



The President's Daily Brief

23 July 1973

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Qadhafi and Sadat to make major speeches today which may clarify situation in Libya and status of proposed merger. (Page 1)

EC foreign ministers meeting in Copenhagen this morning to discuss improving their experiment in coordinating foreign policies. (Page 3)

Peron may be unopposed in September 23 elections. (Page 4)

Notes on [redacted] a Soviet Mars probe, the French nuclear test, [redacted] appear on Page 5.

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LIBYA-EGYPT

Presidents Qadhafi and Sadat are scheduled to make major speeches today which may clarify the situation in Libya and the status of the proposed union. In the meantime, the Libyan Government has come to a virtual standstill, and there are no signs that differences over the union have been resolved.

Qadhafi's resignation has provoked complete confusion throughout Libya. The ten other members of the ruling Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) have refused to accept his resignation and have threatened to resign en masse unless he returns to office. None of the council members appears to have taken responsibility for overseeing the government in his absence and, according to the official news agency, the cabinet has submitted a collective resignation as an expression of support for Qadhafi's leadership. The commercial section of Tripoli has closed down, and vital public services including the international airport have apparently been abandoned by many workers, who presumably have joined popular demonstrations calling for Qadhafi's return. Military police units have been placed on alert but so far there have been no signs of a breakdown in public order.

Qadhafi is still reported to be in the Benghazi area, where marchers returning from Egypt are staging a sit-in until he withdraws his resignation. The Libyan leader apparently promised the crowds that he would discuss his resignation in the address today, but reportedly refused demands that he immediately announce "his return from retirement."

Qadhafi's next move will almost certainly be determined by his appraisal of the chances for achieving his own brand of union with Egypt. He may hope that by prolonging the drama of the last several days he can pressure the Egyptians to make some important concessions on the union issue.

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Sadat's publication on Friday of Qadhafi's resignation statement and his reception of a small Libyan delegation on Saturday, which presented him with a document demanding unity, provided a face-saving way around the embarrassment that confronted each leader as a result of the "march on Cairo." The statement issued following the meeting with Sadat affirmed the commitment of both sides to an official proclamation of union, as scheduled, on September 1.

These gestures have not resolved differences over the form union will take. Consultations between Sadat and some members of the RCC took place yesterday in Cairo. There are no signs, however, that the stalemate over merger has been broken. Despite the rhetoric praising unity, there has been no indication that Sadat is ready to back down on his demands for a gradual approach. He is prepared, and has been throughout the discussions over the past month, to proclaim some form of merger on September 1, but it is doubtful that either the consultations, the unity procession, or Qadhafi's resignation has persuaded him that Libya's continuing demand for complete and immediate merger is in Egypt's interest.

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EC-US

The nine EC foreign ministers are meeting in Copenhagen this morning, beginning their regular semi-annual meeting by considering how to improve their three-year-old experiment in coordinating foreign policies. They are also expected to discuss the US proposal for a new declaration of Atlantic principles. In response to French insistence on separating political from economic discussions, the ministers will then fly to Brussels to meet this evening and tomorrow as the EC Council.

Foreign policy coordination so far has had some limited success, only in part through the mechanism of convening the foreign ministers on political topics every six months and top foreign ministry officials every three months. The concept of cooperation has helped in developing positions for CSCE and has encouraged many EC ambassadors, particularly at the UN, to work more closely together. Common positions have not emerged on such hot issues as the Middle East, however, and members find the lack of a political secretariat an increasing handicap.

The ministers will be trying to clarify recent hints of French willingness to strengthen the mechanism. A high Quai official says that Paris is thinking of a "two-pillar" framework for European cooperation: a "federation" under the Treaty of Rome, to handle that treaty's economic subjects; and a "confederation" to treat broad political and defense issues. Committees would link the "pillars" and a "European union" would cap them.

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ARGENTINA

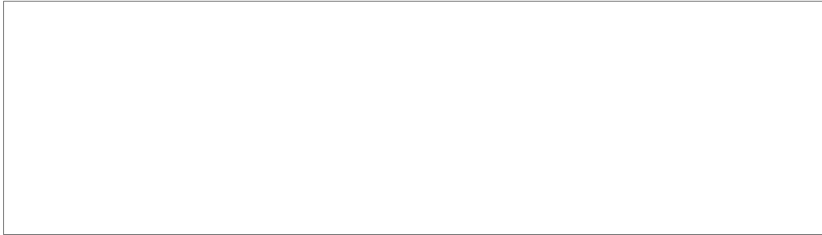
Peron may be unopposed in the presidential elections scheduled for September 23. Radical Party leader Balbin seems increasingly likely to become Peron's running mate on a "national unity" ticket, although arrangements probably will not be concluded until the Radicals convene a party congress in another week or so.

Another of the contenders in the elections of last March has said he will not run. A third apparently is thinking the same way. If no other candidates enter the field, the formality of an election can be avoided by having Congress declare the single slate elected.

Peron probably prefers this more expeditious method. The military is cool to anything that smacks of an uncontested election or plebiscite, but in present circumstances will not try to upset the Peron bandwagon.

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NOTES



USSR: Mars 4, the Soviet space probe launched on Saturday, appears to be functioning normally and is scheduled to arrive in the vicinity of the planet next February. Proper conditions for launches to Mars will exist through August, and additional probes are expected.

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France:



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Despite vigorous protests from a number of South Pacific countries, the French probably will conduct two or three additional low-yield atmospheric tests at the Mururoa site this year. In 1972, they detonated three low-yield devices and conducted one safety experiment at this site.

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Hijacking: Israel and Saudi Arabia each claim to have information that the hijackers of the Japan Air Lines plane will crash it in a kamikaze-style raid after the aircraft takes off from Dubai.

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