



The President's Daily Brief

September 8, 1975

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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PORTUGAL

President Costa Gomes and Prime Minister - designate Azevedo discussed formation of a new government this weekend with representatives of six of the country's political parties. According to Lisbon radio, present speculation is that a coalition comprising the Socialists, the center-left Popular Democrats, and the Communists will be expanded to include members of the anti-Communist Melo Antunes faction.

In addition to these parties, talks have also been held with the hard-line pro-Communist Movement of the Socialist Left, the Communist front Popular Democratic Movement, and the center-right Social Democratic Center. It is believed these parties will not participate in the government, but have only been consulted to secure multiparty support.

There has been very little reaction to Friday's rump session of the Armed Forces General Assembly and the ouster of former prime minister Goncalves. Goncalves' supporters appear to feel that they have suffered a reversal. On Saturday evening his entire pro-Communist cabinet resigned, stating that it could no longer continue because Friday's events had fundamentally altered the political situation. The resignations came despite an appeal by Costa Gomes to stay on until the new cabinet is formed.



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The first reaction from the parties came from a leading Popular Democrat who demanded that the ruling Armed Forces Movement be dissolved, that the

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Revolutionary Council be scrapped, and that the military be subordinated to a democratic, civilian administration. He was probably seeking to gain a strong position for his party in the new government.

Army Chief of Staff Fabiao said yesterday that the parties are incapable of leading Portugal out of its present crisis

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USSR

The Soviet weekly New Times of September 5 presents the most detailed Soviet criticism of the Sinai accord published to date.

The article raises the following objections to the agreement:

--Israeli withdrawal in Sinai is meaningless because 87.5 percent of the area remains under Israeli occupation.

--The introduction of US technicians is an effort by Tel Aviv to involve the US in Israeli "adventures."

--The agreement has no connection with a general settlement in the Middle East and, in fact, aggravates the basic problem by prolonging Israeli occupation of Arab lands.

The article suggests that the accord tends to divide the Arab cause, one of several implicit digs at Egypt.



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CUBA

A three-day conference focusing on Puerto Rican independence, which convened in Havana on Friday, was a high point in Cuba's propaganda drive on that theme. The meeting was held under the auspices of the Moscow-backed World Peace Conference, but Cuba was the major impetus behind organizing the gathering.

At first glance, the meeting--designated the International Conference of Solidarity with Puerto Rican Independence--appears to run counter to Cuba's pursuit of detente with the US. Actually, the conference complements rather than conflicts with current Cuban foreign policy objectives.

--Prime Minister Castro needs a device to offset the sense of betrayal among Third World countries and international revolutionary movements that a reconciliation with the US would engender. The Puerto Rican issue lends itself particularly to international forums, such as the UN, where Cuba can continue to display its revolutionary credentials.

--Castro apparently believes that, as he sheds his independent policies and moves closer to the Soviet line on detente, he must boost his image at home. It is significant that the Puerto Rican campaign is being pressed by those Cubans who have the closest links to Moscow rather than by Castro's own ex-guerrilla comrades.

--The Cubans see Puerto Rican independence as an issue that has significant appeal in Latin America, yet is a safe one that will cost Havana little as long as it stops short of paramilitary involvement.

--The conference can also be read as a signal from Castro that detente is not synonymous with amity. Castro is convinced that not only Cuba but all of Latin America can gain more from the US if association is governed by confrontation rather than cooperation.

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Puerto Rican independence has been a recurring theme in Cuban propaganda, but it is now being given greater emphasis than heretofore. Castro may choose to soften the campaign from time to time as developments--such as negotiations with Washington--seem to warrant.

He is unlikely, however, to abandon what appears to be an integral part of a revised Cuban policy on Latin America. A central committee decision of last fall calls for Havana's concentration on countries in or bordering on the Caribbean basin instead of diffusing its political resources throughout Latin America.

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NOTE

Prince Sihanouk apparently will leave Peking this week for Cambodia.

He is expected to depart for Phnom Penh on Tuesday or Wednesday, accompanied by his wife, two sons, Prime Minister Penn Nouth, and a few aides and older members of his entourage. The rest of Sihanouk's people in Peking fear that if they return to Cambodia they will be sent to the countryside to work in the fields.

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Most of his followers have applied for French visas. The Chinese are taking the line, however, that the departure of these people is an internal Cambodian matter and have refused to grant them visas unless they receive approval from the Khmer communists.

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