

The President's Daily Brief

August 23, 1975

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

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PORTUGAL

Leaders of the effort to oust Prime Minister Goncalves are working on plans for a new government. They have instructed their military followers to remain in a "preventive status" this weekend, but not to initiate any action.

The anti-Goncalves group seems confident of its strength and predicts that the Prime Minister will be removed peacefully.

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Costa Gomes will be retained as president under the plan now being formulated

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The 45-year-old Fabiao has avoided the limelight, but he is believed to be in tune with the views of the Antunes group. He has held a number of commands in the African colonies and apparently enjoys broad support in the military.

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Since the new government will need massive foreign economic assistance to solve Portugal's economic problems, the Socialist Party, which has long-standing contacts with other European countries, is expected to play an important role in arranging for foreign aid.

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The center-left Popular Democratic Party will certainly be represented in the next government, and there are indications that the more conservative Social Democratic Center--excluded from the government since Spínola's ouster--may be given a role. There seems to be general agreement that the Communists will be given a slot in the cabinet, but there are differences within the anti-Goncalves group as to which portfolio the Communists should have.

Goncalves, meanwhile, shows no sign of giving up. He is unlikely, however, to find enough support to change the situation. He is claiming support in the lower ranks of all three services and may still hope to demonstrate enough backing to raise the fear of possible civil war and thus improve his bargaining position.

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PORTUGAL-AZORES-MADEIRAS

The center-left Portuguese Popular Democratic Party in the Azores has joined the separatist movement there. Popular Democratic leaders claim the party controls the Azorean Liberation Front in two of the three Azorean administrative districts and is trying to gain control on the main island of Sao Miguel.

Participation of the Popular Democratic Party in the separatist movement should bring to the Front a degree of leadership and organizational skill it has lacked and help dispel its image as representing the interests of only the wealthy class. The party polled 60 percent of the popular vote in the islands in the April election.

Party leaders told the US consul in Ponta Delgada that if the Communists and radical leftists are ousted from the Lisbon government, the move for independence will be slowed but not stopped.

The example in the Azores is encouraging a parallel movement in the Madeira Islands, where there is widespread dissatisfaction with Lisbon's failure to deal with the growing economic problems of the islands. Government inaction has led to the formation of the Front for the Liberation of the Madeiran Archipelago, whose goal is the peaceful attainment of total independence from Portugal. The group has access to arms, however, and has taken credit for the bombing of a national radio transmitter on Madeira.

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JORDAN-SYRIA

Jordan and Syria announced the formation of a Supreme Syrian-Jordanian Command Council, composed of King Husayn and Syrian President Asad, in a communique capping Husayn's five-day visit to Damascus. The communique avoided any mention of a joint military command. This seems designed to relieve Israeli and US apprehension that a military command might be established. The command council, however, will review plans for "coordination and integration" between the two armed forces.

The council is to meet at least once every three months to act on recommendations of the ministerial committee formed in July when Asad visited Jordan.

The prerogatives of the command council appear to be sufficiently broad to permit Husayn to keep his options open and move toward closer military cooperation at his own pace. The King sees benefits in closer cooperation with Syria, but he will be careful not to override the wishes of the Jordanian army, his major power base. The army, for its part, remains skeptical of Syrian motives, fearing that Asad will prevail on the King to allow the fedayeen to re-establish a presence in Jordan. The pro-forma treatment of Palestinian aspirations in the communique may reassure the army for the time being.

The communique lists several other areas in which the two governments are to work together. In addition to planning for a "unified foreign policy," particularly with respect to Arab issues, the command council will discuss coordination of economic and social development plans, the formation of joint economic companies, unification of markets, and establishment of a unified customs policy.

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INDIA-BANGLADESH

The coup in Bangladesh is a significant setback for India, but New Delhi is trying, at least initially, to retain good relations with Dacca rather than undermine the government of President Mushtaque by military intervention or other pressure. New Delhi has given de facto recognition to the new government.

New Delhi's primary concern lies in indications that Dacca's new foreign policy is going to be far less favorable to India. Indian officials assume that Dacca will normalize relations with Pakistan and China, seek closer relations with Washington, and loosen ties with the USSR, India's closest ally and one of the earliest supporters of independent Bangladesh.

Although economic and political problems between the two nations have grown since India secured Bangladesh's independence in 1971, the late President Mujib regarded India as his country's closest ally, and New Delhi was assured of considerable leverage in Dacca. Now India is faced with the prospect of a less friendly and possibly even hostile neighbor--a prospect that is particularly troubling because some of India's most politically unstable states border on Bangladesh. New Delhi is further concerned that Dacca may turn from secularism to an emphasis on Islamic ties, a move that the Indians fear could lead to persecution of the Hindu minority in Bangladesh.

