



*The President's Daily Brief*

*5 May 1973*

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*FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY*

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The latest cease-fire in Lebanon seems to be holding as negotiations begin on new arrangements for the fedayeen presence. (Page 1)

Egypt and Syria, with the help of other Arab states, are increasing their military preparedness.

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Arab states are considering several possible courses of action during the coming UN Security Council debate on the Middle East. These are outlined on Page 4.

With the rainy season soon to slow movement on the Ho Chi Minh trail, time is running against any Communist plan for a major offensive in South Vietnam this spring. (Page 5)

The meeting on Thursday between Argentine president-elect Campora and the ruling military junta failed to resolve any outstanding issues. (Page 6)

Urban guerrillas have kidnaped the US consul general in Guadalajara. (Page 7)

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**LEBANON-FEDAYEEN**

The latest cease-fire appears to be holding up well as negotiations begin on new arrangements regarding the fedayeen presence in Lebanon.

The guerrillas' tough pose eased when the army showed it was determined to restore order and the expected support to the fedayeen from other Arab states did not materialize. Small numbers of Syrian-based guerrillas did cross the border, but may already have returned to Syria.

President Franjiah plans to insist on further restrictions on the guerrillas' freedom of action. The Lebanese believe they are in a strong position and can exact concessions. The government expects that mediation efforts by the other Arabs should be generally helpful. Representatives from Egypt, Iraq, and Morocco arrived in Beirut yesterday.

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ARAB STATES [redacted]

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Egypt and Syria are increasing their military preparedness with the help of other Arab states.

The Egyptian Air Force has recalled to active duty [redacted] reserve personnel [redacted]

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[redacted] Such recalls have occurred in the past during periods of heightened tension. The Egyptian Air Force has been on a high state of alert

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[redacted] leaves were canceled [redacted]

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Morocco reportedly has sent at least two more trainloads of military equipment to Algeria for shipment to Syria. Some 600 Moroccan troops may already have arrived.

[redacted]

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[redacted] the Sudanese Government has agreed to send 1,400 troops to Syria as a token demonstration of Sudanese solidarity with the Arab cause.

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*Meetings of Arab officials over the past several months--including a recent conference of the Arab Defense League--may have set the stage for these moves. There still is no conclusive evidence, however, that the Arabs have decided on specific military operations or have reached a decision to undertake hostilities against Israel at a particular time.*

\* \* \*

[redacted]

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MIDDLE EAST

During the UN Security Council's coming debate on the Middle East, the Arabs are thinking of pursuing any or all of the following courses:

--Request that Resolution 242, the basis for UN efforts to work out a Middle East settlement, be interpreted to require Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territories.

--Propose resolutions condemning the Israelis for failure to respond to the initiatives of special UN envoy Jarring, and for colonizing the occupied territories.

--Call on UN members to withhold military assistance from Israel.

--Attempt to create new UN mediatory mechanisms. This could take the form of a mandate for the secretary-general to plan a Middle East peace conference or to set up a four-member mediatory team or an ad hoc committee to replace Jarring.

*Given the current composition of the Security Council, the Arabs probably could muster enough votes to pass these measures unless the US vetoes them. Although the Arabs might face some difficulty in reinterpreting the basic authorization for UN efforts on a Middle East settlement, they would have more than the necessary nine votes for condemnation of Israel or for new mediatory mechanisms.*

*In any case, the session will provide the Arabs with a forum to bring pressure on the US to take new initiatives and could provide them with a temporary alternative to resuming military hostilities.*

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SOUTH VIETNAM

Time is running against the Communists if they were planning to use their newly infiltrated men and materiel for a major offensive this spring. The rainy season will begin to slow movement on the Ho Chi Minh trail shortly, and vital combat support from back-country bases in many areas will be badly impeded.

The traditional indicators of preparations for a big campaign--forward deployments, stepped-up communications, intense reconnaissance--are almost totally lacking at present. In the north, the Communists have cut back their combat punch by withdrawing one full division and elements of two others. Drier weather prevails along the coast in the north for the next three months, however, and major combat would be more possible there than elsewhere.

There are reports claiming that during May the Communists will try to intensify the local nibbling attacks they have been conducting since the cease-fire. But throughout the summer and the rainy period at least, the Communists will more likely put their major military effort into the rebuilding, realignment, and consolidation of main forces, the logistic system, and the specialized sapper and artillery units.

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[redacted] the enemy [redacted] believes himself still too weak to make major gains now in a maximum new military effort.

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[redacted] the cease-fire agreement gains time for the Communists to rally and build their forces in order to defeat the government militarily or politically.

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[redacted]

By emphasizing a rebuilding program and employing economy-of-force tactics stressing artillery harassment and small-scale raids, the Communists probably believe they can defend most of what they now control and have a much improved military option by next fall.

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ARGENTINA

The meeting about terrorism on Thursday between president-elect Campora and the ruling military junta failed to resolve any of the issues that divide them. [redacted] little was accomplished other than a rehash of well-known basic differences.

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The Peronists contend that terrorism will subside once a popular government is inaugurated on May 25. The military disagree, and they can point to statements from Trotskyists that they will continue to attack the armed forces. The army and navy--the primary targets of recent attacks--insist that they retain control of the counter-terrorism effort. Campora has said only that internal security will be the responsibility of the police, not the military.

*Campora apparently still believes that, after his strong showing at the polls, the military will not risk civil war by moving to block his accession to power.*

*Most senior officers do believe that they are in no position to act against the Peronists at the present time. This view could change, however, if additional terrorist attacks are made on the armed forces and Campora continues to evade making commitments to the military. Hardliners led by General Sanchez de Bustamente, the Buenos Aires corps commander, might then decide to risk a move to block Campora.*

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NOTE

Mexico-US: Last night urban guerrillas kidnaped US Consul General Leonhardy in Guadalajara and demanded as ransom the release of 30 "political prisoners" held in Mexico. The Mexican police believe that the terrorist group--identified as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of the People--is associated with a guerrilla band that normally operates in the mountains near Acapulco, some 250 miles to the southeast. If the Mexican Government follows its practice in past kidnaping cases, it will meet practically any demand to gain Leonhardy's release.

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