



The President's Daily Brief

February 7, 1975

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Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 11652
exemption category 5B(1), (2), (3)
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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TURKEY-CYPRUS

Ankara is studying the prospects for creating an independent Turkish Cypriot state, but the foreign ministry reportedly believes that the move would be premature.

A high-level Turkish official told our embassy yesterday that his government had not ruled out the formation of an independent Turkish Cypriot state. He warned that such a move was possible if the Greek Cypriot leaders continue to insist that they represent the entire island, rather than just one of two "communities."

The Turkish official stated that his government would not break off the intercommunal talks, but the discussions were being regarded as an exercise in futility. Earlier this month, Archbishop Makarios voiced the same opinion of the talks and threatened to turn to another forum.

[redacted] the Greek Cypriots are most likely to present the question to the UN Security Council. A decision on this tactic may be made in the next few days.

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Meanwhile, the Turkish government is still considering its response to the cutoff of US military assistance. Apparently, the Turks had no contingency plan for responding to an aid halt. Moreover, as the first impetus of anger subsides, cooler heads may have an opportunity to prevail.

[redacted] Ankara will not take any early action to prevent the reinstatement of US assistance. In any case, most military officers believe that it will take several months for the general staff to come up with an alternative to Turkey's pro-NATO posture. Leftist elements, however, have been given a strong issue to argue against the unreliability of the West. They probably will press for a nonaligned posture including ties with the Soviet Union.

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THAILAND

The Thai political right now appears to have out-maneuvered the Democrat Party in the effort to form a government.

Although three of the four major conservative parties agreed earlier this week to support a center-right coalition led by Democrat Party leader Seni Pramot, talks broke down over distribution of cabinet portfolios. The Democrats, who had won more seats than any of the other 21 parties in parliament, refused to give the conservatives control of the powerful interior ministry. As a result, the key group in the rightist bloc--the Thai Nation Party--withdrew from the negotiations.

Further dimming the Democrats' hopes of forming the government was the defeat of their candidate for the post of speaker of the lower house by a member of the conservative bloc. Under present parliamentary procedure, the speaker designates the individual who tries to form a government. The new speaker presumably will select Praman Adireksan, the leader of the Thai Nation Party, rather than Seni Pramot.

Should the conservatives prevail, their cabinet would be less vulnerable to parliamentary pressures than any coalition the Democrats could put together. The conservative bloc controls almost half of the seats in the new assembly and enjoys the full support of the military--under army strongman Krit Siwara--and the business elite.

A conservative government would be strongly criticized by the press, student, and intellectual community in Bangkok, where the Democrat Party's strength is greatest. This could lead to a revival of radical-led student protests.

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PORTUGAL

The future role of the military in the government continues to dominate political discussions in Lisbon. The Communists are stepping up efforts to increase their strength.

The Armed Forces Movement's general assembly met yesterday to consider legislation defining its future role in Portuguese politics. The Socialist and Popular Democratic moderates hope that the military will play a limited political role and encourage European-style democracy. Leaders of both parties have warned recently that the previous dictatorship of the right could be replaced by a left-wing military regime.

A presidential aide said this week that an election for a constituent assembly will be held by April 25, although a public announcement is being delayed to assure there will be no hitches.

Communist Party leader Cunhal, meanwhile, recently rejected West European parliamentary democracy as a solution for Portugal. Cunhal has been cultivating a close working relationship with Prime Minister Goncalves. Party members are also joining the Armed Forces Movement's "cultural dynamism" propaganda teams during their proselytizing forays into rural areas. Their mission is to expose anti-Communist propaganda and to denounce US imperialism.

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SPAIN

General Franco apparently is making plans to turn over his position as head of state to Prince Juan Carlos.

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[REDACTED] Franco would retain only his post as commander in chief of the armed forces.

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Rumors have been circulating in Madrid that Franco would step down ever since he resumed power last September after a mid-summer illness. Most sources maintain that Franco is not seriously ill, but his condition is apparently complicated

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Should Juan Carlos assume power, his most immediate problem, aside from the resentment he will face from the far right, will be to establish his independence from his mentor. There will be a tendency, as long as Franco is functioning in some capacity, to refer vital decisions to him.

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NOTES

Peru is calm following two days of extensive violence.

Tensions remain high in Lima, but the civil guard has agreed to resume its police duties. President Velasco now appears to be attempting to find scapegoats for the disorders, and the government-controlled media has already raised the spectre of US involvement. For the moment, the massive military response will probably inhibit further violence. Moreover, at least for the time being, the military is unlikely to break ranks with the president. As the crisis subsides, however, serious splits may develop within the military affecting Velasco's tenure of office.


* * *

Turkey has accepted Greece's proposal to submit their dispute over oil prospecting rights and sovereignty in the Aegean Sea to the International Court of Justice.

A Turkish official told our embassy yesterday that Ankara's answer would be an "unqualified yes," but the Turks wanted preliminary contacts between the countries in order to work out the details. Athens radio described the Turkish answer as "constructive" and a Greek spokesman said the two countries will hold talks to draft a pledge to accept the court's ruling. The court's deliberations are bound to be lengthy and should defuse the troublesome dispute.

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Ethiopian troops commanded by Colonel Gebre-Yesus have departed for Addis Ababa and will probably arrive tomorrow.

 plans. The arrival of troops from outside the capital, plus the units Gebre-Yesus has under his command in Addis Ababa, will give him a significant advantage if he decides to move against the governing military council.

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