



The President's Daily Brief

15 March 1971

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The implications of the Social Democratic Party's setback in the West Berlin elections are discussed on *Page 1*.

In Cambodia, an officer of the elite Khmer Krom forces says he and some of his colleagues believe that Sirik Matak is planning to move against Lon Nol's followers. (*Page 2*)

South Vietnam
(*Page 4*)

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The no-confidence motions introduced against Israeli Prime Minister Meir have virtually no chance of being carried. (*Page 6*)

Mujibur Rahman told the press today that he is taking over the administration of nearly all of East Pakistan. (*Page 7*)

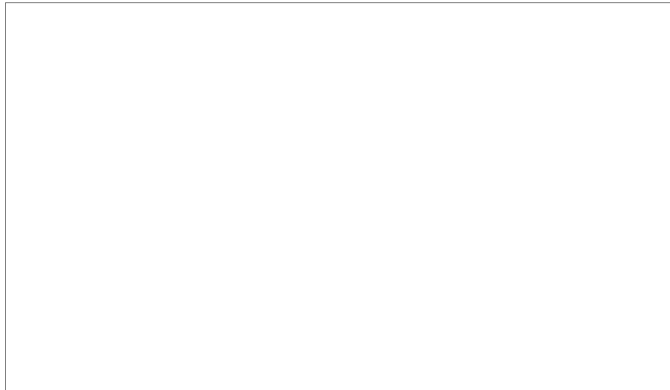
Turkish President Sunay met with military and political leaders over the weekend in his search for an acceptable coalition government. (*Page 8*)

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WEST BERLIN

The ruling Social Democratic Party (SPD) suffered a substantial decline in yesterday's municipal election. The party barely maintained its majority with 50.4 percent of the vote, a loss of 6.5 percent. The opposition Christian Democratic Union (CDU) gained over five percent at the polls, and the small Free Democratic Party also made advances. West Berlin voters again repudiated the Communist Party, although its 2.3 percent did represent a fractional gain.



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Some of the SPD losses are probably attributable to the uninspiring leadership of Schuetz, whose job may now be in some jeopardy. The election outcome is likely to refuel the strife between moderate and left-wing factions of the SPD, who will blame each other for the setback.

The Free Democratic Party, which during the campaign had cited its restraining influence on Ostpolitik in government councils, has strengthened its position as a coalition partner of the SPD in both Bonn and Berlin.

The chances for a better SPD showing yesterday were impaired by the failure of the West Berlin and East German negotiators to reach agreement on 12 March on Easter visits through the wall. The East German representative continued to press for a broad bilateral agreement on relations, which would derogate from the four-power Berlin talks, but he did not categorically reject a one-time Easter visit arrangement.

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CAMBODIA

An officer of the elite Khmer Krom (KK) forces told a US [redacted] attaché in Phnom Penh on Saturday that he and other KK officers believe that Matak is planning on 18 March to arrest all of Lon Nol's key followers--including KK leaders. The officer claimed that such a "royalist" move had been expected for several weeks, and described detailed plans to use KK units in and around Phnom Penh to contest such a coup.

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The officer went on to say that various KK commanders regard the government's recent orders to send their troops on field combat assignments as a ploy to tie down those forces so that they could not interfere with Matak's anticipated power play. As a result of this suspicion, some KK units in Kompong Cham have balked at orders to go on operations along Route 7 in that province.

Since Lon Nol's absence the Khmer Krom units apparently have been largely ignored by Matak and the military establishment. This communications gap, and the growing uncertainty about Lon Nol's future, appear to have fired KK apprehensions and suspicions about Matak's political intentions. There is no evidence to support the rumors about a Matak coup. It is possible that the KK leaders themselves are spreading rumors to justify a move against Matak or, short of that, to impress on him that they intend to play a significant political, as well as military role. It is also possible that the Communists may have planted these rumors to sow dissension.

Whatever the case, Matak may have already allayed KK fears on this matter. Another KK officer told the same US attaché that several KK officers were to meet with Matak last Saturday to discuss their concern about possible events on the 18th. Ambassador Swank's representations to some KK leaders, via the attaché, that they have nothing to fear from Matak and that the US fully supports the present government apparently has had some calming effect on the situation. These leaders indicated to the attaché that they were fully prepared to accept Matak's orders.

