



The President's Daily Brief

22 November 1973

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~~*Top Secret*~~

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

22 November 1973

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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The Egyptians are talking with increasing harshness about what they term Israeli obstructionism in the cease-fire talks [redacted]

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[redacted] The senior UN representative in Damascus reports that the Syrians are moving more troops into an area along the northern Syrian cease-fire line. (Page 1)

25X1

[redacted]

Argentina's President Peron is seriously ill and may not survive. (Page 4)

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In Cambodia, Communist forces continue to hold a four-mile stretch of Route 4 and appear to be preparing for an all-out attack on the provincial capital of Takeo. Floods have temporarily halted military activity in the Phnom Penh area. (Page 5)

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[redacted]

The Austrian Government is planning shortly to replace the Schoenau transit center for emigrating Soviet Jews with new facilities just south of Vienna. (Page 7)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

ARAB STATES - ISRAEL

The Egyptian front remained quiet yesterday, and only sporadic artillery fire was reported on the Syrian front. Egyptian General Gamasy has told the UN Emergency Force commander, General Siilasvuo, that the prisoner exchange will be completed tomorrow, a delay of 24 hours.

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[redacted] Cairo will break off talks at Kilometer 101 after today's meeting if Tel Aviv continues its refusal to discuss the October 22 cease-fire lines. The official explained that Egypt regards the six-point agreement as a comprehensive package, not a series of proposals that can be selectively implemented.

Little information is available on the meeting of November 19--the only one that has considered the question of the October 22 lines--beyond the fact that the two sides exchanged wide-ranging withdrawal proposals. The Egyptians clearly hope for rapid progress toward disengaging forces, and the Israelis would like to slow the process. The Egyptians may anticipate a serious deadlock that they feel they would not be able to resolve without US help.

The senior UN representative in Damascus has reported that the Syrians are moving more troops into an area along the northern Syrian cease-fire line. He was apparently unable to determine the size or nature of the movement. He stated, however, that the Syrians no longer want any UN patrols stationed in the area and that the Syrian chief of staff "probably will not permit" continued UN mobile patrols.

[redacted]

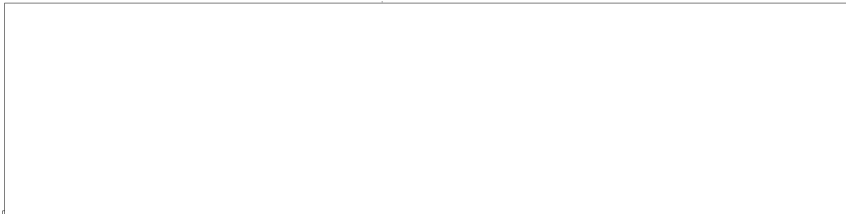
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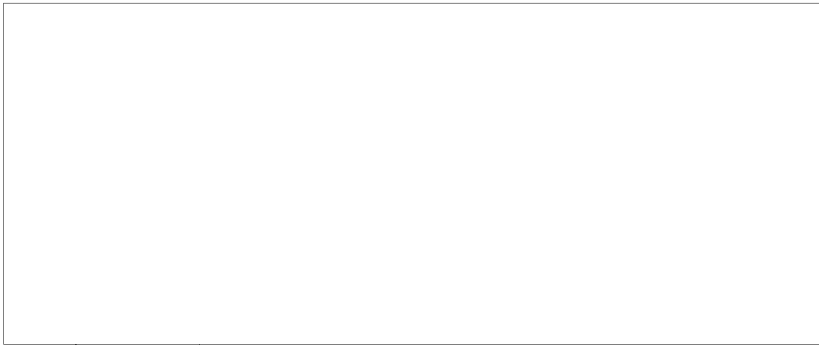
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SYRIA-USSR

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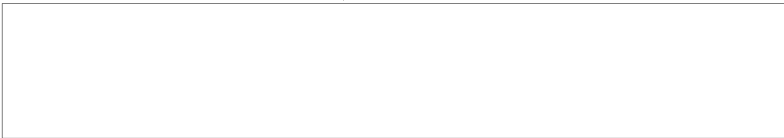


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ARGENTINA

President Peron is seriously ill and may not survive.

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If Peron dies suddenly it is unlikely that his wife and constitutional successor, Vice President Maria Estela de Peron, would be able to retain power for long. Although Peron has allowed her to assume limited executive duties, she has shown few political talents and has little support within the Peronist movement. Should she resign or be forced out, the succession would constitutionally go to the head of the Peronist-dominated Senate, who would be required to call for an election within 30 days.

