

The President's Daily Brief

1 December 1973

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

1 December 1973

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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Both Moscow and New Delhi have some reason to be satisfied with Brezhnev's visit, although neither achieved its maximum goals. Brezhnev received an endorsement of his detente policy, while India obtained promises of greater economic aid. (Page 4)

Soviet and Chinese officials have confirmed that Peking has rejected a Soviet proposal made earlier this year to settle the Sino-Soviet border dispute east of Mongolia. (Page 5)

Increased North Korean military activity continues in the southern half of the country, particularly in the southwest sector and along the Northern Limit Line. Naval vessels patrolling south of the line have penetrated South Korean territorial waters at least three times in as many days. (Page 6)

Military activity in Cambodia increased yesterday as Communist ground attacks forced government units to abandon Vihear Suor, a small provincial capital ten miles northeast of Phnom Penh. The town's fall poses no immediate threat to Phnom Penh. (Page 7)

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South Korean President Pak is under mounting domestic pressure to moderate his authoritarian policies

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[Redacted] (Page 8)

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Notes of Thailand's internal problems and Japanese interest in joint development of oil and natural gas deposits with the Soviets appear on Page 9.

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ARAB STATES - ISRAEL

Efforts to persuade Cairo and Tel Aviv to re-sume talks continued yesterday amid indications of increasing expectations on both sides that a resumption of fighting may be imminent.

United Nations Emergency Force commander General Siilasvuo met with Egyptian Minister of War Ismail in Cairo for an hour yesterday before flying to Jerusalem for meetings on Sunday with Israeli officials, probably including Minister of Defense Dayan. Cairo's UN representative met with UN Secretary General Waldheim yesterday and reportedly warned him that the breakdown of the Kilometer 101 talks last Thursday could jeopardize the start of peace talks in Geneva on December 18. The representative raised the possibility of renewed fighting along the Suez front.

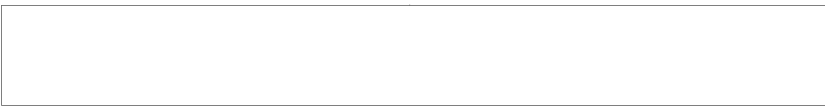
A senior UN official said yesterday that the UN Secretariat would have to prepare a report on the breakdown of the talks for Waldheim to present to the Security Council.

[redacted] the UN official believes that such a report might raise questions that could trigger requests for a Security Council meeting. What, if any, success UN efforts to bring the two sides together again might have is unclear. Press reports cite Egyptian officials as saying it is now up to Washington and Moscow to salvage the situation by persuading Israel to be more forthcoming on the issue of troop withdrawals in the Sinai.

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Israeli officials in Tel Aviv and Washington yesterday expressed fears that hostilities may break out within the week. They claimed that Egyptian forces are on the highest state of alert, that armored concentrations poised against Israel's West Bank salient remain in place, and that within the past week Egypt has completed preparations to resume hostilities. Israel's fears of an Egyptian attack may be well founded. When the six-point agreement was initialed earlier last month, there were reports that Egypt would resume hostilities if all six provisions were not fulfilled. Implicit in these "warnings" were Cairo's suspicions that the Israelis would not agree to all the provisions and further US pressure would be needed.

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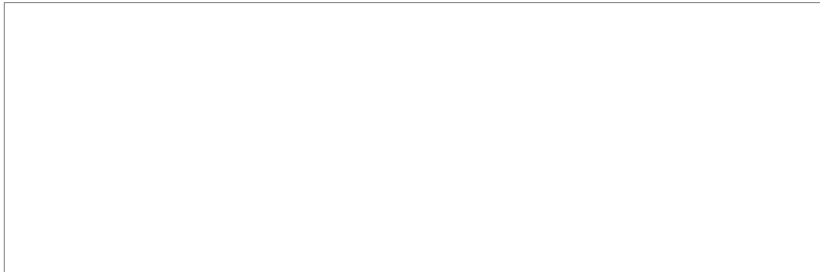


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A UN source has provided an account of Thursday's talks at Kilometer 101 which gives some explanation for Egypt's abrupt decision to call off further meetings.

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Israel's negotiator, General Yariv, told the Egyptians he had no further proposals to make and then reiterated the original Israeli proposal that both sides evacuate all territory gained during the October fighting and turn it over to UN forces. Yariv added that he knew this would be unacceptable to Egypt but had no authority to go beyond this proposal. He thus acknowledged implicitly that the proposals he had put forth earlier had been unauthorized.

