

Noted by DCD
3/11/74



The President's Daily Brief

March 11, 1974



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Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 11652
exemption category 5B(1)(2)(3)
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7/19/79

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

March 11, 1974

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

King Husayn's domestic position and the trend of his thinking on the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank are discussed on *Page 1*.

Two of Portugal's top military men are reported to have been sent into exile over the weekend in connection with the growing dispute over Lisbon's policy in the African territories. (*Page 3*)

After 11 days of hard bargaining in Moscow, West German negotiator Egon Bahr has returned to Bonn with a report on some agreements with Moscow. (*Page 4*)

Khmer Communists maintained pressure on the isolated provincial capital of Kampot during the weekend, but a Cambodian Government counterattack has begun. (*Page 5*)

The Pathet Lao are delaying formation of a coalition government. (*Page 6*)

Another Soviet space probe has arrived in the vicinity of Mars. (*Page 7*)

JORDAN

King Husayn, who postponed his visit to the US last month when a mutiny developed among enlisted men in the army, arrives in Washington today. He presumably expects that his visit will reinforce his standing at home, which was briefly shaken by the mutiny. More important, he probably hopes that reaffirmation of strong US support will strengthen his hand in bargaining with other Arab leaders and the fedayeen over the eventual disposition of the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

Many members of the East Bank Jordanian establishment, [redacted] would prefer--as would the Palestinians--to see Husayn relinquish his claims to the West Bank and turn his attention instead to developing the rest of the country. As of now, Husayn still has no intention of doing that. Last week he sent special envoys to President Sadat, King Faysal, and President Asad with the message that he wished to discuss the Palestinian issue with them after his visit to Washington.

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Husayn may still be angling for an agreement to hold an internationally supervised plebiscite on the West Bank as his price for cooperating with the Palestine Liberation Organization during peace negotiations. The Arab summit in Algiers last November designated the fedayeen group as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians; Jordan, in effect, acknowledged this at the recent Islamic summit in Lahore. Husayn may believe that the other Arab leaders need him to negotiate the withdrawal of Israeli forces because Tel Aviv refuses to deal with the fedayeen.

At home, Husayn seems to have assuaged, at least temporarily, the discontent that erupted in his Bedouin army on February 3. He continues to refuse, however, to fire either Prime Minister Rifai or army chief of staff Bin Shakir whose dismissals were among the demands of the mutineers.

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[redacted] the King recently praised Rifai for his "daring and his

defense of truth against all challenges." The Prime Minister figured prominently during Secretary Kissinger's latest visit to Amman, and in local press coverage of the event overshadowed his principal adversary, Crown Prince Hassan, the King's brother and the heir apparent.

Husayn's public endorsement has probably strengthened Rifai's position over the short term. Although Husayn may be simply paving the way for Rifai to make a graceful exit, the King is unlikely to dispense with Rifai as prime minister soon because he does not want to appear to be giving in to the mutineers' demands.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

PORTUGAL

Two of the country's top military leaders may have been exiled over the weekend in connection with the growing dispute over Portugal's overseas policy.

The US defense attaché reports that Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Costa Gomes and his deputy, General Spinoła, were flown out of the country on Portuguese civil flights on March 9. According to this account, they had attempted a peaceful takeover of the government on the previous evening.

Heavy security measures were noted at Lisbon airport on March 9 and some military personnel were placed on alert. One of the deported officers reportedly was flown to Madeira, an island off the coast of Morocco, and the other to the Azores.

Lisbon has been tense since the publication last month of a book by General Spinoła which advocated greater autonomy for Portugal's overseas territories as well as the liberalization of the Portuguese Government itself. The fact that the book was allowed to be published was thought to reflect Prime Minister Caetano's tacit approval of Spinoła's thesis.

In a speech before the National Assembly on March 5, Caetano's remarks were ambiguous enough to allow different interpretations according to the preconceptions of the audience. His speech was followed by two days of debate on a vote of confidence for Caetano's overseas policy. All speakers pledged their support for the Prime Minister, although some deputies called for a speeding up of the autonomy process.

