



The President's Daily Brief

November 25, 1975

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Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 11652
exemption category 5B(1)(2)(3)
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the Director of Central Intelligence

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

LEBANON

The suspension of the national dialogue committee meeting yesterday will reduce further the chances for success in private talks going on between Lebanese Christians, Lebanese Muslims, and the Palestinians, and probably will prolong the fighting in Beirut.

The continued fighting and the reduced ability of all government bodies to function effectively appear to have reinforced the determination of the Christian leaders to stay in office and to resist making political concessions.

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The Christians apparently have held to this hard line in their talks with French mediator Couve de Murville. Maronite spokesmen on Sunday reportedly rejected outright a tentative French suggestion that the Christians might reasonably offer the Muslims a 50-50 split in parliament.

The situation in Lebanon reportedly has created serious problems within the Palestine Liberation Organization and the large, less radical fedayeen groups.

[REDACTED] their groups have become preoccupied with Lebanon's domestic problems to the neglect of the struggle against Israel.

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CUBA-US

Havana's interest in improving relations with Washington seems to have abated.

In late 1974 and up until mid-1975, there were signs that the Castro regime--partly because of pressure from Moscow--wanted to better its relationship with the US. Since then interest has appeared to wane. A reversal of this trend in the next several months is unlikely because:

--Havana insists on its "right" to press the Puerto Rican independence issue.

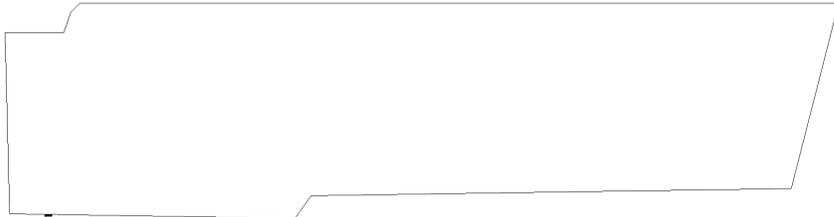
--Escalation of the fighting in Angola has reaccentuated the mutually antagonistic roles of the US and Cuba.

--Pressure from Moscow for better relations between Cuba and the US appears to have lessened.

--The partial lifting of US economic sanctions in August has reduced pressures to achieve a reconciliation.

--Havana's first party congress next month is expected to include heightened anti-US rhetoric.

--The visit of Panama's General Torrijos to Cuba in January is likely to produce further anti-US rhetoric from Havana in support of Panama's canal claim.



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Regime officials appear convinced that Cuba has more to lose from compromising its revolutionary reputation than from retarding progress toward improved relations with Washington.

CUBA-ANGOLA



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More Cuban troops and materiel appear moving to Africa. A Cuban merchant ship seems to be headed there, and a second ship, which reportedly had earlier taken troops to Angola, was seen by a Western diplomat loading cargo and "many young men" in Havana harbor in late October. If these sailings are confirmed, they will bring to at least seven the number of trips made by Cuban ships carrying men and arms to Angola for the Popular Movement.



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THAILAND

Foreign Minister Chatchai will arrive in Washington today to discuss the future of US airbases in Thailand, the disposition of aircraft flown to Thailand from Vietnam in the last days of the Vietnam war, and the status of US military and economic assistance. Chatchai may request US assistance in establishing an indigenous arms industry and may seek to reduce the number of military advisers by at least one third.

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According to the US embassy in Bangkok, Chatchai hopes to gain national stature as the man who liquidated the American role in Thailand. In the early days of the Khukrit government last spring, Chatchai was responsible for the policy statement calling for the withdrawal of US forces by March of 1976.

Chatchai also successfully reduced the authority of the military command in dealing with the US presence in Thailand. Chatchai and his ministry have acquired an increasingly important voice regarding the closure of US bases and related problems.

Chatchai is by no means free to determine policy, even though he has a significant impact on its formulation.

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The success of Bangkok's efforts to improve relations with China has allowed Chatchai's opponents to argue effectively that with close links to Peking there is no longer a compelling reason for extensive concessions to Hanoi.

NOTES

Egyptian Vice President Mubarak told an interviewer in Sudan last week that Syria could not necessarily count on Egyptian support if it initiated an attack on Israel.

Mubarak's statement was the most direct suggestion by an Egyptian official that Cairo might stand aside in such circumstances. President Sadat and other Egyptians have always skirted the issue by affirming their belief that Syria would not attack in any case. Mubarak said Egypt supports Syria but that coordination would be necessary before any warfare is begun. The statements were picked up by all major Egyptian papers.