UN forces patrolling the southern Suez front reported a marked upswing in the number of cease-fire violations over the past several days. An Israeli military officer also told the press that the Suez front was "warming up," and Tel Aviv reported that Israeli forces came under Egyptian fire five times yesterday. One Israeli was wounded. Most clashes, however, appeared to be localized affairs involving small-arms fire, although some mortar and artillery fire was also exchanged.

In a speech to American Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, Prime Minister Meir reiterated her objections to international guarantees as a substitute for defensible borders. Mrs. Meir said she is not convinced fighting will not resume but hoped it would not. After stating that she had not noticed a single genuine call for peace from this week's Arab summit in Algiers, she said that Israel is still ready to attend the proposed Geneva peace conference.

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The Israeli scenario for the conference was spelled out by Foreign Minister Eban in an interview with an Israeli newspaper. He expects it to convene in Geneva on schedule on December 18 with Foreign Minister Gromyko and Secretary Kissinger attending the opening session along with the foreign ministers of Israel, Jordan, Syria, Egypt, and possibly Lebanon. The conference would then adjourn until after the Israeli Government received a negotiating mandate in the December 31 elections. Eban said that he expected the peace conference to go on for months after reconvening in January. The second phase would be attended by permanent delegations of professional diplomats who would deal with specific problems between Israel and individual Arab states. Eban insisted that Israel would not accept participation in the conference by PLO leader Yasir Arafat, even though the Arab summit had recognized the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. Instead, he suggested that Palestinian representatives be included in the Jordanian delegation, a concept that the Arab summit rejected.

The US counsel in Jerusalem reported on November 30 that Palestinians on the Israeli-occupied West Bank are rapidly coming around to the view that the PLO should negotiate for all Palestinians. They reportedly feel that an independent West Bank - Gaza state should emerge under PLO leadership and that Jordan's King Husayn should neither represent nor rule them. Informed journalists think that, in the wake of the Algiers summit, an overwhelming majority of the normally politically fragmented West Bankers favor these ideas, while the remainder are reluctant to speak out in opposition. In such an atmosphere, there is considerable expectation that the PLO will try to broaden its base by adding West Bank personalities to its Palestinian National Assembly. The upsurge of support for the PLO and a separate state apparently has been stimulated by the widespread assumption that now, for the first time, it is possible for West Bankers to decide for themselves what they want, regardless of Jordanian and Israeli views.

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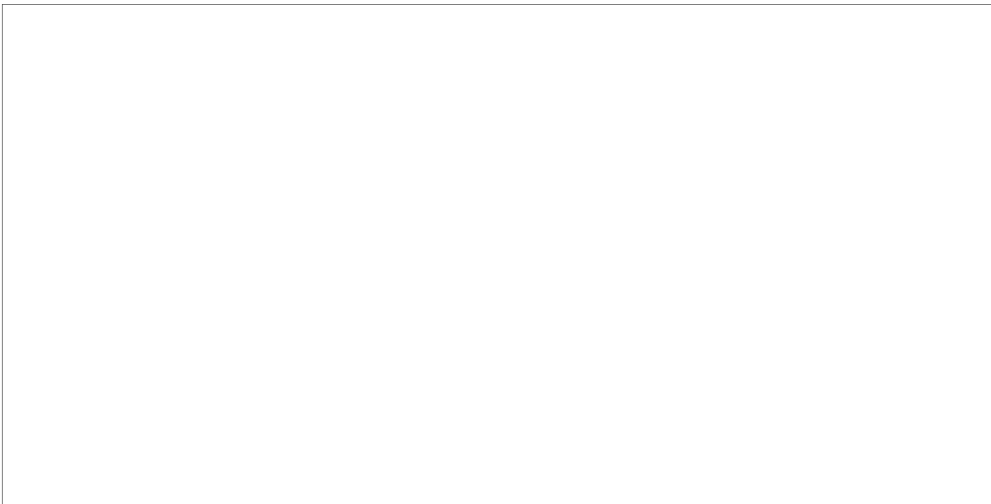
USSR-INDIA

Both Moscow and New Delhi have some reason to be satisfied with Brezhnev's visit, although neither achieved its maximum goals. Brezhnev failed to get endorsement for his Asian collective security proposal, and at least on the surface did not secure closer Soviet-Indian military cooperation. He did, however, get an endorsement of his detente policy which will undercut criticism of superpower diplomacy by other nonaligned countries. The USSR can portray various agreements signed as a strengthening of the Soviet position in India, and Brezhnev may have had some success in assuring the Indian leadership that Moscow will not sacrifice India's interests to detente.