Spinoła is Portugal's most famous war hero and is said to be extremely popular in military circles, particularly with junior officers. His widespread support in the military may explain the use of civil rather than military aircraft in the deportation flights.

The exile has not been confirmed. The situation may be clarified later today when the US defense attaché seeks to keep a scheduled appointment with General Costa Gomes. Regardless of the status of the officers, the debate initiated by Spinoła's book is now before the nation and cannot be withdrawn.

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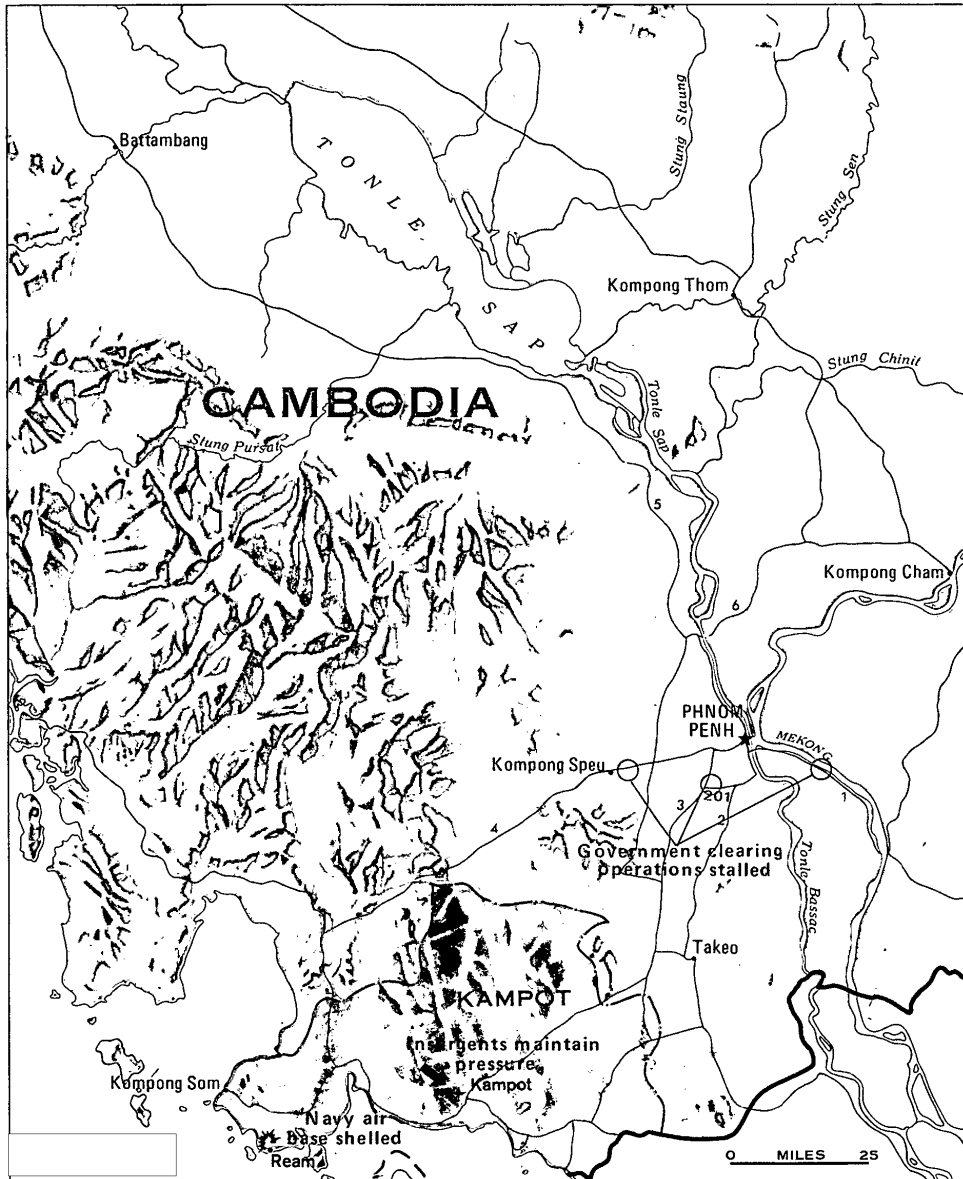
WEST GERMANY - USSR

After 11 days of strenuous bargaining in Moscow, Chancellor Brandt's chief foreign policy adviser, Egon Bahr, returned to Bonn on Saturday relatively pleased with his trip. A formula was worked out ending a long struggle for the inclusion of West Berlin in the Soviet - West German scientific-technical agreement. Bahr says the formula will be a model for handling the touchy Berlin question in future negotiations between Bonn and Moscow.