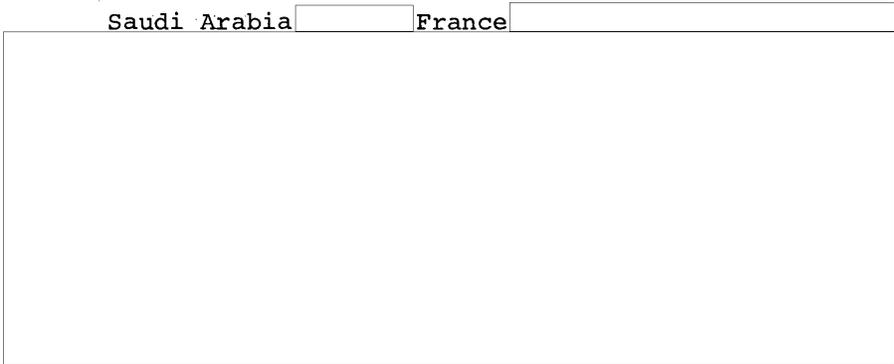
Egypt's critics will regard Mubarak's remarks as proof of their charge that Cairo has turned its back on other Arabs since the second Sinai agreement.

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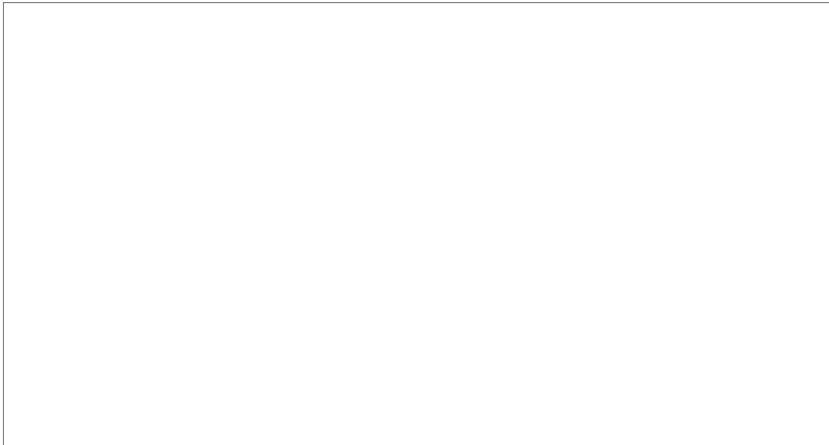
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A military aid to Portuguese President Costa Gomes told the press early this morning that Captain Vasco Lourenco would replace leftist General Otelio de Carvalho as commander of the Lisbon military region.

President Costa Gomes, who as armed forces chief of staff had to approve the change of command, had been reluctant to move against Carvalho. The leftist forces will see the decision as a major setback; Communist-led workers yesterday held a two-hour work stoppage to show support for Carvalho. The Communist Party might seek to use worker demonstrations to force Carvalho's reinstatement and block what it will say is a major shift to the right.

Even if the anti-Communist faction can make the changes stick this time, Carvalho may stay on as commander of the internal security forces, although he would have no direct command of troops in that position.

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SPAIN

The tranquility of the transition period in Spain will depend in large measure on the reaction of the political opposition to what it perceives to be the attitude of King Juan Carlos toward political liberalization.

The initial reaction of the opposition to the King's accession speech last Saturday was mixed. Christian Democratic leader Ruiz Gimenez said he thought it was the most the King could say to the Cortes, which is dominated by right-wingers who would have been affronted by a liberalizing gesture on the eve of Franco's burial.

Other opposition leaders expressed disappointment that the King did not announce specific steps toward opening the political process. The leader of the Spanish Communist Party, Santiago Carrillo, and some of his colleagues in the Communist-dominated Democratic Junta coalition found the speech totally unacceptable.

An analysis of the opposition, its strength, and the role it hopes to play in post-Franco Spain follows.

The Spanish opposition, weakened by nearly four decades of proscription, is composed for the most part of poorly organized remnants of former political parties and regional groups. Many of them have both exile and domestic organizations. Personalities are often as important as ideology in determining political loyalties.

The Communists tried to develop a coalition of opposition factions in the summer of 1974, when they announced the formation of the Democratic Junta. Most elements of Spain's two major non-Communist political groupings--the Socialists and the Christian Democrats--refused to join, and have formed their own coalition.

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The Communist Party

The Communist Party is the strongest and best organized force in the Spanish opposition. It has an estimated 5,000 active members in Spain and at least twice that many abroad, mostly in France. Outlawed since the end of the Civil War, the party has been harshly repressed by the Spanish government--in contrast to the official toleration given many other opposition parties--and its leaders rarely venture into Spain. Santiago Carrillo Solares, now 60 years old, has been secretary general since 1960.

