

The President's Daily Brief

24 October 1973

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~~*Top Secret*~~

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

24 October 1973

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Israel and Egypt have agreed to the new cease-fire resolution. Israeli forces were inside Suez city as the cease-fire was to take effect, following a day of heavy fighting in the area. (Page 1)

Saudi Arabian officials would like to minimize the damage the current crisis may do to US-Saudi relations, but they may consider applying additional pressures on the US if there is no Israeli withdrawal from some Arab lands. (Page 3)

Saudi Arabia and Kuwait [redacted]

(Page 4)

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Ethiopia has broken relations with Israel, the ninth and most important black African state to do so since the war started. (Page 5)

Lon Nol has formally reactivated the Cambodian legislature amid indications that while the cabinet he announced on Sunday may be more competent, it is unlikely to be any more popular than its predecessor. Sihanouk has also made some changes in his "government." (Page 6)

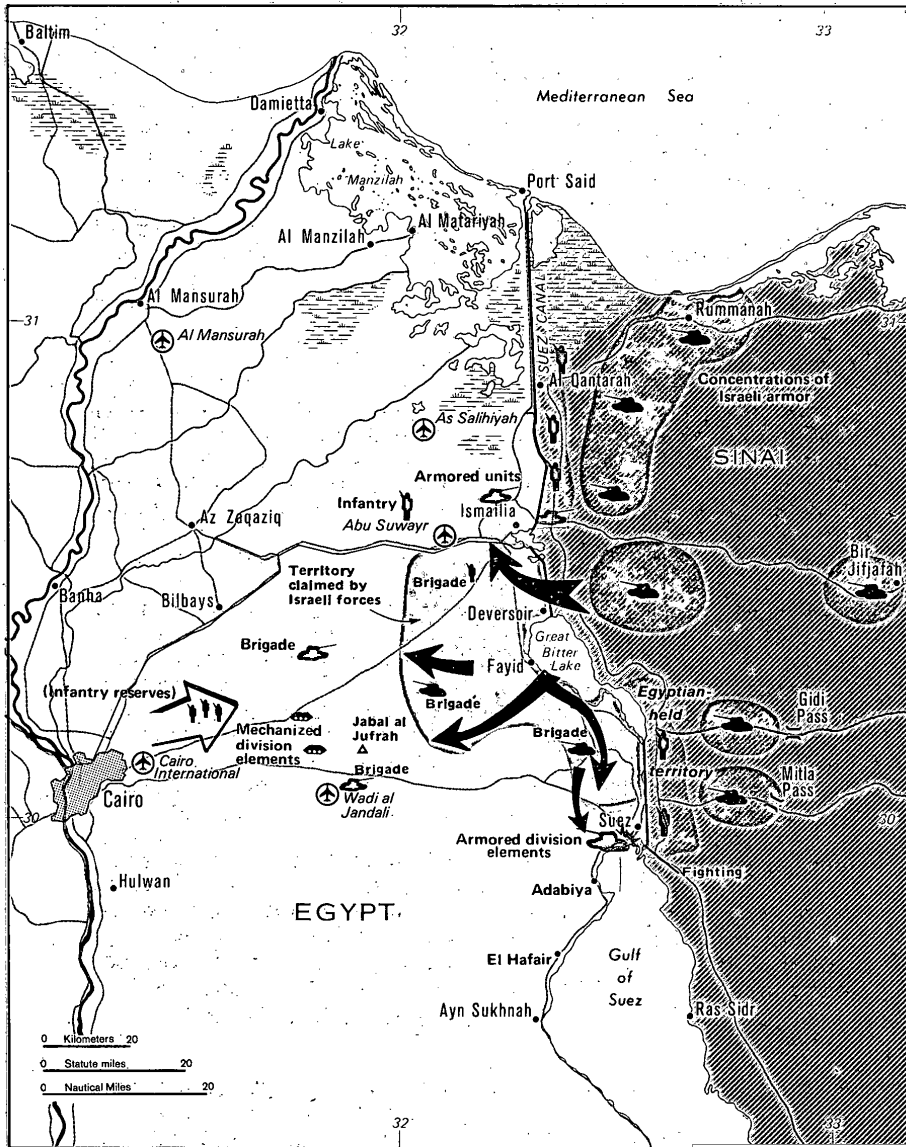
The new government in Turkey, if headed by Bulent Ecevit, may lift the ban on opium production. (Page 7)

