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# The President's Daily Brief

*April 24, 1974*

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

April 24, 1974

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Israeli air strikes on the Golan front yesterday were an attempt to prevent Syria from completing a road to the top of the ridge line on Mount Hermon, according to Tel Aviv. (Page 1)

The EC foreign ministers seem to have improved the atmosphere in the community at their informal meeting in West Germany last weekend. (Page 2)

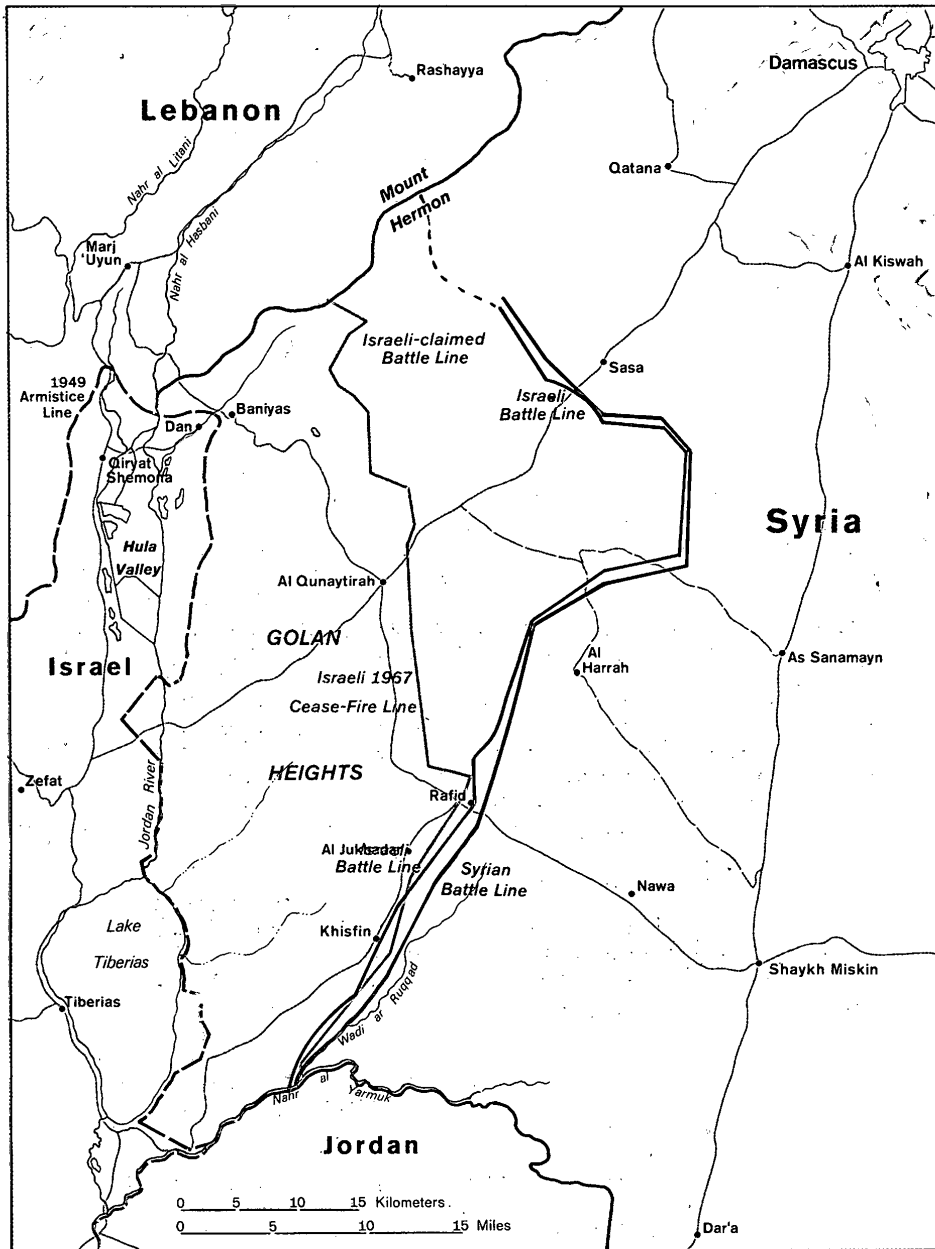
The turmoil in Ethiopia is not only straining the regime's ability to govern but is also posing problems for moderate reformists in the military. (Page 3)

Thai Assembly Speaker Khukrit Pramot, a well-known publisher and confidant of King Phumiphon, is emerging as the most likely successor to Prime Minister Sanya. (Page 4)

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Notes on the USSR, Venezuela-Cuba, [redacted] appear on Page 5.

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ISRAEL-SYRIA

Fighting on the Golan front remained at a moderate level yesterday. Israeli military authorities have said that the Israeli air strikes yesterday were aimed at preventing Syria from completing a road to the top of the ridge line on Mount Hermon. The road would enable Syrian armor and artillery to move to the mountain's summit. Israel has already completed such a road.