India's gains were primarily economic--larger amounts of scarce commodities such as crude oil and perhaps foodgrains, and assistance to help India overcome its energy shortages. However, the Soviets may not have agreed to provide all the kinds of assistance the Indians really want. At present India pays more on old debts to the USSR than it receives in new Soviet assistance.

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USSR-CHINA

Soviet and Chinese officials have confirmed that Peking rejected a Soviet proposal made earlier this year to settle the Sino-Soviet border dispute east of Mongolia.

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Mikhail Kapitsa, chief of the Soviet Foreign Ministry's Far East Division, recently told [redacted] that a Soviet proposal of last March envisaged establishing the border at the main navigation channel of the Amur and Ussuri rivers rather than along the Chinese banks of the rivers. In June, a Chinese official told [redacted] that China had demurred on the grounds that the entire border--including the area west of Mongolia--should be negotiated as a single package.

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A Chinese embassy officer in Moscow confirmed this on November 28 and noted that, while the Soviet offer would have given the Chinese a number of contested islands, it would have left the Soviets holding the island of Hei-hsia-tzu, which has been the focal point of the dispute for several years. Hei-hsia-tzu lies directly opposite the city of Khabarovsk, the headquarters of the Soviet Far East Military District. The Soviets consider the northern route around the island to be an internal waterway and are especially sensitive about any changes that would bring the border closer to the city.

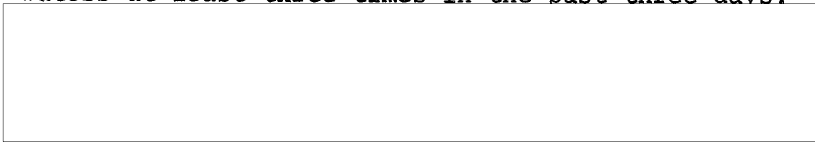
Pravda journalist Yuri Zhukov told a Soviet television audience about the proposal in general terms on October 20, and, a subsequent Soviet Chinese-language broadcast conceded--in a rare public admission--that "some changes at points along the...border may be called for." By disclosing the offer, as well as the proposal of a nonaggression pact made to Peking last June, the Soviets are trying to portray themselves as the conciliatory party faced with Chinese intransigence. They are also trying to underscore the contrast between their success in concluding a series of treaties with the US--particularly on the prevention of nuclear war--and the impasse in Sino-Soviet relations.

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NORTH KOREA

North Korean military activity continues at an abnormally high level in the southern half of the country, particularly in the southwest sector and along the Northern Limit Line.

North Korean naval vessels patrolling south of the line have penetrated South Korean territorial waters at least three times in the past three days.



