

The President's Daily Brief

December 18, 1975

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

December 18, 1975

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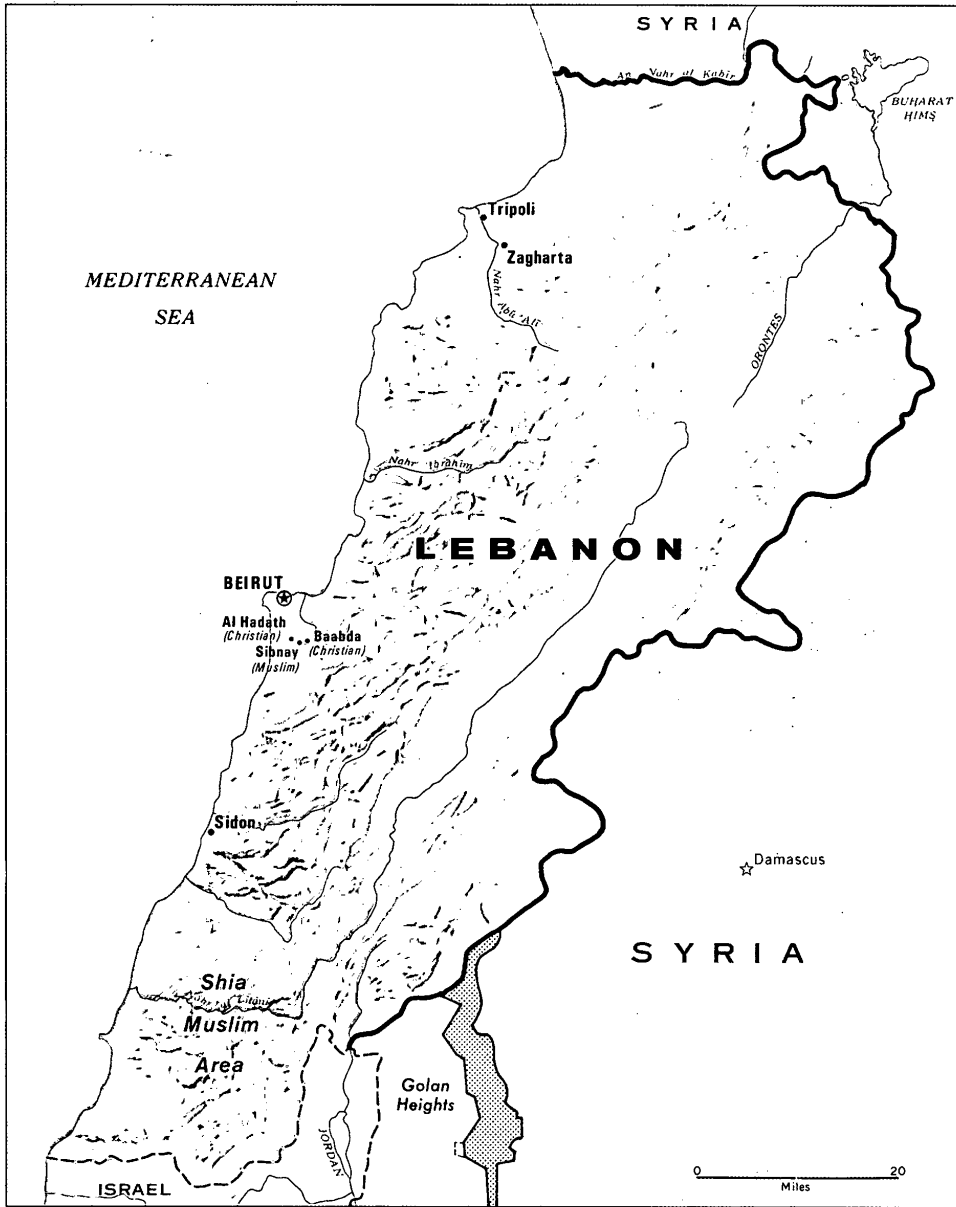
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LEBANON

Scattered shooting was reported in Beirut overnight, but the cease-fire has restored relative calm to the central part of the city and the hotel district. Shelling has been reduced between Christian and Muslim strongholds in the suburbs. Heavy clashes continue in villages southeast of the capital, and in the northern Tripoli-Zagharta area.

On Tuesday, the militia of Camille Shamun's National Liberal Party attacked a Muslim village southeast of Beirut to halt increased sniping directed at two nearby Christian villages. Lebanese security forces intervened to halt a firefight that left at least five persons dead.