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According to several news stories from Beirut, Syria is using "multi-headed" surface-to-air missiles recently received from the USSR. Although the system was not further identified, the stories may refer to an armored reconnaissance vehicle carrying four SA-7 launchers. This weapon has been reported present in Syria, but has not been firmly identified there.

Both Damascus and Tel Aviv have troops on the Lebanese side of Mount Hermon. Israel now occupies most of the dominant peaks on the mountain--including the main one. The Syrians on the Lebanese side of the mountain have the shoulder-fired SA-7 surface-to-air missile with them, but no Syrian SA-6 sites are known to be there. No Israeli SAM sites are on the Lebanese side of Mount Hermon.

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## EC

The EC foreign ministers seem to have improved the atmosphere in the community at their informal meeting in West Germany last weekend. They decided to resume work on a report on European union due by the end of 1975, and they agreed that political consultations with the US should not be formalized.

The informal nature of the session apparently fostered frank discussions among the eight ministers present--the caretaker Belgian Government was not represented. This frankness was most obvious, perhaps, in the dialogue on European union. Foreign Minister Callaghan said he was not opposed to the goal of union by 1980, but added he still was not sure what the concept meant.

A consensus of sorts emerged that national states and borders would be retained but that, above the national level, there would be a "federal or confederal level entailing both integration and intergovernmental cooperation." A European government with independent powers would have a parliament composed of a house of states and a house of the peoples. These ideas are similar to those put forth earlier by the French.

On consultations with the US, the French seem to have given way somewhat on their previous insistence that the Nine could consult only after unanimous agreement among themselves. A senior British official yesterday cautioned that this new attitude is still tentative and could be reversed if the US were to press for an explicit commitment on consultation.

No extensive discussions were held on the EC proposal to offer wide-ranging cooperation to the Arabs, reportedly because the Arab oil embargo is still in force against Denmark and the Netherlands. The proposal had stalled earlier over the question of consultation with the US. On the evening of April 21, however, West German Chancellor Brandt in Algiers characterized his talks there as the beginning of a European-Arab dialogue. EC leaders still have not decided on the form and specific content of the dialogue.

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## ETHIOPIA

The turmoil in Ethiopia is not only straining the regime's ability to govern but is also posing problems for moderate reformists in the military. Agitation by civilian groups seeking redress of grievances may force military leaders to adopt drastic measures that they would prefer to avoid. The government may have adopted a firmer position yesterday; according to late, unconfirmed press reports, it has banned unauthorized demonstrations, ordered the prosecution of striking government employees, and directed the armed forces and police to take "all necessary steps" to maintain law and order.

Declaring a state of emergency would restore partial calm and ease the pressure on the government. The military, however, would be left with the responsibility of enforcing the measure, putting it in the position of cracking down on civilians whose interests it claims to champion.

An outright takeover would likewise leave moderate military leaders with the problem of restoring order without resorting to severe repression. In addition, they would have to assume the day-to-day administration of the government. If a moderate military government failed, a takeover by radicals in the military or a counterrevolt by the nobles and landowners could result. The moderates prefer to avoid such eventualities by keeping the civilian government in power.

Prime Minister Endalkatchew's government, meanwhile, can disclaim any responsibility for the turmoil unleashed by the military's revolt. Its efforts to cope with strikes, demonstrations, and rural unrest give an excuse for not moving ahead with the political and social reforms sought by the military.

