail also met with the French ambassador on Saturday and there are press reports that he will go to Paris in March.

Sadat appears to be looking for a way to get around the stalemate that characterizes UN efforts in the Middle East. He considers that the US is his primary hope for a more forthcoming Israeli position. This latest "diplomatic offensive" is designed to put pressure on the US and Israel to move toward some kind of solution. The timing of Ismail's trip--right after King Husayn's visit to Washington and just before Prime Minister Golda Meir's trip to the US--suggests that Sadat wants his views to be considered before any new US commitments are made to Israel.

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SOUTH VIETNAM

The South Vietnamese recaptured the town of Sa Huynh in southern Quang Ngai Province on 17 February, but sharp fighting in the area continues. At last report, the Communists were still holding part of an artillery base near the town and some high ground to the west.

In the western highlands, the South Vietnamese have not yet cleared the major north-south road. Only six of a 44-truck convoy were able to get through a strategic pass on 17 February.

In the delta province of Kien Phong, five Communist officers identified as members of the policy office of COSVN were captured recently by the South Vietnamese.

The presence of "policy officers," combined with the high level of Viet Cong activity in the province, suggest that the Communists may be trying to establish a new base area along the Vietnam-Cambodia border.

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NOTES

Argentina: [redacted]

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Lanusse, who now believes that Peronist Hector Campora will be elected, has recently played heavily on the military's fear that the Peronists will return to power. He could well use a rise in political violence to gain the support of his generals for a proscriptioin of the Peronists or a postponement of the election.

Cuba-USSR: The Soviet naval task force that has been operating in the vicinity of Cuba since early December has left the Gulf of Mexico and is now on a northerly course off the southeastern US. It appears to be returning to the Northern Fleet area of the USSR. The group consists of a cruiser, a destroyer, a tanker, and an F-class submarine. The task force did not pay any farewell calls at Havana.

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