The incident so far has not sparked widespread clashes in Beirut, but--because it involved Muslims allied to Kamal Jumblatt's Progressive Socialist Party--it could still seriously complicate political negotiations and lead indirectly to renewed fighting. The leftists have boycotted one session of Prime Minister Karami's higher coordination committee to protest the attack, and Jumblatt will try to exploit it while pushing his political demands.

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In Tripoli [redacted]
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Representatives of five Christian families, led by Franjiyah's son, had called on Karami on Tuesday to apologize for killing Lebanese army troops and to solicit additional military assistance in separating predominantly Muslim Tripoli from Christian Zagharta, the President's hometown.

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The prolonged fighting in Lebanon has led to widespread unemployment and to significant population shifts. As many as 200,000 foreign workers, mostly Syrian and Egyptian, may have left the country altogether, and as many as 40,000 Shia Muslims may have departed Beirut for their family homes in

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southern Lebanon. For the most part, Palestinians have taken over areas of Beirut vacated by these departing workers.

Political activity in Beirut is continuing, but so far to no particular end. The cabinet, the higher coordination committee, and the parliamentary committee considering political reforms have all resumed their regular meetings.

ANGOLA

The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola and the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola are waging new diplomatic offensives in view of the almost certain postponement until after the first of the year of any Organization of African Unity summit on Angola.

National Union President Jonas Savimbi is traveling around trying to drum up support against Cuban and Soviet involvement in Angola. He met with Zairian President Mobutu on Tuesday and currently is in Kampala. He will arrive in Senegal on Friday for talks with President Senghor. Savimbi reportedly will then go on to visit Cameroon and Ivory Coast which, like Senegal, have called for an end to all foreign intervention in Angola. He reportedly also would like to make an appearance at the UN.

Popular Movement Prime Minister Nascimento left Luanda Tuesday night for a visit to Nigeria to cement the ties that have developed between the two regimes since Nigeria extended recognition late last month. Lagos recently decided to extend non-military aid to the Popular Movement regime.

The Nigerians apparently still believe, however, that a government of national unity can be formed in Angola, and Nascimento probably will try to convince them otherwise. The Popular Movement fully realizes that Nigeria is a major voice in African affairs and that its position will carry weight with uncommitted states.


The Nascimento delegation also is taking with it the four South African soldiers captured in recent fighting in central Angola. The white South Africans will be exhibited to the Nigerian government and the international press as added weight for the Popular Movement's case that it is the victim of foreign aggression. Nigeria's recognition was prompted by South African support for the National Union.

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The Popular Movement undoubtedly will contend that the National Union and National Front have sold out to the white minority regime in Pretoria and thus cannot be considered by Africans as true Angolan nationalist groups.

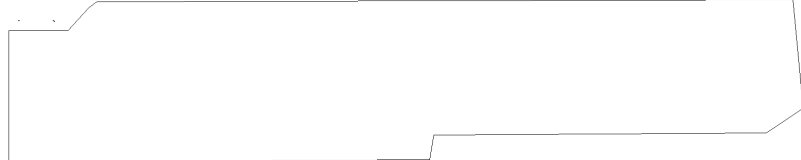
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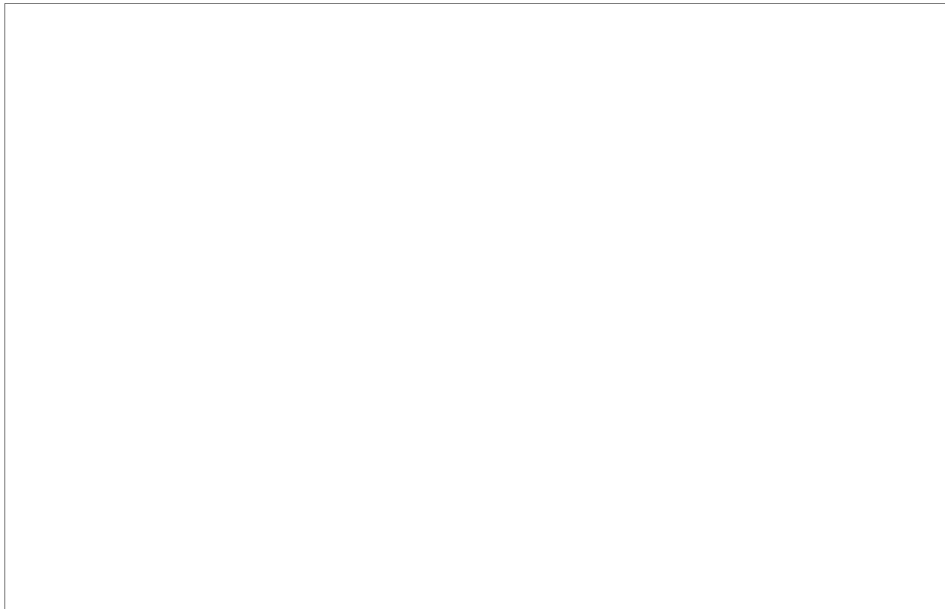
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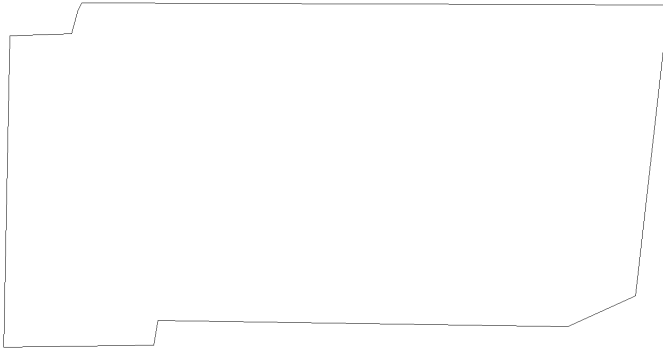


