



The President's Daily Brief

February 28, 1976

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~~Top Secret~~

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Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 11652
exemption category 5B(1)(2)(3)
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February 28, 1976

Table of Contents

China: Teng Hsiao-ping is now being attacked by name in wall posters in several parts of China, apparently with official endorsement of some leaders in Peking. (Page 1)

South Africa: Prime Minister Vorster is pessimistic about recent developments in southern Africa, but offers no new policy suggestions. (Page 3)

Notes: India; Angola-Zaire; Algeria; Saudi Arabia - Jordan; Argentina; Congo-USSR (Pages 5, 6, and 7)

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CHINA

The beleaguered Teng Hsiao-ping is now being attacked by name in wall posters in several parts of China, apparently with the official endorsement of some leaders in Peking. The public attacks make Teng's position more precarious and reduce the likelihood that he can retain all of his present positions.

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While Teng's mounting troubles cast further doubt on his political future, they also illustrate his long-standing vulnerability in any succession plans. China's leaders, we now know, became aware that Chou En-lai was terminally ill in 1972. At the time, the leadership had been drastically reduced by the fall of defense minister Lin Piao and his associates.

Given the paucity of choices at the time, Mao and Chou probably had little choice but to bring Teng back from political obscurity. Teng's built-in liability as a once-disgraced official was immediately seized upon by the political left. Teng was rehabilitated in 1973 amid a leftist propaganda barrage defending the "fruits of the cultural revolution," a theme that re-emerged last December in the context of the education debate and which seemed aimed indirectly at Teng.

It is obvious now that Teng's ascension to power was opposed at every step by the left. Chou--and Mao--undoubtedly wanted to put Teng on the Politburo at the party congress in August 1973. Teng, however, was not elevated to that body until

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December of that year--an appointment made with some urgency because the premier was dying.

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It was not until the party and government meetings in January 1975--meetings that apparently were delayed by backstage wrangling--that Teng finally emerged as a leading figure in the party, government, and military bureaucracies and the man in line to succeed Chou.

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Teng's new power gave him enormous confidence, and his behavior throughout 1975 bordered on cockiness. He seemed oblivious to his political vulnerability as the only man in the top leadership who had been ousted during the cultural revolution. Instead of trying, as Chou did, to placate his opponents, he seemed to go out of his way to antagonize them.

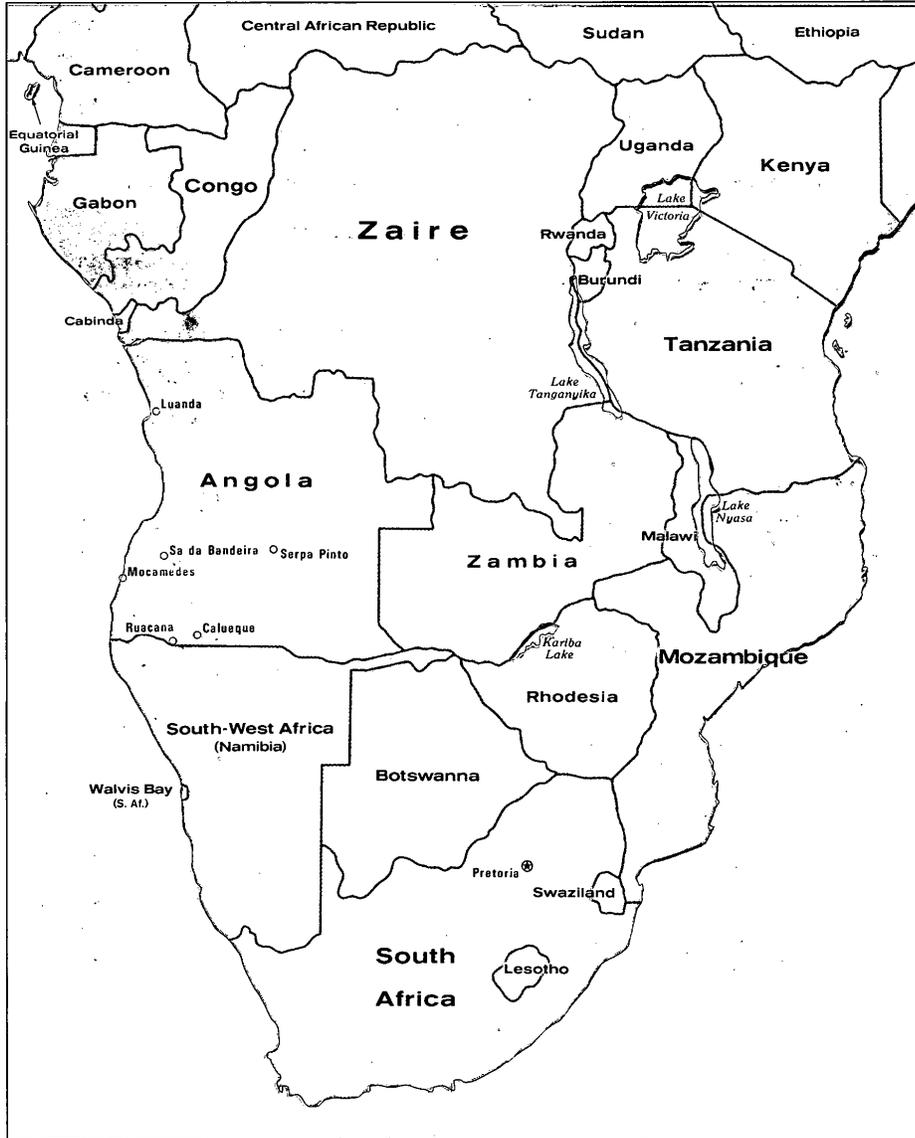
Starting with his speech at the party plenum in January 1975, which included an attack on the cultural revolution, Teng moved to discredit the left in ways that Chou never would have. Teng presumably felt it necessary to pursue this course in order to neutralize his opposition and consolidate his own power. These heavy-handed tactics probably only stiffened leftist opposition to him when the time came to name the new premier.