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Notes on [redacted] the World Peace Congress in Moscow, North Vietnamese troop infiltration into the South, and the latest Sino - North Vietnamese agreements appear on Page 8.

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Suez Canal Zone



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ARAB STATES - ISRAEL

Israel and Egypt have agreed to a new cease-fire, which was to have taken effect at one o'clock this morning. Hostile military activity decreased sharply, although some skirmishing was reported in the area of Suez city and along the east bank of the canal after the cease-fire was to have taken effect.

The Security Council resolution approved last night reaffirms the cease-fire call of last Monday and urges all parties to return to the positions they occupied at the time that truce became effective. The new resolution also requests the Secretary General to dispatch UN observers to supervise the cease-fire along the Egyptian front.

Three UN observer teams were to be sent to the west bank of the Suez Canal, and Israeli Defense Minister Dayan was scheduled to meet last night with a UN representative to discuss the placement of observers along the east bank. Some UN teams have remained on the Syrian front throughout the war and should continue reporting without additional instructions. Damascus has finally announced its acceptance of the initial cease-fire resolution.

On the Egyptian front yesterday, heavy fighting occurred near Suez as the Israelis continued to push south. By late evening, an Israeli armored column had reached Adabiya on the Gulf of Suez. Later reports indicate that Israeli units were advancing on Suez city, and by the time the cease-fire was to go into effect lead elements were engaging Egyptians in the naval base inside the city.

[Redacted]

If the city were to fall, Egyptian forces in the southern sector of the Sinai would be cut off from their supply lines and the Israelis could effectively block their return from the east bank.