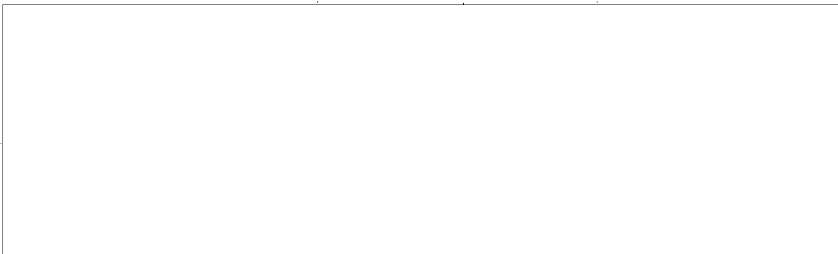
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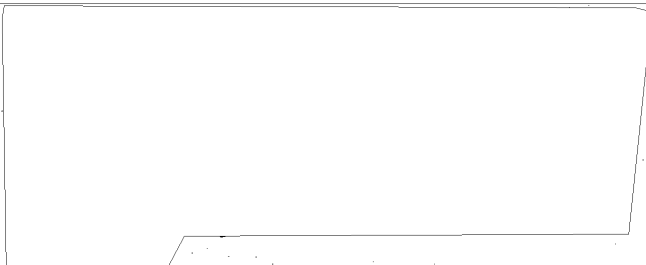
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Nevertheless, the danger still exists that in this charged atmosphere some KK elements could misinterpret government intentions. A number of KK units are located in areas from which they could converge rapidly on Phnom Penh, and they thus have the capability of reacting quickly to any real or fancied threat to Lon Nol and themselves.

Besides the present KK imbroglio, there are indications of other political restiveness in Phnom Penh. Rumors of additional plots and counterplots recently have begun to circulate in the capital. Most, if not all, of these rumors contain elements that make them hard to credit. At a minimum, however, their persistence does indicate some form of maneuvering and jockeying for position among political factions is afoot.



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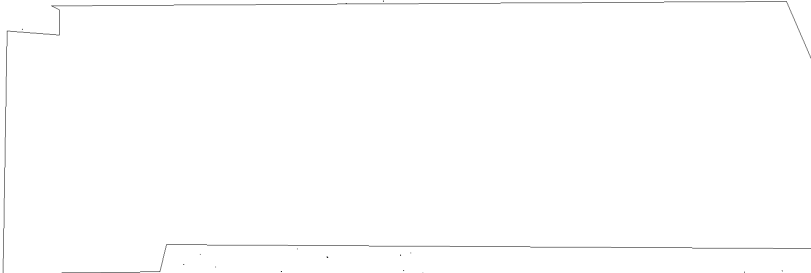


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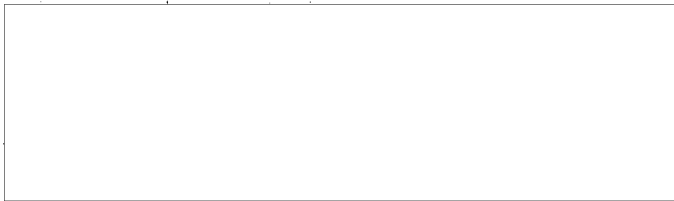
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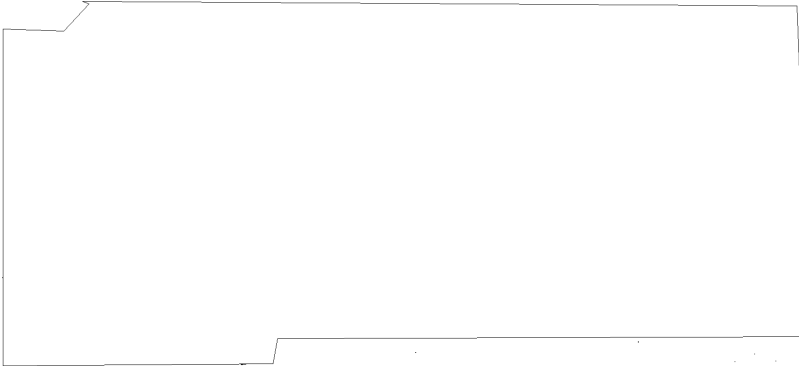
SOUTH VIETNAM



