

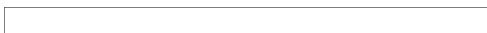


The President's Daily Brief

September 16, 1975

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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LEBANON

Prime Minister Rashid Karami has won the support of all major Lebanese and Palestinian leaders for his decision to use the army to contain violence. Sporadic and sometimes intense fighting has continued during the past few days in Beirut, Tripoli, and the northern town of Bayt Millit, but it has not sparked a resumption of widespread clashes between Christians and Muslims.

The most serious incident occurred early yesterday morning, when 12 members of the radical "October 24 Movement" were killed in a firefight at an army roadblock south of Tripoli. This was the first time the army had become directly involved in the fighting.

There are now approximately 2,000 army troops performing internal security functions in northern Lebanon. Fatah officials [redacted] have acceded to the request of Minister of Interior Shamun that Palestinian police units that have been assisting Lebanese internal security forces remain in place to help newly arrived army units.

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Lebanese leftists, who in the past have often received fedayeen backing, have been hurt by the decision of the principal commando leaders to back Karami. Zuhayr Muhsin, chief of Saiqa, has made the most forceful statement in support of the Prime Minister, but high-level Fatah officials joined him late last week in trying to convince Lebanese and Palestinian leftists to lay down their arms.

Fatah leaders, including Yasir Arafat [redacted] [redacted] are impressed with the performance of both Karami and Shamun [redacted]

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[redacted] Leaders of Lebanon's disadvantaged Shia Muslim community, who sometimes cooperate with the Lebanese leftists, have spoken out on Karami's behalf. They have been joined by Muslim and Christian political leaders, by leaders of the large Sunni Muslim sect, and by the Maronite Christian patriarch.

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This combination of support suggests that Lebanese political and security officials are succeeding--for the moment, at least--in their strategy of gradually transforming the character of the fighting in Lebanon from a Christian-Muslim dispute to one between moderates and leftists. The government believes that if it can retain the support or neutrality of the major political and religious groups, it will be able to contain the Lebanese leftists and the fedayeen rejectionists.

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FEDAYEEN

The fedayeen who seized the Egyptian embassy in Madrid yesterday apparently created a special group for this operation. The unit, named "Martyr Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni" after a Palestinian hero killed by Israeli forces in 1948, has not been seen before.

All the fedayeen groups that engage in international terrorism have followed this practice, but it has been favored most by terrorists who leave the major commando groups to operate more or less independently with Libyan or Iraqi support.

[redacted] the terrorists may belong to the Libyan-supported Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command.

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Leaders of all the fedayeen groups are angry with Egypt's President Sadat for agreeing to a second Egyptian-Israeli interim agreement without securing any concessions for the Palestinians. Emboldened by Syria's harsh criticism of the accord, even the normally moderate Saiqa group--which is controlled by Damascus--attempted a terrorist operation in the Netherlands early this month.

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[redacted]

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Yasir Arafat, chief of the Palestine Liberation Organization and of Fatah, has been careful not to burn his bridges to Egypt by endorsing personal attacks on Sadat, despite the political necessity of his joining in the Palestinian criticism. Arafat [redacted] was [redacted] urgently seeking some opening to negotiations with the US.

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Although it is thus unlikely that Arafat is behind the operation in Madrid, Fatah's terrorist arm, the Black September Organization, might be involved without his knowledge. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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The Egyptians will not allow this incident to upset the second Sinai pact or interfere with future negotiations. The attack on the Egyptian embassy will, nevertheless, further sour Cairo's relations with the PLO. Sadat condemned the Palestinians in a speech yesterday; representatives of several fedayeen groups have in turn denounced Cairo's indictment of "Arafat, the PLO, and all Palestinians" as unnecessarily harsh.

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PORTUGAL

Right-wing groups that support former president Spinoia reportedly are planning a show of strength this weekend in northern Portugal.



