

Notes by DCI
4/3/74



The President's Daily Brief

April 3, 1974

3

~~Top Secret~~ 25X1



Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 11652
exemption category 5B(1),(2),(3)
declassified only on approval of
the Director of Central Intelligence

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

April 3, 1974

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The first round of elections to select a successor to deceased French President Pompidou will be held on April 28 or May 5, earlier than either the Gaullists or their leftist rivals would have preferred. (Page 1)

Tel Aviv gave wide publicity yesterday to its reinforcement of the Golan front, as Syrian and Israeli troops continued to exchange mortar, tank, and artillery fire. (Page 2)

Peking's warm reception of Khmer Communist leader Khieu Samphan raises questions as to the future of Sihanouk. (Page 3)

The recent campaign by Egyptian media to discredit the Nasir regime has backfired, and Cairo is attempting to repair the damage done to President Sadat's image among some Egyptians and other Arabs. (Page 4)

Hanoi has made reassignments to several top economic jobs aimed at strengthening long-term economic planning in the North. (Page 5)

Notes on Cambodia, North Korea, Greece, and the USSR - Middle East appear on Page 5.

FRANCE

The first round of elections to select a successor to deceased French President Pompidou will be held on April 28 or May 5--earlier than either the Gaullists or their leftist rivals would have preferred. Gaullist Jacques Chaban-Delmas and Socialist Francois Mitterrand are the main contenders, but there will be several other candidates.

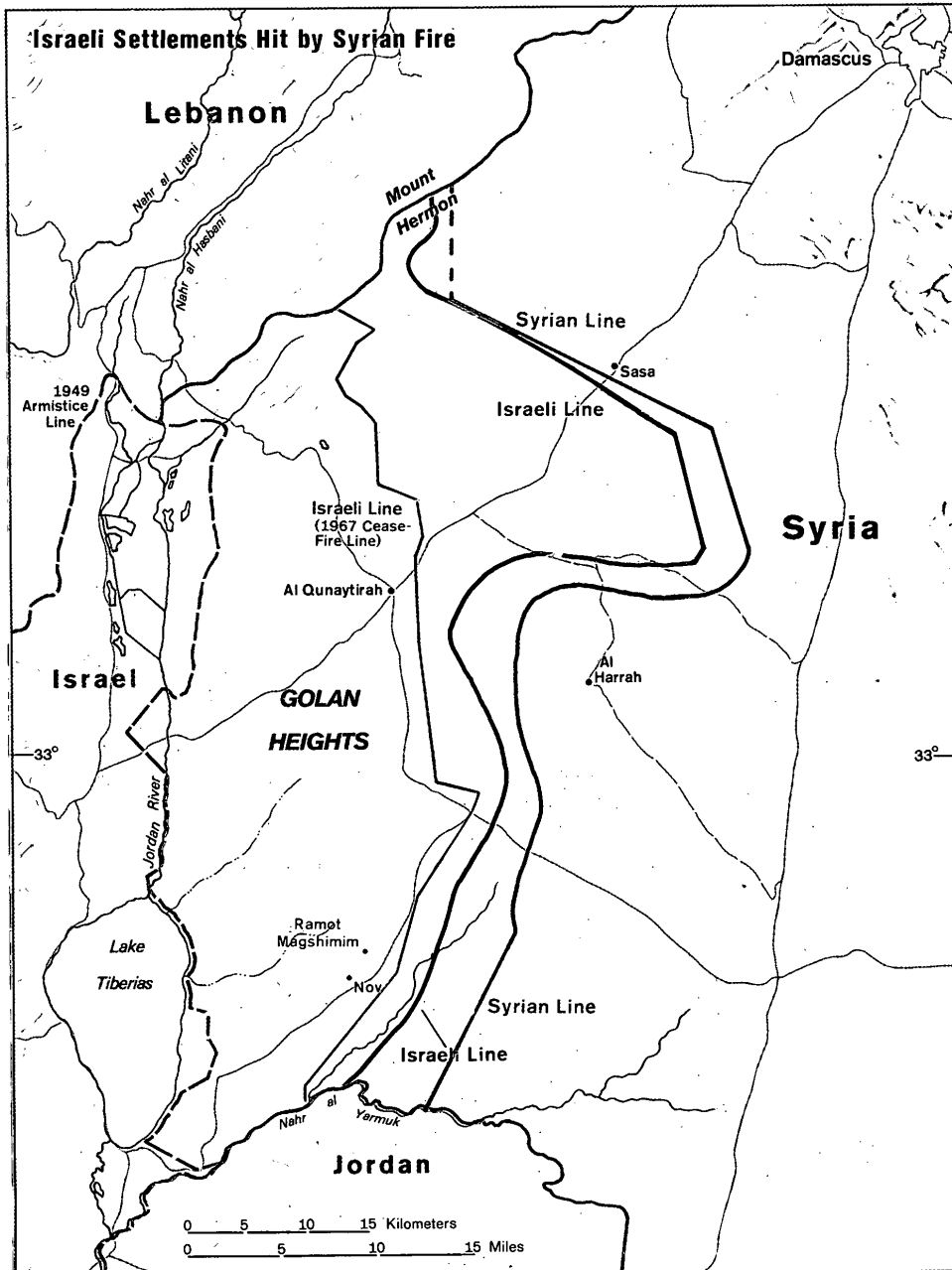
The Communists, Socialists, and left Radicals had hoped an election would not occur until at least next year. They wanted more time to develop an image of international statesman for their leader, Socialist Francois Mitterrand. The alliance also hoped for time to exploit popular dissatisfaction with the government's failure to resolve the country's economic problems.

