

The President's Daily Brief

6 April 1973



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS



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India apparently is attempting to persuade Bangladesh that the two countries must move to break the stalemate that is blocking a normalization of relations on the subcontinent. *(Page 3)*

France's new cabinet announced last evening reflects Pompidou's increased personal strength after the parliamentary election last month. *(Page 4)*

Many West Germans are increasingly skeptical that Brandt's Ostpolitik has done much to bridge the gap with East Germany. *(Page 5)*

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CAMBODIA



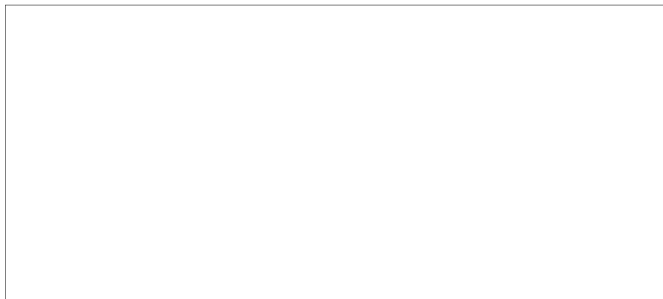
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VIETNAM

The North Vietnamese are continuing their construction on the Khe Sanh airfield in northern South Vietnam. [redacted]

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[redacted] about 2,800 feet of the main runway is usable. In addition, the North Vietnamese are reconstructing an abandoned parallel runway, and approximately 4,200 feet of this runway is ready for use.

The North Vietnamese apparently intend to use the airstrips for transports. The limited length of the runways and the rugged terrain make the fields unsuitable for jet fighters. [redacted]

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No North Vietnamese aircraft have been detected flying into Khe Sanh, but a recent intercept discloses plans to fly aircraft there on April 6 and 7 to pick up personnel and transport them to Hanoi.

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INDIA

P. N. Haksar, a special envoy from Prime Minister Gandhi, visited Dacca this week. His mission was to try to persuade the Bengalis to drop their insistence that Pakistan recognize Bangladesh prior to any prisoner exchanges or discussion of war crimes trials.

India apparently is attempting to persuade Bangladesh that the two countries must take the initiative to break the deadlock that is preventing a normalization of relations on the subcontinent. New Delhi believes such a normalization would remove a major obstacle to the improvement of its relations with Peking and Washington.

The Indians believe that unless Dacca adopts a more flexible position on the return of the 90,000 Pakistani POWs held in India, President Bhutto will find it extremely difficult to make any moves toward the release of most of several hundred thousand Pakistani-held Bengalis or formal recognition of Bangladesh.

The Indians are also concerned over charges that they are holding the Pakistani POWs illegally, and they are anxious to demonstrate that they are not responsible for the diplomatic stalemate. But they are still reluctant to jeopardize their good relations with Dacca by pushing the Bengalis too hard.

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FRANCE

The new cabinet announced last evening reflects Pompidou's increased personal strength after last month's parliamentary election. Over half of the 22 cabinet positions went to Gaullists; major posts are held by men close to the President. The Independent Republicans, the Gaullists' major partner, gained only one cabinet post--hardly commensurate with the strength they showed at the polls.

Giscard d'Estaing, the Independent Republicans' leader, retained the Ministry of Economics and Finance. Pompidou reportedly made the post conditional on his resignation as president of his party. Loss of this post may damage Giscard's chances in the presidential race in 1976.

The major new faces are Michel Jobert as Foreign Minister and Robert Galley as Defense Minister. As former head of the presidential staff, Jobert is one of Pompidou's closest working associates. He is a foreign affairs specialist but is untested in the political arena. Galley is also primarily a technician who has been close to the President.

Conspicuous by his absence is Jean Lecanuet, head of the centrist faction that cooperated with the government in the second round of the elections. Lecanuet declined a cabinet post, possibly waiting to see if Pompidou acts on the promised reforms, or to see if Premier Messmer is replaced soon.

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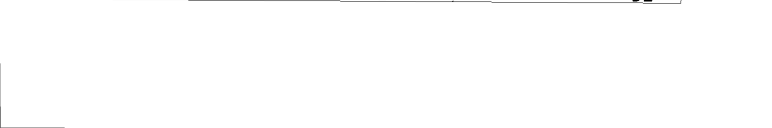
NOTES

West Germany: The West German press is widely critical of a government report on the state of relations with East Germany, charging that it glosses over the lack of progress in many fields. The press treatment reflects the growing skepticism of many West Germans that Brandt's Ostpolitik has done much to bridge the gap with East Germany. Although ratification of the inter-German treaty next month remains assured, public disenchantment with Ostpolitik could pose a problem for Brandt with party conservatives as well as his Free Democratic coalition partners. The failure of the opposition Christian Democrats to pull themselves together since their decisive defeat last November, however, diminishes the immediate threat to Brandt.

International Wheat: The International Wheat Council, an association of major wheat producing and importing countries, has estimated that world wheat production in 1972/73 will be five percent below the previous year's record of 319 million tons. The Council predicts that stocks of wheat held by the major exporters as of August 1 this year will be the smallest in 20 years. Major exporters have indicated that they will not permit stocks to fall any lower. Thus, import demand in the year ending June 30, 1974 will have to be met from 1973/74 production.

China-US: Continental Oil Company has been asked to participate in the Canton Trade Fair that starts on April 15. This is the first known invitation to a US oil firm to take part in the fair. The Chinese have also contacted other US firms in an apparent desire to acquire US technology.

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