Such a constitutional successor, however, would probably not last long--if, indeed, he could even be put in office. There is no single Peronist leader sufficiently strong or popular to stand a chance of gaining control of the Peronist movement peacefully. A violent struggle for control of the government and the movement would be likely.

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[Redacted]

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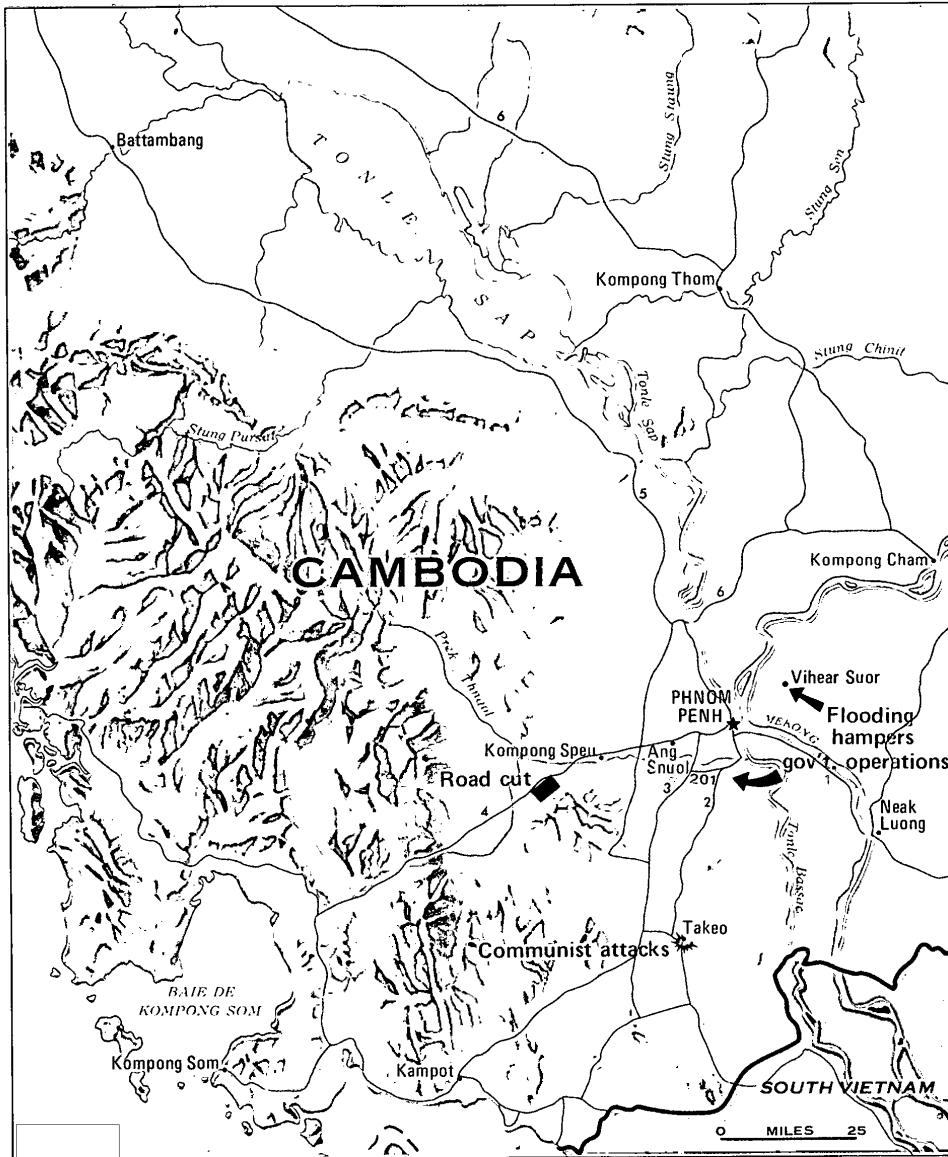
A violent struggle for power would hasten the re-emergence of the military as the ultimate political arbiter in Argentina.

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CAMBODIA

Khmer Communist forces during the past week have maintained firm control over a four-mile stretch of Route 4 west of Kompong Speu City and have kept nearby government units pinned down with mortar fire and sporadic ground attacks. Recent intercepted messages from this front have reflected Communist plans to mount a major attack against Kompong Speu itself. Local government commanders have apparently been anticipating such a move and appear reluctant to commit the necessary troops to reopen the highway.

