



The President's Daily Brief

6 March 1971

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

President Sadat's ambiguous threat to let his military chiefs decide on the resumption of hostilities after 7 March is discussed on *Page 1*.

North Vietnam [redacted] South Vietnam [redacted] Laos. 50X1
(*Page 3*)

Peking appears to have made its case regarding the threat against China posed by allied operations in Laos, and in fact may have begun to take a more relaxed view. (*Page 4*)

Pakistani President Yahya has announced that the postponed session of the National Assembly will convene on 25 March. (*Page 5*)

The ransom deadline has passed, but there is still no word on the whereabouts of the four airmen kidnaped by Turkish extremists. (*Page 6*)

The curbing of inflation in South Vietnam since last July will improve President Thieu's election prospects. (*Page 7*)

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MIDDLE EAST

President Sadat's ambiguous threat to let his military chiefs decide on the resumption of hostilities after 7 March is a calculated Soviet-Egyptian move to bring formal international pressure on Israel. The signal for Sadat's action apparently was the failure of the Soviets to win a four-power statement condemning Israel's recalcitrance on the territorial issue. Egyptian forces have been on a semialert since December, and press reports today assert that they and the Syrian forces are now on full alert.

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Further tightening of Egyptian and Israeli military alert postures can be expected in the wake of Sadat's statement, and there will be increased danger of inadvertent or individual shooting which could then escalate. But a deliberate resumption of military action by the Egyptian armed forces Monday morning does not appear likely at this time.

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Egyptian official and press statements of the past 24 hours have made it clear that Cairo expects a formal condemnation of Israeli intransigence as the minimum price for Egypt's active cooperation in a cease-fire extension. The Soviet representative's insistence on a condemnatory communiqué by the four-power committee in New York indicates Egyptian-Soviet agreement on this point.

(continued)

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Sadat's announcement to Donald Bergus that he had had "intensive talks" with Soviet leaders in Moscow on 1 and 2 March was clearly aimed at conveying the notion that Cairo had Moscow's full concurrence in the decision not to extend the cease-fire. It is, in fact, likely that the Soviet leaders have acquiesced in Cairo's decision, and that the USSR also supports Egypt's determination to pursue immediate tactics aimed at sharp intensification of pressure against Tel Aviv. The Russians would not, however, be sympathetic to any bona fide move by Sadat to leave the Egyptian military the question of a possible resumption of hostilities.

Over recent months the USSR has expended considerable effort urging caution on Cairo's leaders. Lately, to be sure, there has been ample evidence of mounting exasperation among Egyptian and Soviet leaders over what they regard as Washington's failure to bring the Israelis around, despite new signs of flexibility on Cairo's part. Frustrated though Cairo and Moscow may be at the lack of give in Israel's stance, however, there is little reason to believe that they now feel compelled to resort to significant offensive military action. Rather they appear to have decided, in concert, to up the ante and play out their strongest diplomatic cards.

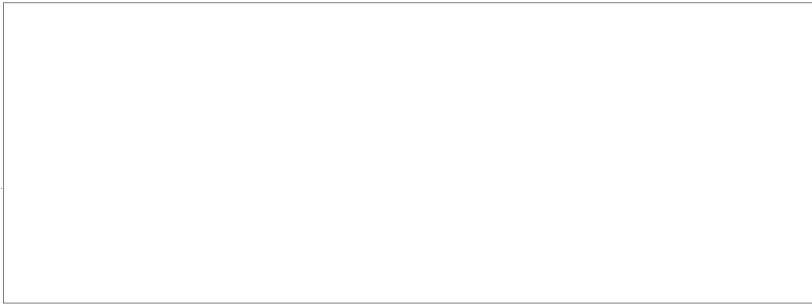
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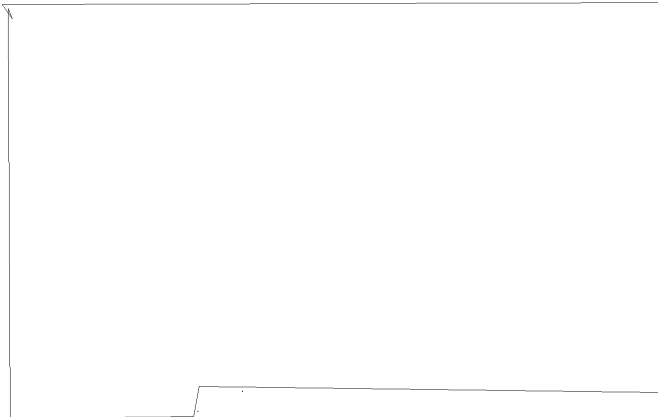
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VIETNAM-LAOS



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COMMUNIST CHINA - INDOCHINA

Peking appears to have made its case regarding the threat against China posed by allied operations in southern Laos, and in fact may have begun to take a more relaxed view of the situation in Laos.

The Chinese still refer occasionally to the government statement of 12 February, which contained the warning that allied actions in Laos threatened China itself, but they have not adverted directly to this "threat" in two weeks. Speeches by two Politburo members during this period discussing current military developments in Indochina did not even mention China's security interests. In addition, references in Chinese media to the possibility of the US using tactical nuclear weapons in Indochina have virtually ceased since President Nixon's statement ruling out this possibility.