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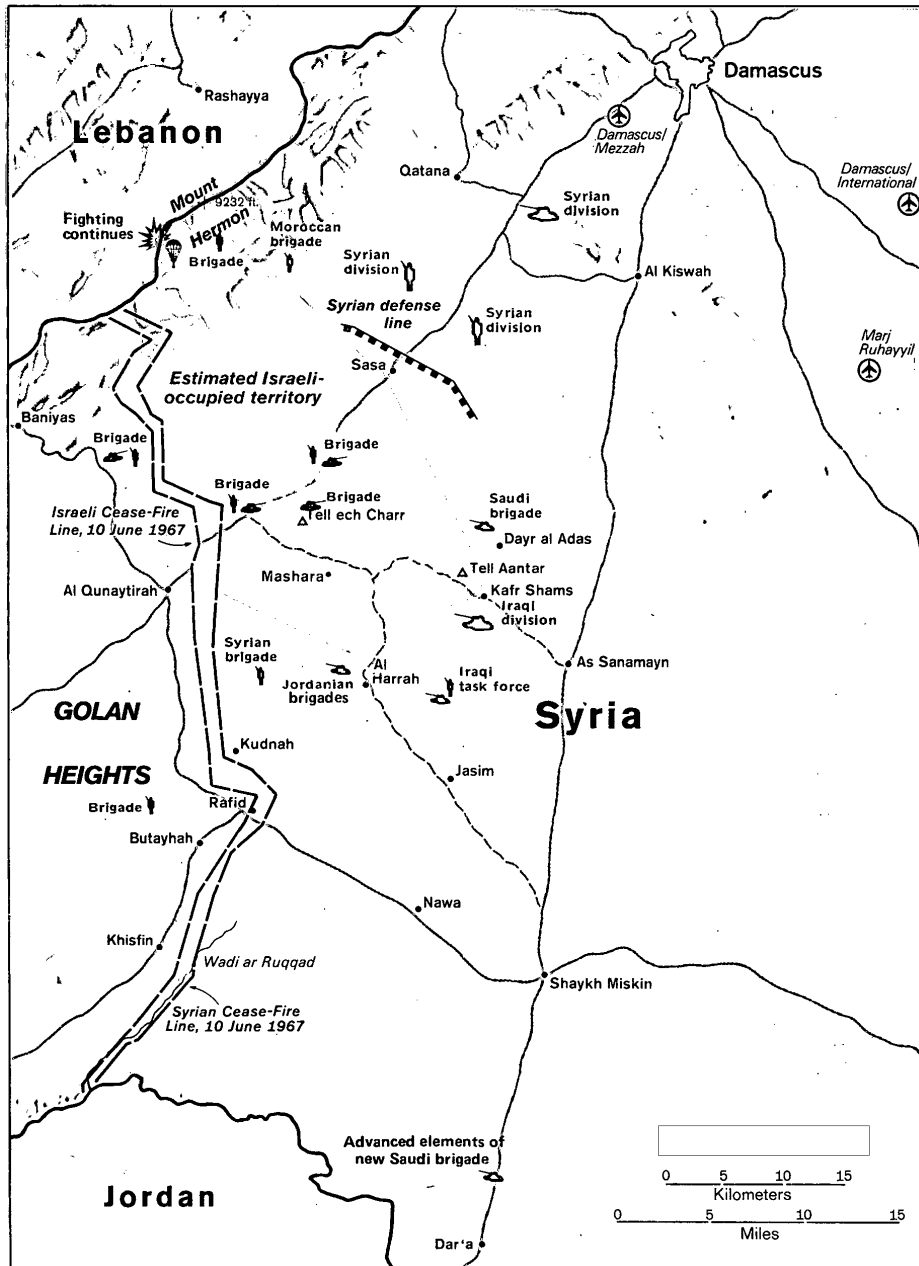
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The Syrian Front



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Fighting on the Syrian front yesterday was limited to air strikes and artillery duels in the Mount Hermon area. Damascus claimed to have shot down 11 Israeli aircraft, while Tel Aviv said it destroyed 10 Syrian fighters. Early this morning, the Israelis were shelling the ports of Latakia and Baniyas from offshore. [redacted]

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[redacted] Damascus claimed that one Israeli vessel was sunk.

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[redacted]

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In a speech to the Knesset yesterday, Prime Minister Meir emphasized that Israel had accepted the cease-fire on Monday from a position of strength. She noted that Israeli forces on the west bank of the Suez Canal constitute a powerful base from which to launch future operations if they become necessary. Mrs. Meir stressed again the necessity for direct negotiations between Israel and the Arabs, adding that there would be "no Israeli withdrawal until a binding peace settlement" is achieved.

Cairo claimed that the Meir speech proved Israel's responsibility for the cease-fire violations, and asserted that the US, as a sponsor of the cease-fire resolution, has a special responsibility for curbing Israel.

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SAUDI ARABIA - US

The US Embassy in Jidda reports that senior Saudi officials want to minimize the damage the present crisis may do to US-Saudi relations, and that they view a cease-fire as an important positive step. If a cease-fire is not followed by an Israeli withdrawal from at least some Arab lands, or if renewed fighting results in major Arab reversals, the Saudis may consider applying more pressure on the US.

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[redacted] told the embassy that King Faysal may have in mind a number of additional sanctions, and that the nationalization of ARAMCO is probably high on the list. Other measures could include further cuts in oil production, termination of US military overflights, and withdrawal of Saudi funds from the US.

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ARAB MONETARY ACTIVITY

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AFRICA-ISRAEL

Ethiopia yesterday became the ninth and most important black African country to sever relations with Israel since the beginning of the war in the Middle East. Ethiopia had long maintained strong ties with Israel, which has been second only to the US as a source of technical and military assistance. The Emperor apparently came to believe, however, that he could no longer resist pressures from both the Arab and African camps.