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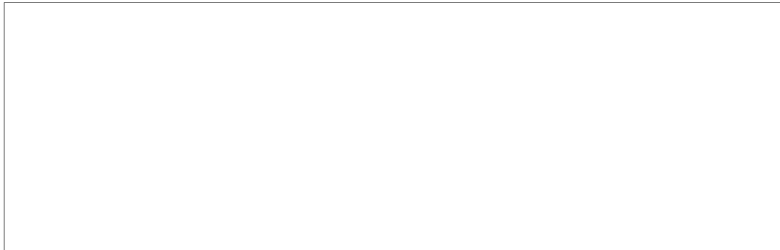
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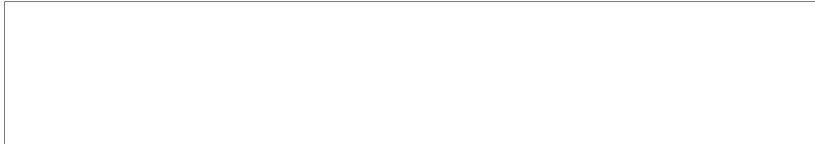
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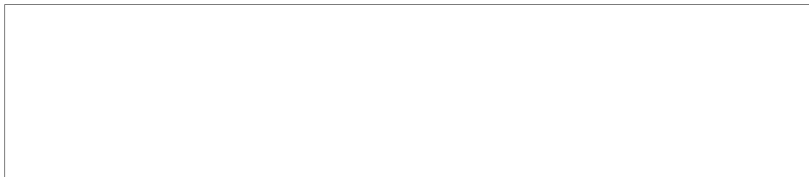
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The Soviet central press has admitted for the first time that both Moscow and Havana are providing military support to the Popular Movement in Angola.

Moscow's decision to make public, even in an unofficial way, its role in Angola coincides with recent military and diplomatic gains of the Popular Movement, and suggests that the Soviets may want to get their fair share of the credit for these successes. The Soviets also may now feel less compelled to mask the dimensions of their own involvement because of the recent revelations in the American press of US support for the Popular Movement's rivals.

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ISRAEL

Prime Minister Rabin is holding the line against any significant policy shifts despite increasing criticism of his handling of a number of issues by centrist and left-wing factions of the ruling Labor Alignment.

Rabin has been attacked for his:

--Apparent readiness to bow to conservative pressures for new Jewish settlements in the occupied territories.

--Inflexible position against negotiations with the Palestinians.