Some progress apparently was made toward settling the question of Bonn's right to represent the legal interests of West Berlin, but further negotiations will be necessary.

Brezhnev assured Bahr that the number of ethnic Germans permitted to emigrate to the Federal Republic will increase. Brezhnev's promise came during their last meeting, which Bahr called the "turning point" in the talks. The Soviet leader also discussed at length West German participation in three economic projects in the USSR.

Bahr made no announcement of progress concerning Soviet opposition to the establishment of a federal environmental office in West Berlin, an omission that suggests this issue is not resolved.



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CAMBODIA

Khmer Communist forces maintained pressure on the isolated southwestern provincial capital of Kampot over the weekend, but a government counter-attack has begun. Reinforcements have increased the strength of the Cambodian Army in the Kampot area to some 3,200 troops. US defense attachés who visited Kampot last week reported that the city has been receiving adequate air support from the nearby naval air base at Ream. Four government aircraft were damaged, however, in a Communist mortar attack on the base on March 10.

The insurgents apparently hope to intensify the action around Kampot to compensate for their recent tactical setbacks in the Phnom Penh area. Intercepted Communist messages state that munitions and troop reinforcements are being shifted from Phnom Penh's southwestern front to Kampot in an effort to "liberate" the provincial capital. Other messages, however, indicate that insurgent forces southwest of Phnom Penh are badly understrength and are exhausted after nearly two months of steady fighting. As a result, the insurgents may have considerable difficulty in reinforcing the Kampot front. No major fighting developed in the Phnom Penh area over the weekend.

LAOS

Pathet Lao actions--and lack of action--have delayed Prime Minister Souvanna's efforts to form a coalition government. Pathet Lao chairman Prince Souphanouvong has failed to dispatch a plenipotentiary to Vientiane with a promised list of Pathet Lao candidates for the coalition cabinet and its advisory political council. Moreover, there is still no indication as to when chief Pathet Lao negotiator, Phoun Sipraseuth, who left for consultations in Sam Neua on February 26, will be returning to Vientiane.

Meanwhile, the Pathet Lao delegation in Vientiane is demanding more effective neutralization of the twin capitals of Vientiane and Luang Prabang as the price of further progress toward forming the coalition. The Pathet Lao call this situation the primary obstacle to a meeting between Souphanouvong and Souvanna in the royal capital to work out final arrangements on the new government. The delegation is also complaining bitterly about the government's lethargy in transferring municipal police functions in both cities to the Joint Police Forces.

The positions of the Pathet Lao are being used against Souvanna by his conservative opponents in the National Assembly. They are demanding convocation of a special legislative session to address the constitutional problems raised by Souvanna's plan to form the new government by direct royal investiture. The cabinet's recommendation to the King against a special session may head off this move.

The conservatives claim they are not trying to obstruct Souvanna's scenario for forming the coalition, but they apparently do want to reserve the right to approve the Prime Minister's appointees to the new government.

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To make matters even more complicated for the Prime Minister, there are indications that the King also is backing away from his assurances to Souvanna that he would invest the coalition without prior approval by the assembly.

NOTE

USSR: Mars 7, the third of four Soviet space probes launched from Tyuratam last summer, has arrived in the vicinity of the planet.

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The fourth probe, Mars 6, will reach the planet tomorrow and is expected to attempt to land a capsule. The first two probes arrived in the vicinity of the planet last month. One of them--Mars 5, which reached the planet on February 12--is now in orbit around Mars.

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