India so far has adopted a wait-and-see attitude toward the new government. This caution is encouraged by evidence of a power struggle in Dacca between middle-grade officers who led the coup and senior officers who supported the plotters but now want to assert their own authority. We have no indication that India is trying to support any particular group or individual.

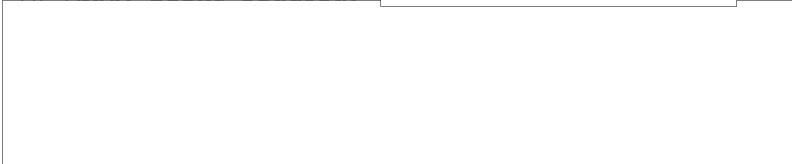
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Realizing that India may be tempted to intervene, Bangladesh is trying to assure New Delhi of its desire for friendly relations. Probably in response to India's concern, Dacca apparently has decided against designating Bangladesh an "Islamic Republic," even though this will disappoint the Islamic countries from which Bangladesh hopes to receive economic aid.

India, too, is trying to maintain the appearance of normal relations. Its high commissioner to Dacca has returned to his post and Indian officials deny rumors of a buildup of Indian military units near the Bangladesh frontier. On Thursday, Prime Minister Gandhi told Ambassador Saxbe that the number of Indian units along the border was, in fact, being reduced.

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New Delhi is clearly shaken by events in Bangladesh, despite the fact that a coup had long been anticipated by Indian officials. This week, Foreign Minister Chavan called off a trip to Brazil in order to deal with the Bangladesh question. A special session of the Indian parliament that was to have convened last Monday has been postponed indefinitely, probably in part because the government does not want Communist members of parliament to make accusations about the coup.

India's Communists have had a field day with the coup, running many stories in leftist newspapers accusing the CIA of direct involvement.

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As long as New Delhi does not perceive a serious threat from Bangladesh, the chances for Indian intervention will decrease. Gandhi would not shrink from intervention if she considered it in India's interest, but for the moment the situation does not seem to call for such action. Her concern will increase markedly, however, if China establishes close relations with Dacca.

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ANGOLA

Portuguese Foreign Minister Ruivo yesterday outlined for Ambassador Carlucci his government's latest initiative for bringing an end to the fighting in Angola. Ruivo said Portugal is attempting to renew discussions among Angola's three liberation groups. He is doubtful that such talks will "meet with much success," but he hopes that the three groups can be brought into some sort of agreement that will last at least until independence, which remains set for November 11.

Basically, the initiative calls for:

--The negotiated withdrawal of all Popular Movement military forces from Luanda.

--The establishment of an "administrative" government, with legislative and defense powers in the hands of a high commissioner and with the former ministers of the defunct transitional government serving as directors general.

--Notification to the UN that the independence agreement signed last January between Portugal and the Angolan liberation groups is suspended.

Portuguese officials already have begun efforts to sell their proposal to the Angolan liberation groups and to leaders of neighboring African states. [redacted] a Portuguese military delegation from Lisbon visited Zambia [redacted] to enlist President Kaunda's support for the plan. The delegation stated that similar approaches would be made to Zaire, Tanzania, and Uganda.

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The commander of the Portuguese air force in Angola recently told the US consul there that he has been working to bring together the leaders of the liberation groups in order to arrange a cease-fire. So far he has had no success.

There is only a slim chance that Angola's liberation groups will agree to the Portuguese plan. Although it offers a temporary political solution,

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it takes away from the three groups many of the powers they had under the transitional regime instituted last January. The Popular Movement is likely to hold out for the territorial gains it has made. Even if an "administrative" government should replace the transitional arrangement, the liberation groups will continue to jockey for predominance and prepare for a resumption of armed struggle after independence.

* * *

Portuguese President Costa Gomes formally requested US assistance yesterday in airlifting at least 140,000 of the 330,000 refugees who want to leave Angola. Lisbon has also approached the British and French for help.

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NOTES

The Turkish general staff yesterday established new procedures which prohibit US air force flights through Incirlik air base to third countries.

Such flights must now be routed through civilian airports at Istanbul and Ankara. The move apparently is not a new effort to press the US Congress to lift the arms embargo, but is rather the implementation of the Turkish government's earlier decision to restrict operations at Incirlik to NATO-related activities. Ankara appears willing to await the result of a new vote by the US Congress on the arms embargo before taking further action against the bases.

* * *

President Suharto apparently hopes to get explicit Portuguese support for Indonesian intervention in Timor to restore order.

[redacted]
[redacted] Jakarta will ask Lisbon to initiate a request [redacted] for Indonesian assistance. The Portuguese realize they are in no position to stop the fighting in Timor. Consequently, they may well give the Indonesian approach a sympathetic hearing.

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