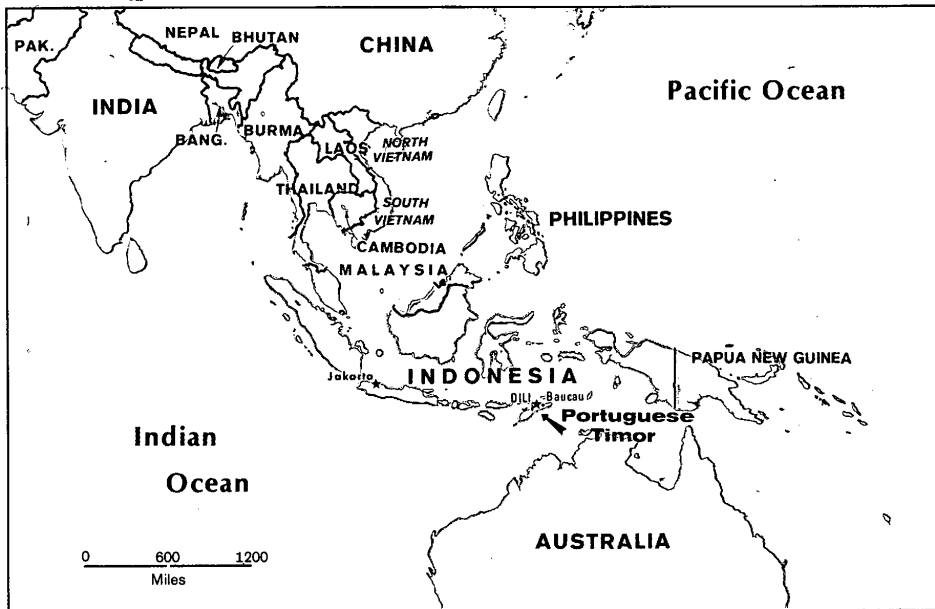
--Failure to consult Labor Party leadership forums in making governmental policy.

The stability of Rabin's fragile coalition depends on his ability to retain the support of both conservatives and centrists. The conservatives wield much more political clout than their cabinet colleagues, however, and Rabin looks to them for his Knesset majority. Labor's centrist Mapai faction is not a cohesive block and, even with the support of various left-wing factions and parties, could not form a government.

The conservatives, together with the right-wing opposition Likud bloc, would need only the support of a handful of Knesset deputies from the Mapai faction to form a government. Any alternative to Rabin, therefore, would be likely to be a conservative who would be even less responsive to pressure from Labor's center and left-wing elements.

For now, neither side seems inclined to permit an open break that could topple the government. Nevertheless, the increased grousing by Foreign Minister Allon and other ministers has placed new strains on the Rabin cabinet's precarious unity.

Any changes Rabin might make in response to the recent criticism are likely to be non-substantive ones, such as toning down his uncompromising public remarks on the Palestinian issue.



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TIMOR

President Suharto, now that he has finally authorized overt intervention in Timor, is unlikely to pull back regardless of the amount of resistance Fretilin can create. He is clearly prepared to commit whatever forces are necessary to restore order and begin a decolonization process that will ensure integration of the colony into Indonesia. The scenario worked out by Indonesian officials is along the lines of the agreements reached with the Portuguese in conferences earlier this year. The major difference is that Jakarta rather than Lisbon will be the administering power for the period of the transition.

Indonesia plans to organize a referendum a few months after order is restored to ratify its fait accompli in Timor. Jakarta hopes to conduct the decolonization process under the auspices of the UN Security Council. Indonesian officials have said they would welcome UN observers for the voting. Local authorities in Timor would have little difficulty restricting the movements of such observers, thereby avoiding embarrassing disclosures about the secrecy of the balloting or fairness of the outcome.

Jakarta expected Portugal to be a willing participant in the behind-the-scenes activity that would engineer a favorable UN resolution and is clearly shocked at Lisbon's strong reaction to the Indonesian invasion. Nevertheless, Indonesia hopes that its friends in the Security Council will be able to hammer out a resolution that in effect recognizes the new status quo.

Immediate Military Prospects

Indonesian forces have now established their control over Portuguese Timor's two principal cities, Dili and Baucau. Fretilin forces are withdrawing to the hills and are not contesting Indonesia's moves against major towns. Any difficulties Jakarta experiences in moving into the remaining well-populated areas more likely will result from command-and-control shortcomings, poor weather, and bad communications than from Fretilin resistance.

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Fretilin initially may try to retake some areas occupied by pro-Indonesian forces, but so long as Indonesian troops are present, Jakarta's overwhelming superiority in men and materiel should prevail.

Pacification of East Timor is in many respects similar to the kind of internal security problems that the Indonesian armed forces have dealt with successfully in other parts of the archipelago. With the departure of the last Portuguese and Australians, there is no longer any known foreign presence other than the Indonesians. Any resistance activity is likely to go largely unobserved by the rest of the world.

Prospects for Guerrilla Resistance

The core of the Fretilin fighting forces consists of Timorese trained under the Portuguese, some of whom advanced as far as sergeant. After the April 1974 coup in Portugal, the Timorese troops evidently became highly politicized through contact with newly arrived Portuguese officers who have since departed. Estimates of the total Fretilin forces range from 5,000 to 10,000, but few of these have had much military training.

Fretilin has enough resources to carry out terrorist acts that could cause some international embarrassment for the Indonesians. Rural dissidence, moreover, will be extremely difficult for Indonesia to eradicate.