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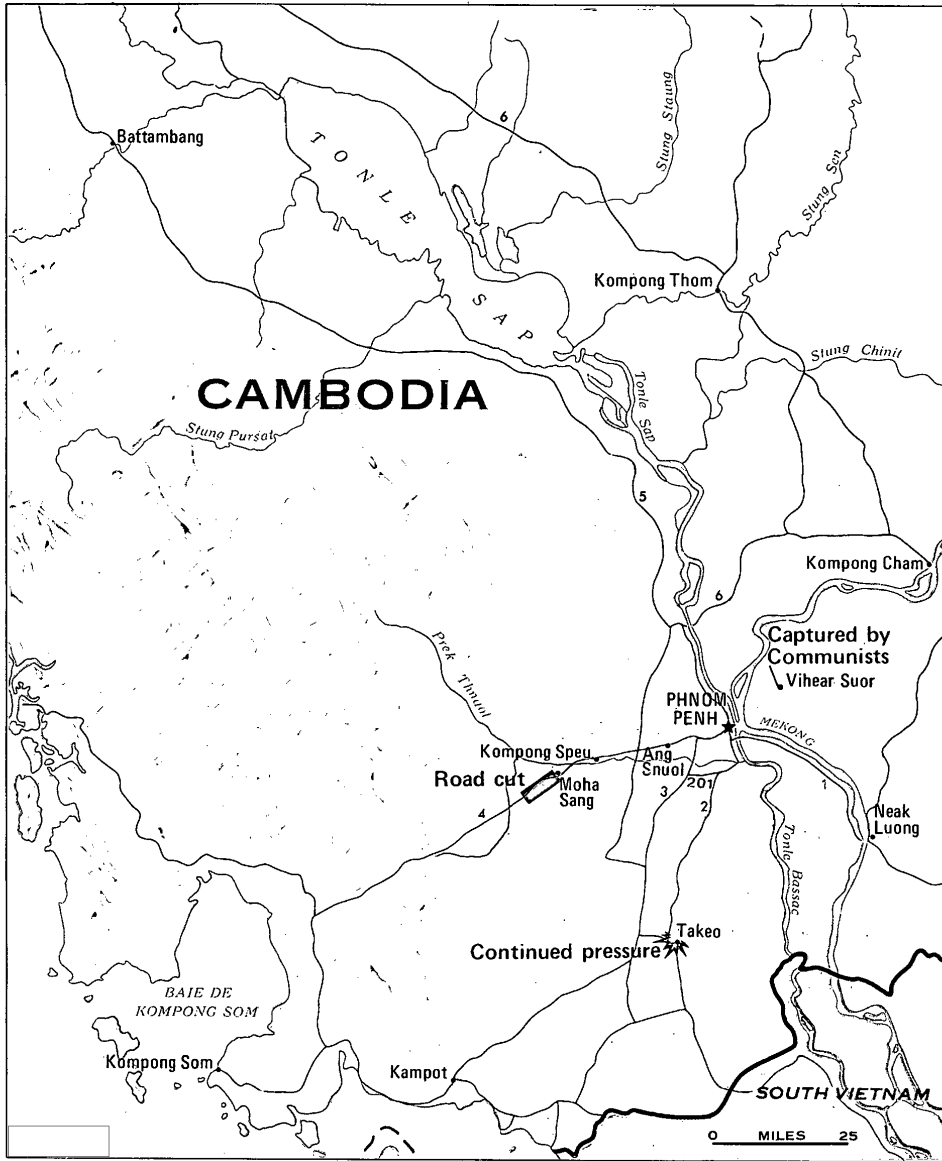
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Pyongyang, in response to the UN Command's protests against the naval activity, has accused Seoul of hostile acts and espionage and termed its own activity "routine patrols" within North Korean territorial waters. In the Military Armistice Commission meeting scheduled for today, Pyongyang may claim some areas near the limit line as its territorial waters.



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CAMBODIA

Military activity in Cambodia increased yesterday as Communist ground attacks forced government units to abandon Vihear Suor, a small provincial capital ten miles northeast of Phnom Penh.

While the town's fall poses no immediate threat to Phnom Penh, the Communists could use it as a base to mount operations against villages on the Mekong's east bank just upstream from the capital. Although the rest of the capital region is calm, intercepted messages reflect Communist plans to cut traffic on the Mekong and launch attacks along Route 1 southeast of Phnom Penh.

Elsewhere, the provincial capital of Takeo, 40 miles south of Phnom Penh, remains under siege. Despite the recent arrival of at least one fresh battalion and daily support from the Cambodian Air Force, the city's defensive perimeter has shrunk under steady Communist pressure. Communist units have also checked government clearing operations along Route 4, west of Kompong Speu. The insurgents now control seven miles of highway southwest of the village of Moha Sang. An intercepted message late last week stated that the fighting along Route 4 had "caused the invasion of Kompong Speu city to be delayed."

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SOUTH KOREA

President Pak is under mounting domestic pressure to moderate his authoritarian policies.

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The government has also approved a carefully worded National Assembly recommendation that calls for limited political reforms. There are indications that Pak plans a new initiative in the negotiations with the North early next year to refocus public attention on the unification issue.

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The cosmetic character of these moves points up Pak's belief that he can ride out the storm without significantly modifying any of his major policies. He clearly wants to avoid making concessions that might only whet the appetite of his opposition. He seems to have confidence in the military and security forces, continues to believe that most Koreans wish to avoid the uncertainty that would attend any major weakening of his power.

Pak's troubles seem likely to continue nonetheless. The regime's compromise gestures fall far short of the basic political reforms the students and others are demanding. In the past few days campus demonstrations have intensified and spilled into the streets, causing the government to close schools and colleges.

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NOTES

Thailand: Recent strikes and other labor unrest, accompanied at times by violence and vandalism, are worrying Thai government leaders, who are eager to see the country return to normal. [redacted]

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[redacted] So far, the labor situation does not appear to be a serious threat, but the new government could create trouble for itself by overreacting.

Japan-USSR: The energy crisis has rekindled Japan's interest in developing oil and natural gas deposits on the island of Sakhalin. Japanese business interests now favor reopening talks concerning joint Soviet-Japanese development there, and want Tokyo to bear some of the costs if the Sakhalin deposits should prove insufficient for development. Until recently, Tokyo wanted to hold up talks on the Sakhalin project until final details were worked out on the joint Soviet-Japanese Tyumen oil project.

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