At the same time, a Communist push appears to be developing against the isolated provincial capital of Takeo, 40 miles south of Phnom Penh. The city has been under sporadic attack since November 16

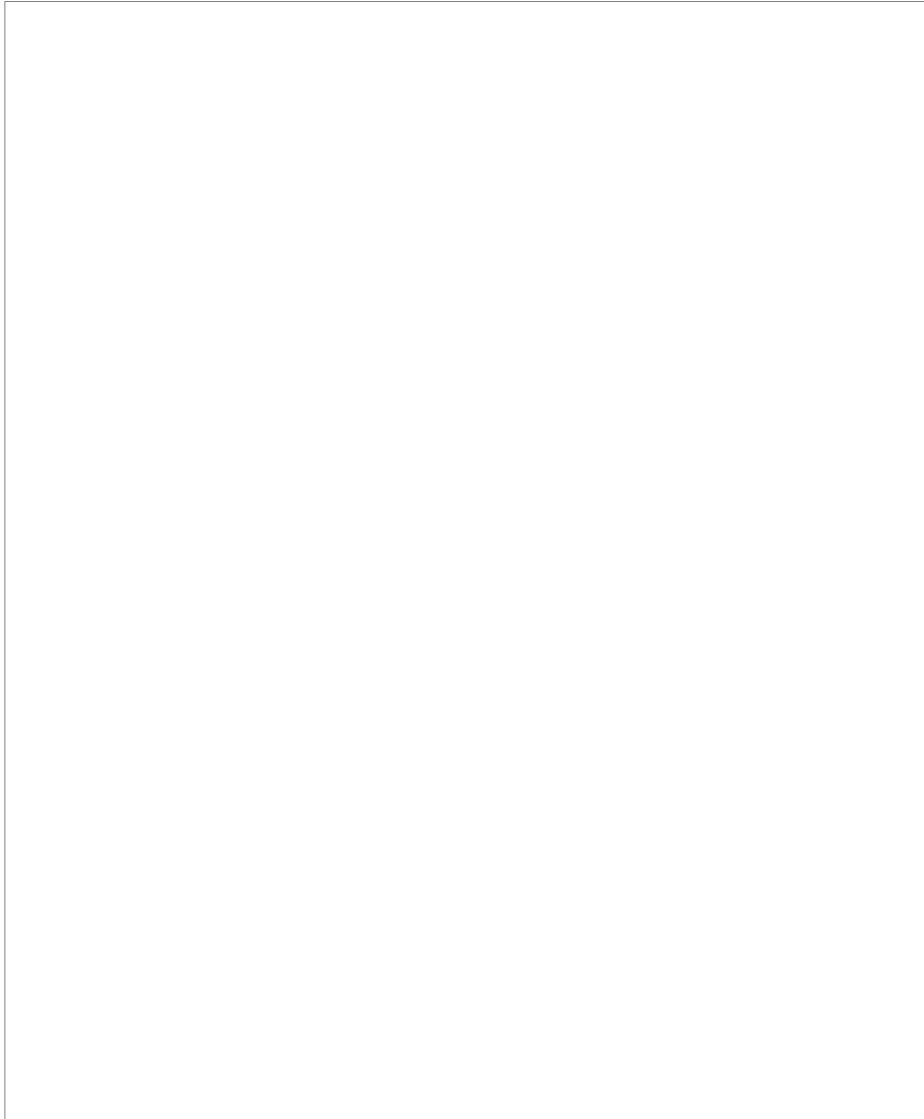
[redacted] Takeo has a 2,000-man military garrison and a civilian population of 43,000. Last April, intense US bombing prevented the Communists from capturing the city.

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In the Phnom Penh region, however, typhoon rains have brought military activity to a temporary standstill. The flooding of the Prek Thnaot River on the capital's southern front has halted efforts to resupply elements of two government divisions holding newly won territory along Routes 2 and 201.

Similar flooding ten miles northeast of Phnom Penh has slowed the move to relieve government forces at the town of Vihear Suor. The situation along Phnom Penh's northwestern defense line--ten miles from the city's airport--remains quiet following the Cambodian Army's successful clearing operation in that area last week.

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NORTH KOREA

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NOTE

Austria: The Austrian Government is planning shortly to replace the Schoenau transit center for emigrating Soviet Jews with new facilities at Woellersdorf, just south of Vienna, and to establish new processing arrangements. Chancellor Kreisky informed Mrs. Meir in October that under the coming arrangement, Soviet Jews transiting Austria would have to leave for other destinations as quickly as possible. Woellersdorf is a small medical center and will be under the nominal control of the Austrian Red Cross. Austrian and Israeli officials reportedly have drafted plans to replace the Woellersdorf center later by a transit station at the Vienna airport, thus permitting even more rapid processing of emigrants.

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