Fretilin's successful exploitation of long-standing tribal rivalries will give it more staying power in the countryside than it otherwise would have. The organization apparently has been able to ally itself with enemies of the pro-Indonesian tribal groups in many areas. Fretilin has attracted few international supporters, however, who would be either able or willing to provide it with supplies.

Jakarta's success at restoring order will depend on how effective it is in manipulating the tribal situation and in selecting local rulers. This will be a difficult job for the Indonesians, who do not share a common language with the Timorese and have little knowledge of the tribal politics in Timor.

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The International Dimension

Indonesia is less concerned about lingering dissidence in the countryside than about problems its action in Timor will cause at the United Nations and in Jakarta's bilateral relations, particularly with Australia and the US.

Once Indonesia establishes military control of the towns, it should be able to control the flow of information. Fretilin spokesmen are still active abroad, however, and they will probably be a source for anti-Indonesia propaganda in the international media for some time. There is a large reservoir of sympathy for the Timorese in Australia among both left-wing trade unionists and usually conservative World War II veterans who served in Timor and have an emotional attachment to it.

The main focus of the propaganda battle is likely to be the UN. Jakarta realizes that it will have to take some lumps from Portugal and the OAU bloc. Indonesia's Asian friends will try to prevent resolutions that harshly censure Jakarta or demand restoration of Fretilin. The African bloc already has engineered an expression of anti-Indonesia sentiment in the UN decolonization committee.

Jakarta's friends believe they can head off any move in the Security Council to impose sanctions or otherwise force Indonesia's hand. If those friends can contain the efforts of radical Third World states, international interest in Timor will probably wane very quickly. Even Jakarta's Asian critics, Hanoi and Peking, have given Fretilin only limited media support.

Both China and the Soviet Union are trying to improve their bilateral relations with Indonesia and will not risk this effort by championing Fretilin's cause. India and the Arab states are working on Jakarta's behalf at the UN.

An exile Fretilin group probably will be active for some time, but so long as Jakarta is able to establish effective control of the more heavily populated areas of Timor quickly and without excessive casualties, Fretilin spokesmen will be little more than a nuisance. They will probably be in much the same position as the West Irian separatist movement. Information on continuing resistance in Irian rarely reaches the outside world.

USSR

In a recent assessment of the dismissal of Secretary of Defense Schlesinger, an official of the Soviet Union's USA Institute concludes that US adherence to detente will probably be substantially unchanged.

The author of the article relies heavily on the American press to make his points. Using numerous quotes, he points out that you probably wished to strengthen your position on the eve of the election campaign, but he places the burden of the dismissal primarily on Schlesinger's attitude toward detente. The former defense secretary is called a "stubborn opponent" of detente who had attempted to use the "old bugaboo" of national security to block arms limitations agreements.

The Soviet author also alleges that Schlesinger's "noise" against defense budget cuts contributed to his downfall. The removal of the defense secretary is seen as a victory for Secretary of State Kissinger and a reflection of your desire to "move further down the path of detente."

The article warns, however, that the installation of Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld does not mean that the Pentagon will change its position on detente. Both the new Secretary and his predecessor are seen as holding similar ideological views of the world, and White House denials that Rumsfeld would follow a softer line are underscored. The author ends by citing your pledge to sustain US foreign policy without change and to continue trying to reach a second SALT agreement with the Soviet Union.

The USA Institute official's article cautiously replays, with only slight distortions, the discussion in the US press of the significance of the cabinet changes. The former defense secretary is, however, linked directly to the obstacles in the way of a new SALT agreement. The article, moreover, identifies Secretary Rumsfeld's views with those of Schlesinger more clearly than did initial Soviet coverage of the personnel change. This portrayal of the new Secretary as a "hard-liner" may reflect a Soviet need to maintain the Pentagon as a believable scapegoat for US actions that Moscow does not approve.

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NOTES

Soviet Union

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The East and West German governments plan to announce today their agreement on a "package deal" to improve road and rail transit routes to Berlin.

The accord is the most important single step the two Germanies have taken to improve bilateral affairs since they established diplomatic relations in June 1974. Negotiations were stymied for a long time by several problems, but Chancellor Schmidt evidently saw an opportunity to reap political benefits by concluding these highly visible accords with the East Germans.

The improvement in transit routes should boost his stock with West Berliners, who have considered Schmidt less attentive to their interests than former chancellor Brandt. East Berlin will gain some favorable publicity, as well as coveted hard currency from highway construction projects.

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