The principal source of Communist strength lies in its dominance over most of the Workers Commissions--illegal labor groups that appeared in the 1960s. Communist organization, discipline, and financial backing have helped make the commissions the most effective protest mechanism available to the Spanish worker. They will provide an important means of exerting pressure on Franco's successors, particularly if Juan Carlos does not establish other avenues to express worker grievances to management.

The Communist Party also has at its disposal a well-oiled propaganda machine in *Radio Espana Independiente*, which broadcasts from Romania. The party has support in the universities and is said to have good connections in the media.

Communist efforts to infiltrate the military have apparently met with little success. The military forces have been a prime target for many years, but there is no evidence of significant penetration. The basic Communist aim is to assure the neutrality of the military during the post-Franco evolution of Spain's political system.

The Communists have not been spared internal dissension. A serious rift reportedly exists between the Madrid Central Committee and the exiled senior leadership in Paris over present party tactics.

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The party is said to be losing "considerable numbers" of young workers and university students to more extremist groups.

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On international issues, Spanish Communist attitudes and positions are close to those of the Italian Communist Party. Carrillo's relations with Moscow have been strained ever since he denounced the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Like the Italians, Carrillo makes a point of stressing his party's independence from Moscow and has criticized Portuguese Communists for their hard-line, revolutionary tactics.

Carrillo professes to favor a more gradual approach in bringing about change. He recently claimed, for example, that he cannot object to the US military bases in Spain as long as the Soviets keep troops in Czechoslovakia.

Rival Coalition

The Platform of Democratic Convergence was formed last summer as a counter to the Communist-controlled Junta. Dominated by Socialists and Christian Democrats, the Platform is composed of some 15 opposition parties, organizations, and trade unions.

Their program calls for the eventual drafting of a new democratic constitution setting up a federal state that would grant autonomy to the component regions. Most of the groups in the Platform would accept a gradual evolution toward Western style democracy, although there is considerable squabbling over how gradual the evolution can be.

The dominant force in the Platform coalition is the Spanish Socialist Workers Party--the major Socialist faction in Spain. The Party and its affiliated illegal trade union, the General Union of Workers, will provide the principal competition to the Communist Party during the transition period. Although clearly smaller and less well organized than the Communists, the Socialists are believed to enjoy widespread popular support.

Four Christian Democratic factions have joined the Platform, and a fifth is expected to join soon. Two Christian Democratic leaders claim that the various factions are collaborating closely. Effective unification, however, appears unlikely.

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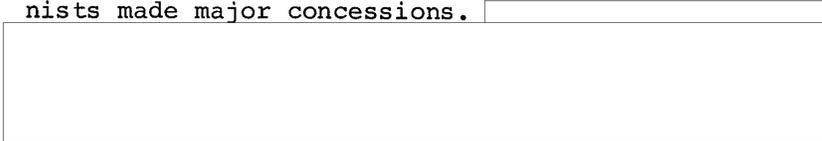
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Cooperation Between Coalitions

Cooperation between the Democratic Junta and the Platform of Democratic Convergence has been limited. The two coalitions have issued two joint communiqués--the first in September condemning the decree law on terrorism and the government's death sentences, and the second in October setting out "objectives" for the transition period.

Agreement was reached after two weeks of arduous negotiations and then only because the Communists made major concessions.

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Major differences separate the two coalitions:

--The Communists and other leaders of the Junta reportedly hope to fuse the two coalitions into one "popular front." Platform leaders are not prepared to go further than establishing a committee of coordination.

--The Junta believes the structure of the government should be completely reorganized. Platform leaders feel that modification of the existing structure would be sufficient.

--There are differences over how to handle demands for autonomy in the Basque provinces and Catalonia.

--Long-standing personal rivalries inhibit joint activity.

There is general agreement, however, on the two most immediate issues that Juan Carlos will have to confront--amnesty for political prisoners and the legalization of political parties. There is deep disagreement within the government as to whether such actions should be taken and whether they should include the Communists.

At this point, Juan Carlos seems likely to exclude the Communists from the benefits of a freer political system. Some members of the opposition

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believe that this isolation would only benefit the Communists, who could be challenged more effectively if they were compelled to compete openly. It would also hurt Juan Carlos' chances of keeping order because the Communists are almost certain to respond by playing a more active spoilers' role.

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Antonio Giron--a powerful politician of the old Falangist school--and other figures of the far right have publicly condemned political parties. Giron and his followers played a major role during the past year in scuttling Prime Minister Arias' moves toward limited pluralism, and they believe there can be no compromise on the principles of the regime.

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