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The President's Daily Brief

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July 2, 1975

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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ISRAEL

Some members of Prime Minister Rabin's coalition are urging him to consider making further concessions to Egypt in order to preserve Israel's close relationship with the US.

One of the country's most respected commentators wrote yesterday that sources close to Rabin claim he is facing stronger pressure for concessions from within his coalition than from Washington. The drive is spearheaded by the leftist Mapam Party, supported by the small Independent Liberal Party and some leading members of Rabin's Labor Party. The latter reportedly include Foreign Minister Allon and Yitzhak Navon, chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, and a member of the Labor Party's conservative Rafi faction headed by Defense Minister Peres and Moshe Dayan.

Navon, probably echoing a major argument used by the advocates of concessions to buttress their case, told reporters after a briefing by Rabin two days ago that, in his opinion, Israel's security is more dependent on close ties to the US than on a "single mountaintop or one single place." Israel, he pointedly remarked, won wars in 1948, 1956, and 1967 without having possessed the Gidi and Mitla passes in the Sinai and was unable to prevent a war in 1973 when it did.

Some press reports suggest that Israeli advocates of greater flexibility are arguing that the government should be guided by what it can get from the US--not Egypt--in return for giving up the passes completely. Specific objectives being discussed include:

--A two-year US economic aid commitment worth \$2 billion.

--Military aid to meet the major part of military requests over the next two years.

--A public announcement by the US administration to Congress that the US would support Israel's reaction to any Egyptian violation of the agreement.

(continued)

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Before making his next move, Rabin probably wants to get a better reading of feelings in Washington and Cairo in order to prevent another breakdown of the negotiations. An article two days ago, for instance, by a commentator close to Peres suggests that conservatives in the cabinet are arguing that there may be an element of bluff in the US position which could be smoked out by Israel's demand for further "clarifications" of the Egyptian position. The commentator claims the Israeli government thinks Washington and Cairo are extremely anxious to make progress before Secretary Kissinger meets Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko later this month, before Egypt celebrates its Revolution Day on July 23, and before the UN mandate in the Sinai expires on July 24.

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LEBANON

Lebanese Prime Minister Rashid Karami and PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat agreed last night to enforce an immediate cease-fire in Lebanon. They announced their agreement after discussing relations between Lebanon and the Palestinians with Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam, senior Lebanese army officers, and fedayeen leaders.

Public acceptance of this agreement by Arafat and by Syria suggests that the main Palestinian units will stay on the sidelines as the security services attempt to stop the continuing heavy fighting by radical leftists, small fedayeen groups, and Christians. Should the large fedayeen groups abandon their policy of neutrality and come to the aid of the radicals, civil war would be certain.

The continued fighting probably is part of a last-ditch effort by Lebanese leftists and fedayeen radicals to draw the Lebanese army into the fray. George Habbash, the Libyan-supported head of the Marxist-oriented Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, reportedly is leading this attempt.

The effort could succeed. Karami and President Franjyah reportedly may be considering a further agreement that would replace the current commander of the army--as desired by Karami and his Muslim supporters--and engage the army in efforts to restore order, a move right-wing Christians have long advocated.

Karami, supported by Arafat and the Syrians, is in a stronger position than most of his predecessors to overcome Muslim opposition to army involvement. He can claim that, because he is defense minister as well as prime minister, he will be able to protect the Muslim and Palestinian communities against possible army excesses.

Leaders of the Phalanges and Progressive Socialist parties, which have been left out of the cabinet, have still offered no public comment on the new government. Phalangist leader Pierre Jumayyil reportedly has promised Interior Minister Shamun that his followers will respect the cease-fire.

The new cabinet is likely to remain at its present size of six members for two or three months at most. The only cabinet formed without the Phalangists and the Socialists in recent years--that of June 1972--lasted less than a month.

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SYRIA

Equipment associated with the Soviet-supplied Scud short-range ballistic-missile system [redacted] in Syria for the first time.

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[redacted] one Scud transporter-erector-launcher and nine Scud resupply transporters near Al Qutayfah, some 20 miles northeast of Damascus. No missiles were seen.

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Scuds have been reported in Syria for more than 18 months, but have never been seen by Westerners. The nine resupply transporters suggest that at least one Scud brigade of at least nine missile launchers has been formed.

The Scud has a range of about 180 miles and could cover virtually all of Israel from southern Syria.

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NOTES

[redacted] Syrian-Israeli [redacted]
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[redacted] Soviet Union [redacted]
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