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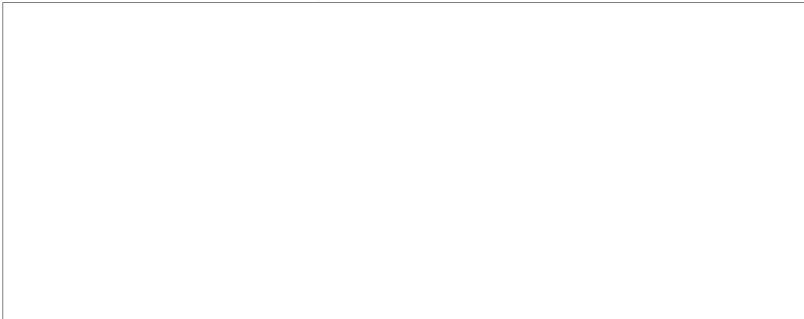
The apparent change in Peking's attitude toward Laos may be one result of top leadership meetings recently held in Peking. These conferences probably were mainly concerned with domestic political problems, but discussions concerning the situation in Indochina were presumably also on the agenda. The two Politburo members appear to have attended some of these meetings, and their comments, as well as those of Chinese officials abroad, almost certainly accurately reflect current regime thinking on Indochina.

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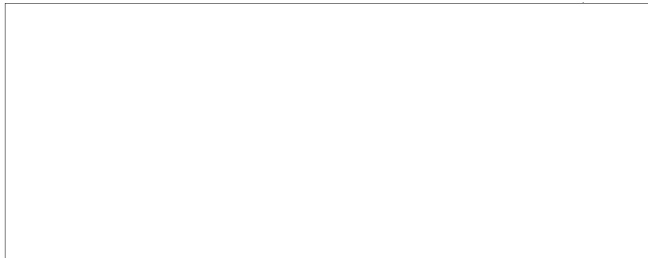
PAKISTAN

President Yahya announced today that the postponed session of the National Assembly will convene on 25 March. He said that his failure to arrange a meeting of political leaders to discuss their differences left him no choice but to proceed with the assembly session. He said that he felt "duty bound to resolve this impasse by taking a decision myself."

We do not have the full text of Yahya's speech, but the tone of his remarks does not suggest much progress in his efforts to bring about a compromise between the East and West Pakistanis.



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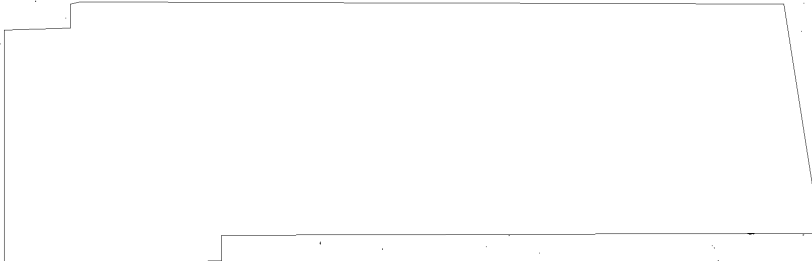
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Yahya talked with Bhutto at some length yesterday, but there was no announcement as to what transpired. After the meeting, a spokesman for Bhutto's party criticized Mujib and his colleagues for their "most unwarranted" reaction to the postponement, but he refused to say whether Bhutto's group is now willing to participate in the assembly.

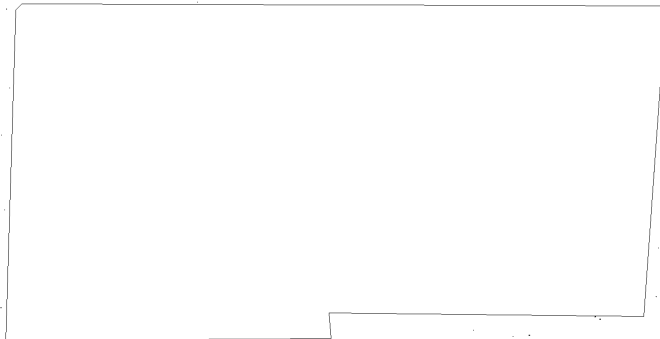
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TURKEY

There is still no word on the whereabouts of the four US airmen kidnaped Thursday. Yesterday's raid on the Middle East Technical University campus by several thousand gendarmes and police, assisted by army helicopters, failed to turn up the kidnapers or their hostages, although it did have the effect of disrupting one of the major centers of leftist extremism in Turkey. In a seven-hour pitched battle between students and the security forces, at least two persons were killed and many wounded. Students barricaded themselves in the dormitories and fought with guns, Molotov cocktails, and sticks of dynamite used as hand grenades. Nearly 200 students were taken into custody.



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NOTE

South Vietnam: Prices in Saigon have risen by only one half of one percent since last July, according to the USAID index, in contrast to an annual rate of nearly 30 percent in 1969 and early 1970. This will remove some steam from one of the most telling issues used against Thieu, and improve his prospects for re-election.

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