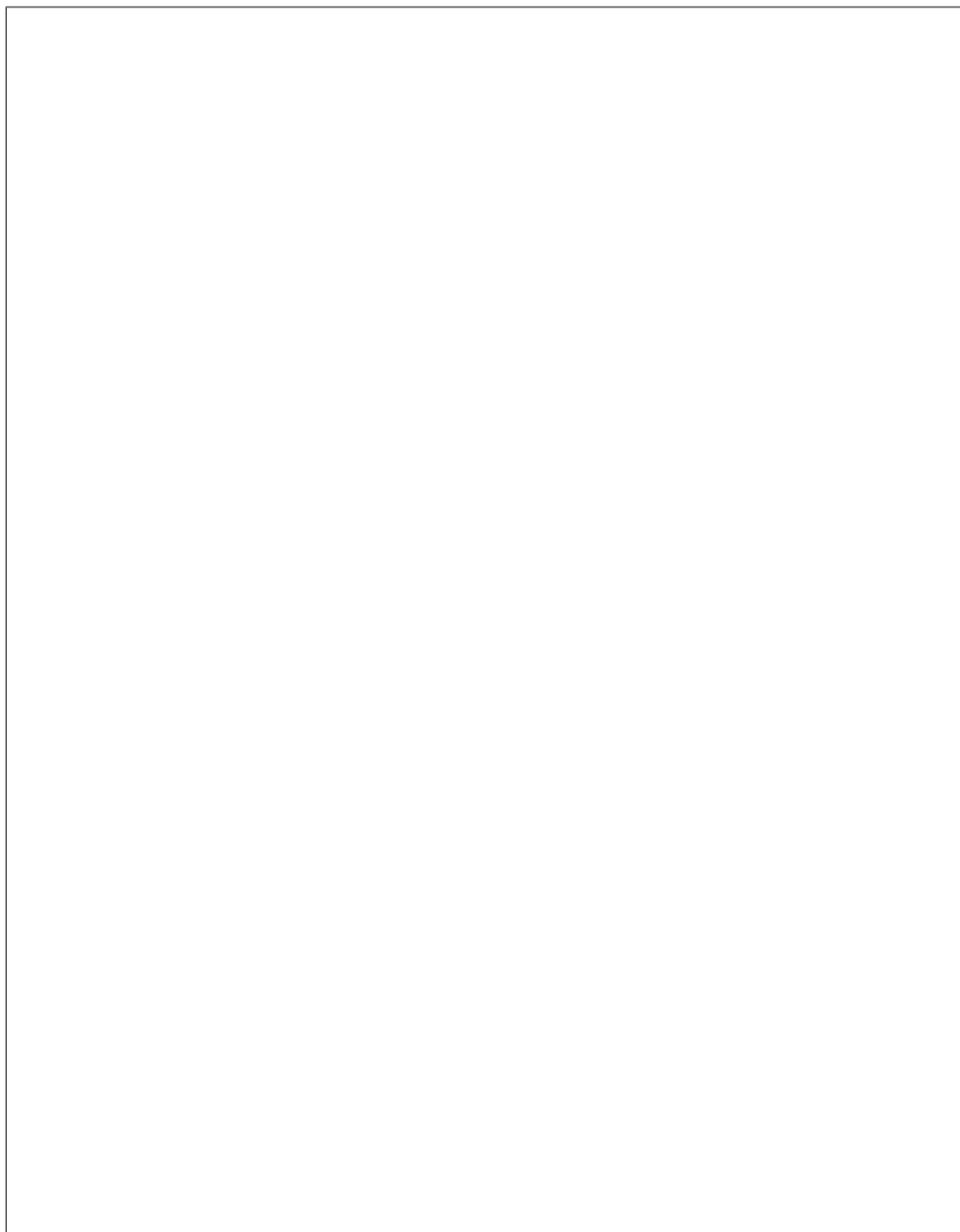
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The US defense attaché in Madrid has learned of another plot by several hundred exiles in Spain who are not supporters of Spinoia. The attaché's source claims they have ambitious plans to use force against the Lisbon government in late September or early October. Initially the exiles may have in mind nothing more than cross-border operations. Should they undertake such action, they might be able to take advantage of anti-Communist sentiment in the north and establish an operational base there.

Exiles are suspected of bombing a radio station in northwestern Portugal on Sunday night and may have been involved in an attempt to take over a station near Porto the same evening.

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NOTES

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Syrian President Asad raised the possibility of unilateral military action to spur negotiations with Israel during a [redacted] session with Newsweek editor Arnaud de Borchgrave.

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Asad said Syria's purpose in reopening hostilities would be to provoke an international crisis and an oil embargo. Asad's remarks to De Borchgrave, [redacted] are an obvious effort to signal Washington that it may be making a serious miscalculation of Syrian patience if it allows Israel to drag its feet on negotiations over the Golan Heights. Previously, Syrian officials have told the US embassy in Damascus that official criticism of the recent Sinai agreement is as much an effort to disarm internal and external Arab critics as an expression of genuine Syrian unhappiness. By using De Borchgrave to convey his concern, Asad is aiming at both Washington and Tel Aviv and is attempting to lend greater urgency to his insistence on negotiations.

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Turkey has received a gift of seven US-built F-5 fighters from Libya.

Libya has previously violated contracts covering sales of US-built military equipment, which call for US approval of any transfer of the equipment to another country. The aircraft, apparently piloted by Turkish crews, arrived at Murted airfield near Ankara on Friday. They are said to be older models, which the Turks are likely to cannibalize for badly needed spare parts. Several weeks ago,

[redacted] that were not operable because of the lack of spare parts. The shutdown of these ten reflected a loss of nearly one third of the base's operational aircraft.

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Chile's military regime celebrated its second anniversary last week with a mass rally in downtown Santiago. The turnout, estimated to be as many as 300,000 persons, was larger and more enthusiastic than regime supporters had anticipated.

The evident sympathy for the government among middle and lower class citizens implied by the impressive turnout can be expected to encourage President Pinochet's belief that the junta has chosen the correct path for his country. In an apparent effort to mollify his critics, however, Pinochet following the rally ordered a dozen former cabinet ministers and senior officials of the Allende administration released from prison. Five Christian Democrats, recently arrested for "clandestine political activities," also were given their freedom.

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