



*The President's Daily Brief*

31 October 1969

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*FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY*

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

As Arab mediation efforts go forward in Cairo, fed-ayeen elements have attacked a town overlooking the main road from Syria to southern Lebanon. *(Page 1)*

General Ovando, only five weeks in power as Bolivia's new strongman, is already finding himself on shaky ground. *(Page 2)*

In the Philippines, the Marcos bandwagon is beginning to roll as the presidential campaign enters its last two weeks. *(Page 4)*

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LEBANON

Egyptian newspapers, among them the authoritative Al Ahram, claim that the Lebanese Government has decided to allow the fedayeen freedom of action in its territory. This decision, according to these sources, was to have been revealed yesterday at the talks now under way in Cairo. General Bustani, head of the Lebanese military delegation, and President Hilu are said to have conferred with one another before the decision was reached.

*There is no direct word on this from official sources in Beirut, but the logic of the situation as it has evolved would seemingly impel Hilu toward an essentially laissez-faire policy toward the fedayeen.*

Fedayeen representatives have yet to show up for the Cairo talks. Fatah sources disclosed yesterday that the organization had once again reversed itself and would not be sending representatives.

In Lebanon, the truce proclaimed Tuesday ended yesterday amid fedayeen charges that the government had violated it. Whatever the truth to these assertions, the fedayeen lost little time in attacking Rashaya, a town that overlooks the main road from the Syrian border to southern Lebanon.

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BOLIVIA

President Ovando, only five weeks in the job, is already threatened with coups from both the right and the left.

In Washington, Bolivian Ambassador Sanjines has told US officials about reports from his personal friends, some in fairly high government posts. The gist of his information is that many military officers, especially those who worked with President Barrientos, are dissatisfied and disturbed by Ovando's performance thus far. They resent his seeming obeisance to the civilians advocating leftist and nationalistic policies. These officers want a return to the old policies and an improvement in relations with the US. Sanjines said that talk of a coup is increasing among this group.

For their part, the radicals--who seem to be following the lead of Minister of Mines Quiroga--are also less than enchanted with Ovando. Although they have been able to push him into his present position, they fear they may not be able to nudge him any further. According to Sanjines, this group would like to replace Ovando--and Quiroga, we know, would like to be president.

*We must remember that Sanjines has his own prejudices and biases.*

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*We know that Quiroga is sharp and ambitious and suspect that he has surrounded himself with some powerful allies (see The President's Daily Brief of 29 September). We also know that Bolivian military men in general and followers of Barrientos in particular are not pleased with the present trend. They may well have lost respect for Ovando.*

(continued)

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*Ovando is not clever enough to play these groups against each other for very long. Ambassador Sanjines predicts a series of coups and countercoups in the near future, which is certainly possible--although at present we have no firm evidence to help us evaluate his forecast.*

*Ovando has been trying to build up popular support*

*[redacted] because it would help him stare down his political enemies. He has made some progress, but the initially favorable reception given his economic austerity program will change as the public begins to feel the pinch. For one thing, he will have to renege on his promise to raise miners' wages. All in all, it looks like a bad year for Bolivia and for US-Bolivian relations.*

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PHILIPPINES

President Marcos' election campaign is gaining momentum, and he now stands a good chance to become on 11 November the first Philippine president in history to be elected to a second term. With less than two weeks of the campaign left, Marcos has picked up important independent backing.

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*For a time in September, opposition candidate Sergio Osmena of the Liberal Party threatened to make a close race of it. However, beset by party factionalism and money problems, he has not been able to keep up the pace. It seems unlikely that he can now call forth the last-minute surge needed to beat Marcos.*

Relations with the US have assumed more than usual prominence in a Philippine election campaign. Both candidates have felt compelled to compete with one another in promising to seek clear acknowledgment of Philippine sovereignty over US bases and personnel stationed in the country.

The campaign has typically centered on name-calling and charges of corruption, but by Philippine standards there has been little violence so far. Intense press scrutiny and vigorous if uncustomary monitoring by the presidentially appointed Commissioner on Elections seem to have prompted the parties to hold back on traditional strongarm tactics.

*Some voter intimidation is still possible, however. Marcos, still shaken by Osmena's early showing, is likely to leave nothing to chance.*

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NOTES

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Nationalist China - Israel:

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Israel-Egypt: Israel, using a new tactic in its harassment of the Egyptians, has announced it carried out three small helicopter raids along the Gulf of Suez in the past ten days

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This kind of activity is probably conducted more for its nuisance value and psychological effect than to inflict heavy damage. But it may divert more Egyptian troops to this area.

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