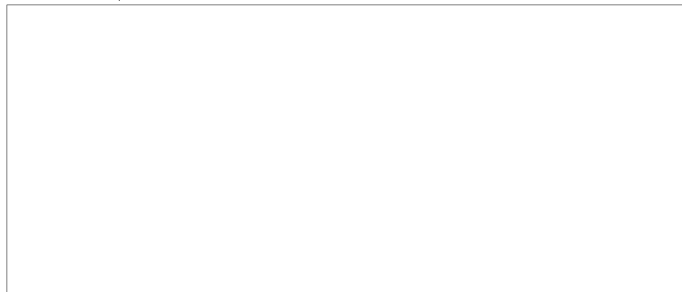
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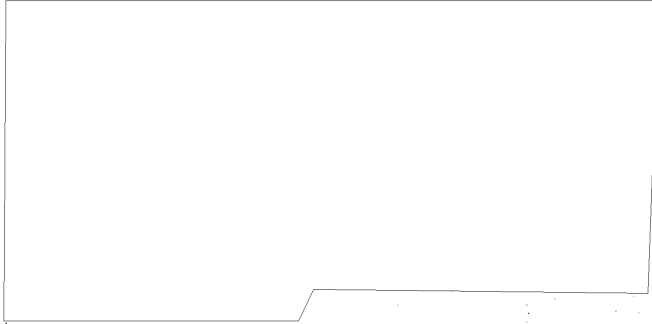
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ISRAEL

Right-wing opposition parties introduced no-confidence motions yesterday to protest proposals made by Prime Minister Meir on ultimate borders. They were reacting to the interview published in the London Times on Saturday, in which Mrs. Meir called for an Israeli presence at Sharm ash-Shaykh and retention of Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, but implied that much of the West Bank would be returned to Jordan.

The Gahal and Free Center parties, which introduced the no-confidence motions, favor retention of most of the occupied territories.

At a cabinet meeting yesterday, Mrs. Meir is reported to have said that her statement reflected only personal suggestions and did not commit the government. Nevertheless, the National Religious Party (NRP), which is a member of the government, announced afterward that it was not satisfied with her explanations and would call for further clarification.

There is practically no chance that the no-confidence motions will be adopted when they are debated on Tuesday. In the unlikely event that the NRP, which advocates retention of the West Bank for religious and historical reasons, should leave the government and vote for the motions, Mrs. Meir's Israel Labor Party and other parties affiliated with it would still control a majority of the Knesset votes. The political tumult caused by Mrs. Meir's statements, however, is an indication of the type of crisis which might occur once the government attempts to adopt an official policy with regard to the disposition of the occupied territories.

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PAKISTAN

According to press reports, Mujibur Rahman claimed early today that he has taken over administration of East Pakistan, except for the cities of Dacca, Comilla, and Jessore. This assumption of power follows one week of a noncooperation campaign called by Mujib, during which he became the de facto ruler of East Pakistan. His announcement may be an attempt to force the West Pakistan - dominated central government to accede to his demand that power in East Pakistan be turned over to elected representatives of the people as a preliminary step before the recently elected National Assembly meets to write a new constitution.

Mujib's action is the closest step he has taken toward a declaration of independence for East Pakistan. It is not yet certain that he prefers such a declaration, except as a last resort. His preference seems to be for some type of confederation between East and West Pakistan in which the eastern province would be virtually autonomous. The central government is unlikely to find a confederation scheme acceptable and will probably resist Mujib's announced take-over attempt.

President Yahya flew to Dacca today to confer with Mujib. The East Pakistani leader has reiterated that he is willing to meet with Yahya without preconditions.

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TURKEY

With Demirel continuing in office on a caretaker basis, President Sunay met over the weekend with military leaders and with representatives of ten political parties in his search for a coalition government that would secure passage of reform legislation and prepare for early elections. Both houses of Parliament have suspended their sessions for the present.

The military are demanding a broad coalition in which members would eschew partisan politics, and they may well insist on naming at least one minister. They would likely endorse Suat Uygur

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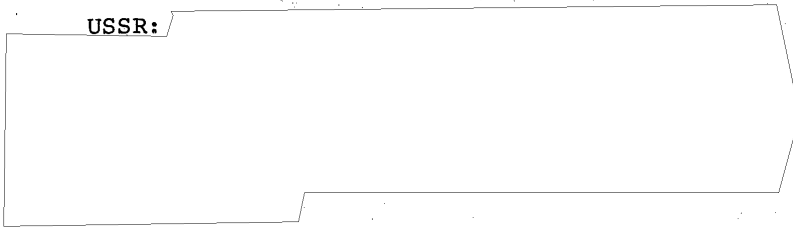
The 67-year-old senator has no political affiliation, and his nine months as interim premier in 1965 were relatively unmarked by political strife.

Sunay could announce the make-up of the interim government today when he is scheduled to address the nation, although it will likely take more time to find an array of acceptable figures who meet the requirements of the military.

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