Haile Selassie's decision may influence other important African leaders who are still on the fence, particularly Nigeria's General Gowon, the current head of the OAU. Gowon has been under intense pressure from within his own government and from Arab states to break with Israel. Continued fighting and Israeli diplomatic rigidity on a settlement could convince him to follow Ethiopia's example.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

CAMBODIA

President Lon Nol formally informed the legislature yesterday that the High Political Council would continue as the country's ruling executive. The President also authorized the legislature--which has been in suspension for the past six months--to resume an active governmental role. Although the other three members of the council were opposed in varying degrees to the legislature's recall, Lon Nol evidently won them over by giving posts to their political supporters in the new cabinet announced on October 21.

The new cabinet broadens the government's support; for the first time in over a year it includes representatives from the opposition Republican Party. The US Embassy suggests that the appointment of reasonably competent vice prime ministers may lead to some improvement in the government's performance, but that it is unlikely to be any more popular than its predecessor.

The "new" look in Phnom Penh probably will not help to bridge the growing gap between the military establishment and the civilian leadership, however. Such key officers as Cambodian Army commander in chief General Fernandez recently have been contending again that the army is being "neglected" and that the war effort is being undercut as a result of civilian politicking.

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Meanwhile, Prince Sihanouk has announced in Peking that all cabinet posts within his "government"--except the foreign ministry--will be turned over to the leaders of the "internal resistance." Most of the individuals who will lose their cabinet positions are members of the Prince's entourage.

Sihanouk indicated that this move is aimed at giving more ammunition to his backers at the UN, who are seeking to disprove charges that the Sihanouk government is a government-in-exile. Sihanouk did not name the new cabinet members, but a cabinet chosen from among insurgent leaders in the field probably will be less responsive to the Prince.

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TURKEY

The new government that will take office shortly after the newly elected representatives to the National Assembly are sworn in today could lift the ban on opium production. Republican People's Party leader Ecevit, who may form a coalition government with the right-wing National Salvation Party, reportedly believes US compensation is inadequate, and has indicated that he hopes to have the ban lifted by the end of the year.

The two parties also have some other economic and foreign policy views in common, but they represent opposite sides in Turkey's basic schism between Westernization and Islamic traditionalism. The coalition will be inherently fragile and will have a hard time pushing legislation through parliament.

Suleyman Demirel, the leader of the Justice Party, which lost about a fourth of its seats in the assembly, says his party will play the role of a "responsible opposition." Demirel is not anxious to bring down the next government and force early elections, preferring to give the Republicans time to make mistakes and his own party time to reorganize.

Most junior army officers reportedly are happy with Ecevit's victory, believing that he will develop a more self-reliant and independent foreign policy for Turkey. Thus far, there has been no reaction from the senior officers who consider themselves the guardians of Ataturk's modernizing reforms.

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NOTES

USSR:

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World Peace Congress: The opening session of the World Peace Congress in Moscow tomorrow will probably hear an address by Brezhnev. Although Moscow is in firm control of the Congress, one "non-socialist" attendee, Sean McBride of Amnesty International, has raised the issue of Soviet treatment of dissidents at preliminary work sessions and may do so at the Congress itself.

Vietnam: Hanoi will continue to dispatch regular combat infiltration groups at the rate of "one group a day," according to an intercept from the North Vietnamese panhandle. About 18,000 troops have set out since the beginning of September. Of these, 4,000 are headed for northern South Vietnam; the remainder are earmarked for duty along the logistics system in Laos, Cambodia, and western South Vietnam.

China - North Vietnam: A trade agreement and a protocol on Chinese economic aid were signed late last week, completing negotiations for aid and trade for next year. Such agreements have been concluded annually since 1970, and have been heavily weighted on the side of military aid. This presumably is no longer the case, although the announcement was not specific.

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