Teng may also have generated opposition to himself within the Politburo. He probably incurred the enmity of Politburo member Chen Hsi-lien by apparently planning to replace him as commander of the Peking Military Region. Politburo member Chang Chun-chiao could have been instrumental in discrediting Teng because this would leave Chang as the only major figure with important posts in the party, government and army. In addition, Chang, who rose to prominence during the cultural revolution, may have been dismayed at Teng's high-handed treatment of the left.

Finally, Teng has not been as deferential to Mao as Chou was. Foreign visitors have been surprised at Teng's total lack of reference to him, and the Chairman has complained over the past year that no one listens to him. This was a complaint Mao made specifically about Teng prior to the cultural revolution--a concern he did not express when Chou was active.

The array of forces against Teng thus could be quite considerable and may well have been partly of his own making. The propaganda attacks on people in the party taking the capitalist road--a pointed reference to Teng--and the wall poster criticism of him confirm that the left is now engaged in an all-out effort to purge him. Others may merely want to reduce his power.

Southern Africa



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SOUTH AFRICA

Prime Minister Vorster, in a conversation last week with our ambassador, conveyed a strong note of pessimism and disillusionment about recent developments in southern Africa, but offered no new policy suggestions.

Vorster said that South African troops are stationed just inside Angola and at four refugee camps "along or near" the Angolan-Namibian border. He said that Popular Movement and Cuban forces are located some 120 miles from the South African positions. Vorster expects any further advance southward by Popular Movement forces to be done cautiously.

The Prime Minister emphasized that his government had had no direct contacts with the Popular Movement, but said other countries have offered their assistance in helping the two sides reach an understanding. He stated that any agreement would have to include:

--Assurances that Pretoria can complete construction of the Ruacana-Calueque hydroelectric and irrigation projects, which will take another two years, and agreement on the joint use of these projects.

--Arrangements for the care of Angolan refugees, whom the South African government has been supporting at a cost of some \$5 million in four camps along the border.

--Assurances that Namibian insurgents would not be given sanctuary in Angola from which to launch attacks across the border.

Regarding Namibia, Vorster said that events in Angola had not convinced him that he should accelerate the pace of constitutional changes to allow greater participation in government by the territory's different ethnic groups. The Prime Minister still believes that two to three years is a realistic time frame.