The leaders of the alliance are still not agreed on how to present their candidates. The Communists want Mitterrand to run as the sole leftist candidate; they fear one of their own would do poorly, exposing the party's weakened position. Mitterrand, however, wants his allies to field candidates so he can run on a moderate platform, rather than be associated with the more extreme portions of the alliance program. He is gambling that he will win enough votes on the first round to make the second, where he hopes to prevail with the additional support of Communist voters.

The governing coalition--Gaullists, Independent Republicans, and a small centrist group--is also in disarray. One of their major problems is that Giscard d'Estaing, the leader of the Independent Republicans, may choose to break coalition unity and run in the first round.

Of the two main candidates, Jacques Chaban-Delmas, 58, is a liberal Gaullist and a former prime minister. At a party congress last November, his Gaullist colleagues indicated that they would support him as a successor to Pompidou. Mitterrand, 57, is the prime mover of the leftist alliance.

Under the present system, no president has been elected in the first round. In view of the many likely candidates, this election probably will be no exception. Uncommitted voters make up some 30 percent of the French electorate and usually determine the outcome.



555576 4-74

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

MIDDLE EAST

Tel Aviv gave wide publicity yesterday to its reinforcement of the Golan front as Syrian and Israeli troops continued to exchange mortar, tank, and artillery fire. The Israeli move apparently was designed to warn Damascus against any renewal of offensive action and to reassure the home front of Israel's military preparedness. Israeli air activity, however, was at a much lower level than on Monday. Syrian shells yesterday struck two Israeli civilian settlements, according to an Israeli spokesman, causing some damage but no casualties. Syrian shelling of civilian targets will heighten pressure within Israel to strike back harder at targets in Syria.

Damascus apparently believes it must maintain military pressure on the Golan front to support its negotiating aims. Israel, however, views this pressure as a military threat

25X1

[Redacted]

25X1

One result of this prolonged period of growing tension has been that the chances of miscalculation on both sides have increased, and that a minor incident could lead to a major outbreak of fighting.

25X1

* * *

A wave of Israeli land purchases that is apparently under way on the occupied Jordan West Bank along the periphery of Jerusalem may further complicate Middle East negotiations. Purchasers are both private individuals and organized groups, such as construction firms.

25X1
25X1

[Redacted]

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

CHINA-CAMBODIA

From the Khmer Communist point of view, the visit of "deputy premier" and "defense minister" Khieu Samphan to Hanoi and Peking was intended to emphasize that the Khmer Communists are an independent force that must be reckoned with politically before the fighting can end in Cambodia. Peking's warm reception and the prominence accorded Samphan raise questions as to the future of Sihanouk, whose return to power the Chinese have long proposed as part of a solution in Cambodia.

Chou En-lai's remarks on prospects for a negotiated settlement still reflect the cautious tone that has characterized Peking's statements on Cambodia over the past year. Although Chou made no specific reference to peace proposals, he implied approval of a negotiated settlement in Cambodia by citing the Paris and Vientiane cease-fire agreements as "victories" in Indochina.

Samphan, militant as usual, denounced the US and its "lackeys" for alleged espousal of "sham cease-fire, sham talks, and sham peace." He contended that the Khmer Communists wanted a "genuine peace," not one that would allow the Phnom Penh government to "recuperate and strengthen its forces" in order to go on fighting.

EGYPT

The recent intensive campaign by Egyptian media to discredit the Nasir regime has backfired, and Cairo is attempting to repair the damage done to President Sadat's image among some Egyptians and other Arabs. The belated attempt to back off from the blatant criticism of Nasir that began appearing two months ago, however, has not silenced opponents of Sadat's policies.

Cairo may attempt a new tactic to mollify Arab, and particularly Egyptian, critics and turn the tables on the Soviets, who have been sniping at Egypt's turn toward a more open society.

25X1

25X1

25X1



555580 4-74

25X1

NOTES

North Vietnam: Hanoi yesterday announced reassignments to several top economic jobs aimed at strengthening long-term economic planning in the North. The most important change was the appointment of the Politburo's senior economist, Le Thanh Nghi, as Chairman of the State Planning Commission. Vice Premier Nguyen Con apparently has been designated to oversee the development of heavy industry.

Cambodia: The situation is deteriorating at the southwestern provincial capital of Kampot. Insurgent forces just west of the city and around the airstrip are posing a serious threat, despite the government's superior troop strength and firepower. 25X1

[REDACTED]

According to a message intercepted March 31, insurgents in the Kampot area believe they have the ability to enter the city "in the near future."

North Korea: Military exercises involving ground, naval, and air forces continue at a fairly high level, largely in the southwestern and central part of the country. Although the exercises are not coordinated, their purpose is probably to keep units closest to South Korea in their normal high state of readiness.

Greece: The US Embassy in Athens has confirmed a build-up of Greek military personnel and equipment on the Turkish frontier. The activity appears to be of a contingency nature, designed to convince the Turks that Greek claims to oil exploration rights in the Aegean Sea must be taken seriously. The junta in Athens may also be deliberately fanning the controversy as a diversion from domestic policy problems and to foster unity within the army.

USSR - Middle East: Moscow and Damascus may have reached a new understanding on using the Syrian port of Latakia to support the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron. Since the October war, Soviet diesel-powered attack submarines and their auxiliary ships have been making almost continuous use of this port for replenishment and minor repair. The bulk of support work for Soviet submarines, however, is still being done at the Egyptian port of Alexandria.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Top Secret