

The President's Daily Brief

21 April 1973

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~~*Top Secret*~~



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LATE ITEM

Cambodia: Lon Nol has accepted Republican Party leader Sirik Matak's proposal for a four-man supreme political council with authority divided equally among the members--Lon Nol, Matak, former chief of state Cheng Heng, and former first deputy prime minister In Tam. [redacted]

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Lon Nol could not accept dissolution of the pro-government legislature and the immediate calling of new elections, but after discussion accepted Matak's suggestion that the National Assembly be indefinitely prorogued, rather than dissolved. Lon Nol said he is ready to announce creation of the council as soon as Matak has prepared an action program, possibly as early as this evening. As of yesterday, Matak was planning to contact Cheng Heng and In Tam for contributions to his action program.

Matak told the source he is quite confident that Lon Nol will follow through on the agreement.

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Lenin's birthday yesterday was the occasion for upbeat treatment of US-Soviet relations. *(Page 1)*



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The French Government is falsely denying that any French-built Libyan Mirage aircraft have been moved to Egypt. *(Page 3)*

President Bhutto is withdrawing Pakistani pilots from Libya. *(Page 4)*

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USSR

Politburo candidate-member Ustinov gave a generally upbeat treatment of US-Soviet relations at yesterday's Kremlin meeting marking Lenin's birthday. According to TASS, Ustinov characterized the summit last May as a "turning point in the normalization of ties with the US," but added that the USSR saw room for further improvement. He took the line that significant new steps are possible "in the course of further contacts," but cautioned that both sides must "travel the road jointly."

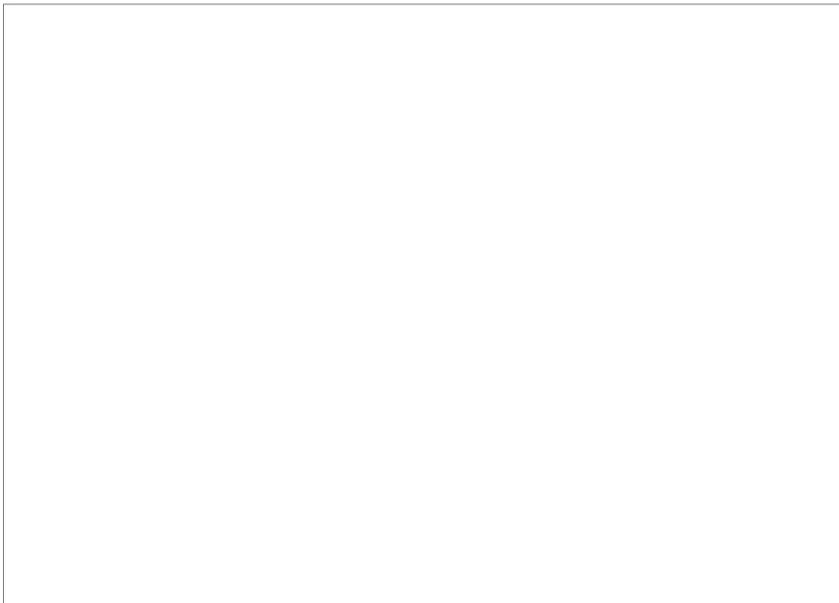
Ustinov minced few words in castigating Chinese policies. Quoting from Lenin, he branded Peking's behavior "strange and monstrous" and permeated with anti-Sovietism. At this, the Chinese chargé dutifully marched out.

Ustinov reiterated Soviet support for the Vietnamese in consolidating the "peace achieved" in the Paris Accords, but made no criticism of recent US actions in Indochina.

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FRANCE-LIBYA-EGYPT

Paris continues to deny, falsely, that Libya has moved any of its French-built Mirage aircraft to Egypt. The Foreign Ministry this week told US Embassy officials that all 71 Libyan Mirages were still stationed in Libya. According to the Ministry, on April 10 and 11 twenty of the Mirages were transferred from Uqba bin Nafi Airfield near Tripoli to Nasir Airfield near the Egyptian border. Earlier, the French ambassador to Libya had stated that some of the aircraft had moved to Nasir Airfield for security reasons, but that none had been transferred to Egypt.

These denials are contradicted [redacted]

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-- [redacted]

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[redacted] yes-
terday that a squadron of 20 Mirages has left Libya and is located in Egypt. Egyptian pilots and ground crews connected with this squadron also have returned home. Other Mirages serviced by French technicians are still in Libya.

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[redacted]

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[redacted]

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[redacted]

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The contract governing the sale of Mirages to Libya prohibits their transfer to a third country and the French probably will persist in their denials until irrefutable evidence is produced. In the meantime, France is likely to refrain from any public comment while it tries to work out a new understanding with the Libyans.

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NOTES

Pakistan-Libya: President Bhutto is withdrawing Pakistani pilots from Libya. Bhutto says he is fearful that the pilots would become involved in a Libyan-instigated incident involving the US. Pakistan has an air force contingent of about 75 men--including pilots--in Libya now. Libyan President Qadhafi recently asked Bhutto to provide 20 more pilots, but they may not have arrived yet in Libya.

Vietnam: [redacted] since mid-March the Communists have extended their DMZ pipeline southward to Route 9 in eastern Quang Tri Province, where they are building a petroleum storage facility. The depot's location, some ten miles northwest of Quang Tri City, will allow the Communists to distribute petroleum to their units throughout the province.

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Bangladesh-Pakistan: Dacca has purchased 40,000 tons of Pakistani rice from a US trading firm for delivery next month. Until now, the Bangladesh Government had refused to accept Pakistani goods even through third parties. Dacca's decision probably was prompted by the recent 40-percent rise in domestic rice prices and by the general world rice shortage. The decision also reflects the increased flexibility in Dacca's policy toward Islamabad.

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