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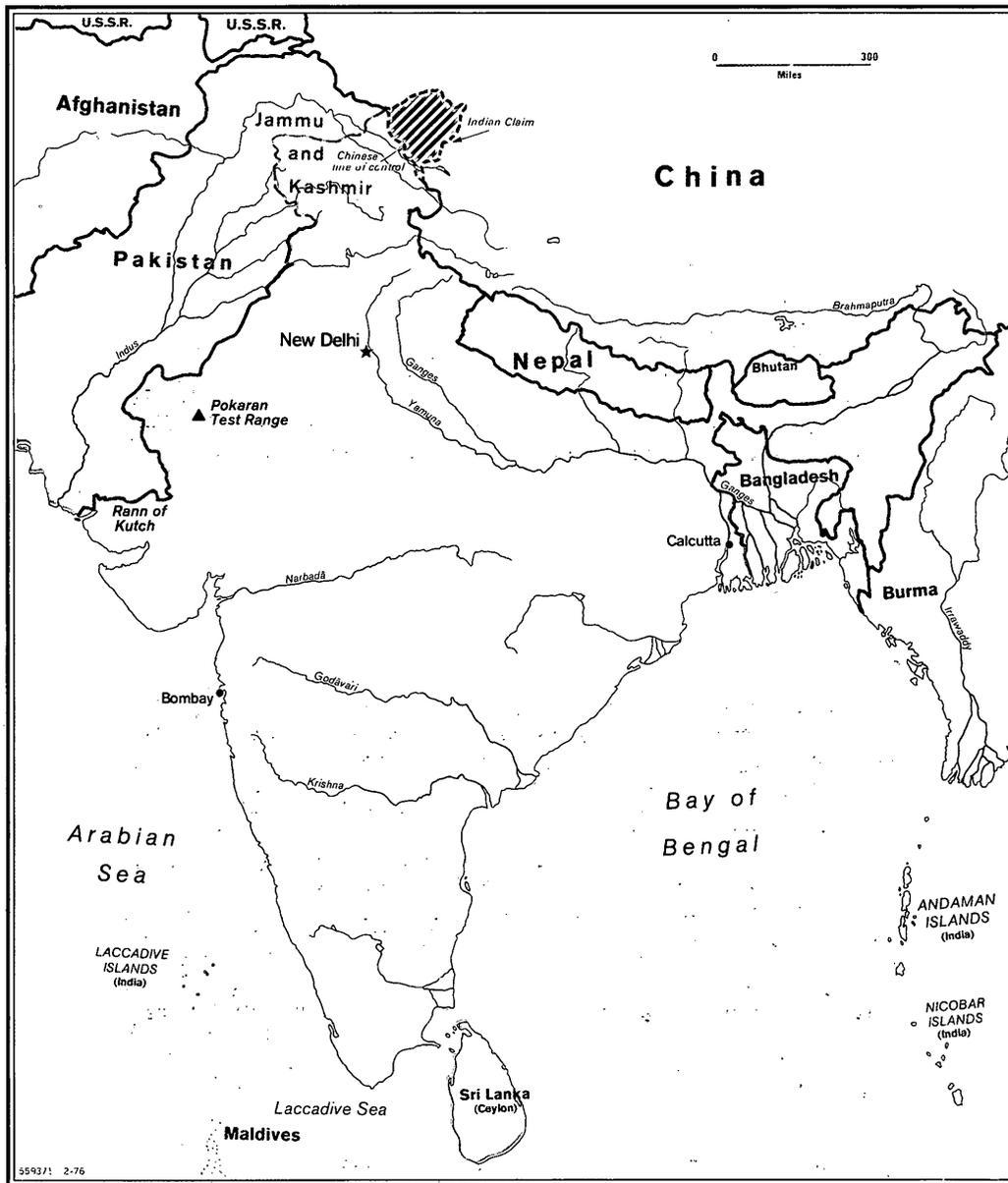
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Vorster believes that the next target for insurgency will be Rhodesia rather than Namibia. He noted the upswing of guerrilla activity there already and said that in time the Soviets and Cubans would be involved in the same way they have been in Angola.

Vorster declared that he has gone as far as he is prepared to go to pressure Prime Minister Ian Smith into arranging a negotiated settlement with Rhodesian nationalist leader Nkomo. Vorster stated emphatically that he would not try to coerce Smith with "sanctions." He has, however, again told Smith that Rhodesia cannot count on South African assistance in the event of a stepped-up insurgency.

Vorster believes Smith is gambling that public opinion in South Africa will force Pretoria to support Rhodesia, particularly if insurgency escalates to a point where white women and children are being killed. He admitted that in this case there would be intense pressure from within South Africa, but gave no hint whether it would cause him to change his policy.

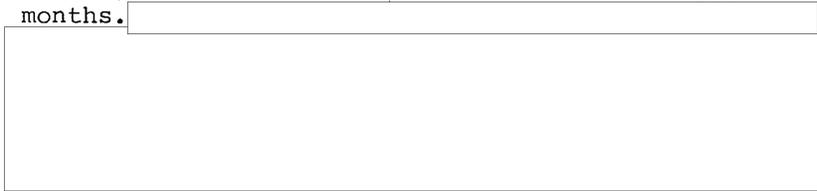
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NOTES

The head of the Indian Department of Atomic Energy has revealed that India has definite plans for a second nuclear test.

He refused to discuss its timing with US mission officials and indicated that a test site had not yet been selected. If a site has not been chosen, a test could not occur for two or three months.



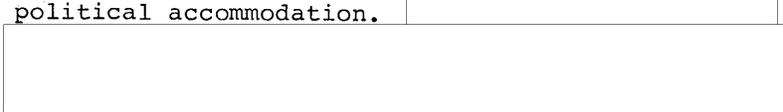
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Negotiations on the resumption of Canadian nuclear aid to India--suspended after the first test--are scheduled to begin next week. The Canadians have said that they will suspend aid indefinitely if a second test is conducted.

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Radio Angola announced yesterday that Popular Movement President Agostinho Neto will meet with Zaire's President Mobutu in Brazzaville this weekend.

The two presidents, ideological foes for more than a decade, have been working through intermediaries for several weeks in an effort to reach a political accommodation.



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The Algerian-backed Polisario Front proclaimed the formation yesterday of the Democratic Saharan Arab Republic, according to Algeria's official news agency.

The Front controls little territory and has in effect set up a government in exile. The announcement is intended to detract from the Moroccan-dominated Saharan territorial assembly's endorsement on Thursday of the agreement with Spain dividing control of the territory between Morocco and Mauritania.

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Moroccan officials are jittery about the possibility of a major Algerian attack in Sahara to back the Polisario guerrillas.

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