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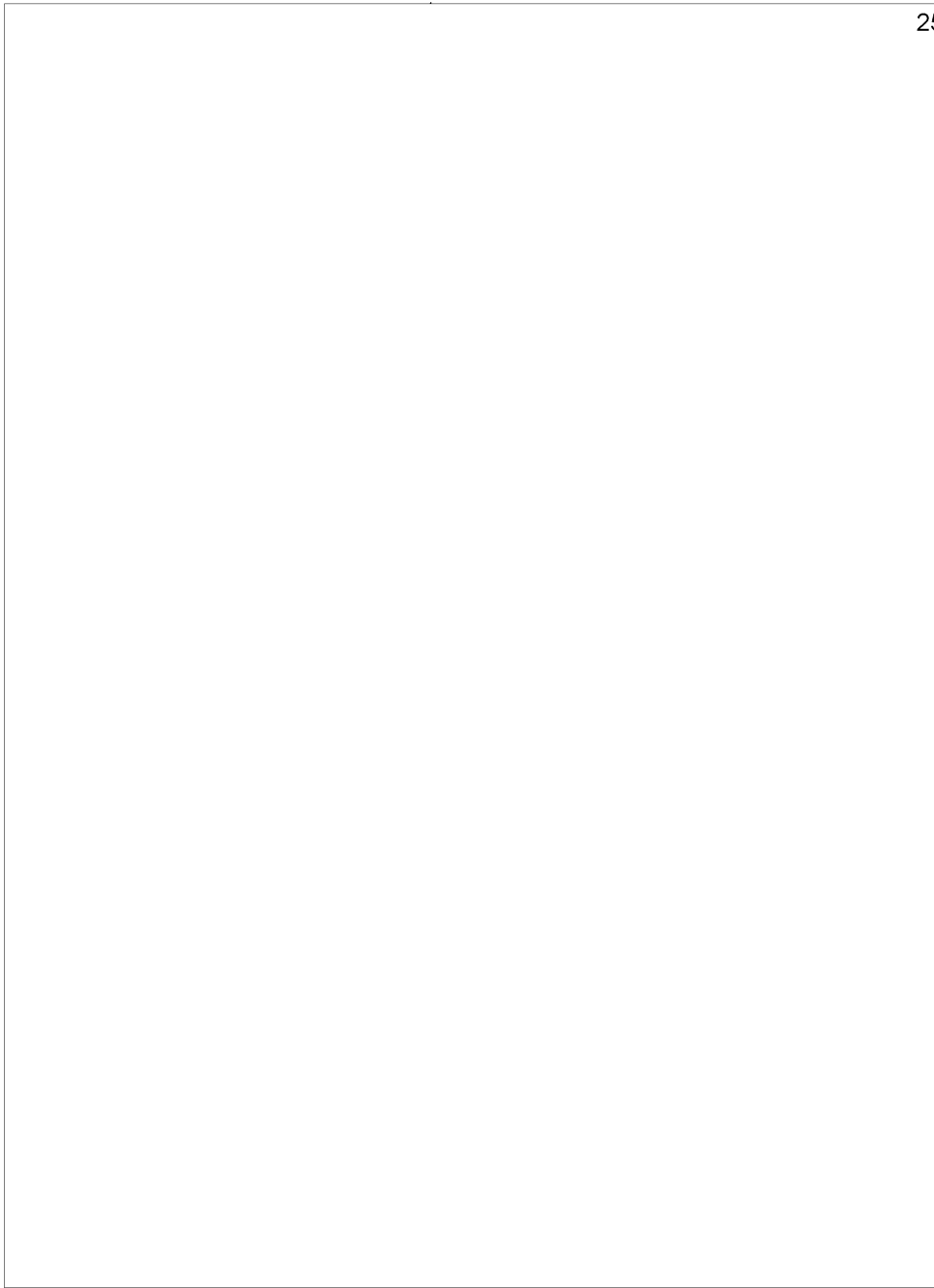
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NOTES

USSR: The Soviets have stepped up the pace of flight-testing for their TU-144 Charger supersonic transport.



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Soviets have said that the TU-144 will be in commercial service in 1975. If no major problems develop, they will probably meet this goal.

Venezuela-Cuba: The re-establishment of diplomatic relations with the Castro regime is regarded as a certainty in Venezuela, with only the timing and details yet to be worked out. In early April an emissary of Venezuelan President Carlos Andres Perez is reported to have spent six days in Havana for conversations with Fidel Castro and Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, the Cuban deputy prime minister for foreign relations.

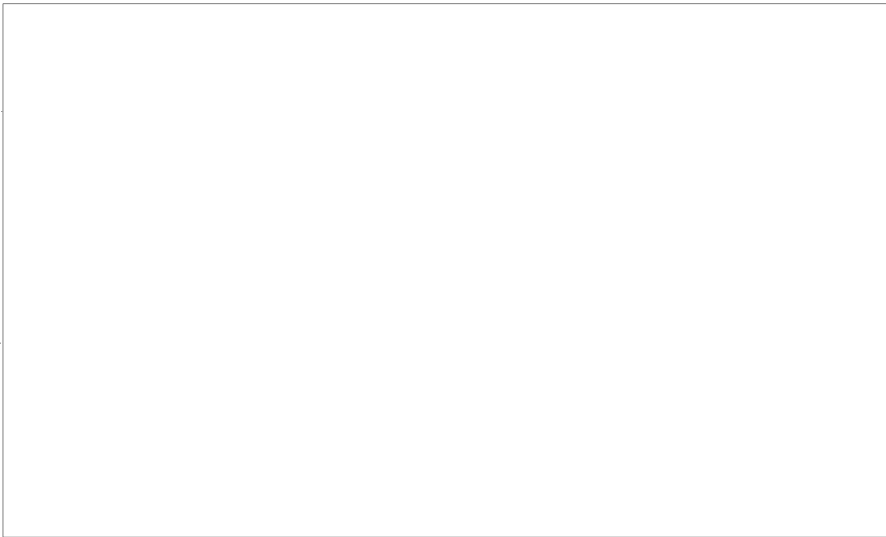
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Last week, a leading Venezuelan politician told newsmen that resumption of ties with Cuba seems imminent.

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