



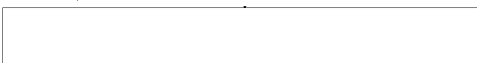
*The President's Daily Brief*

*31 March 1971*

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~~*Top Secret*~~

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

31 March 1971

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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The situation in Pakistan [redacted] appears on  
Page 1.

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South Vietnamese attitudes toward the Laotian operation are viewed on Page 3.

[redacted] Soviet  
Egypt. (Page 5)

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Foreign policy aspects of Brezhnev's party congress speech are analyzed on Page 6.

Egypt-Jordanian relations have worsened over the past several days. (Page 7)

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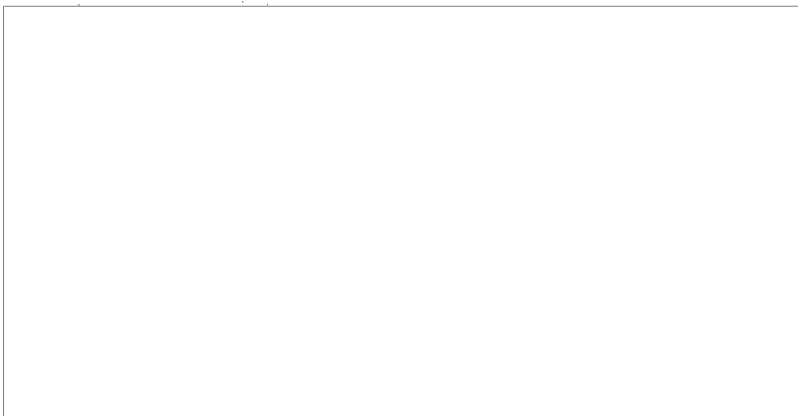
**PAKISTAN**

East Pakistani claims that a major battle is under way in Dacca have no basis. The city remains relatively calm with the army in complete control. In other places, such as the southern port of Chittagong, however, both sides agree that fighting continues, although their accounts differ widely. The military situation appears serious enough to require the government to use air strikes by F-86 jet fighters and to have additional army reinforcements flown in.

The army may originally have hoped that a ruthless campaign would quell the Bengalis quickly. Although it is still possible that resistance might collapse in the next few days, fighting may already have lasted longer than some military men expected.

Evacuation of foreign nationals from East Pakistan continues, with a large contingent of Yugoslavs leaving yesterday. When asked by the US defense attaché, on a contingency basis, the senior air force officer in East Pakistan expressed the view that Dacca airport could handle no more than two evacuation flights a day. The attaché thinks that six a day would be technically feasible. The Pakistanis claim there is no fuel, service, or controller at Chittagong, where over 100 Americans are located, and suggested that in case of necessity it might be best to have them flown to Dacca in Pakistani aircraft.

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SOUTH VIETNAM

Not surprisingly the Laotian operation has added to the political ferment of an election year.

Many independent and progovernment politicians have publicly praised the operation. One moderate opponent of the government told [redacted] that the operation achieved its objective of disrupting Communist supply routes. He thinks this will relieve Communist pressure on the northern provinces, and that as a result the people there feel more secure. A prominent progovernment senator described the operation as a necessary measure, but he argues that the government failed to explain it adequately, and that the population was alarmed by news accounts reporting South Vietnamese forces were in trouble.

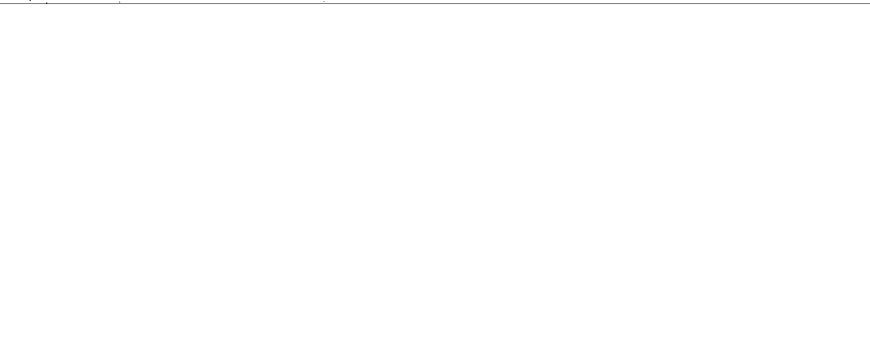
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Public criticism of the operation has been muted, but, [redacted] opponents of the government claim that President Thieu's position has been weakened. One of Big Minh's advisers argues that losses suffered by South Vietnamese forces were too great to justify the operation. Minh and his entourage believe that popular reaction to events in Laos will work to their advantage, and they are now more hopeful of being able to win the presidential election next fall.

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Some outspoken opposition figures privately describe Lam Son 719 as a failure. Even a relatively moderate opposition leader thinks that, whatever the facts, the South Vietnamese people believe the operation failed and will blame Thieu. The same politician believes that at least in psychological terms the Communists have come out on top and he fears that this will lead to a resurgence of Viet Cong terrorist activity, even in Saigon.

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EGYPT-USSR

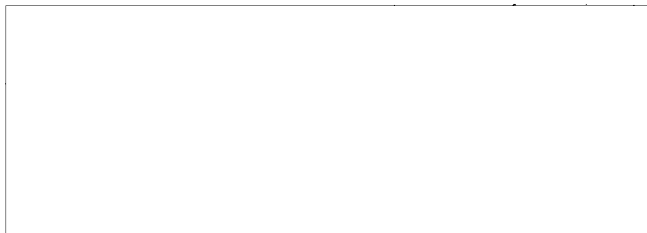


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USSR

Brezhnev's foreign policy statement at the opening session of the party congress alternated between firmness and flexibility. He defended Moscow's past policy toward both the Communist movement and the West in terms suggesting there is little prospect for any major changes in the near future. Though sharply critical of US policies, he took pains to re-endorse the principle of "peaceful coexistence."

Brezhnev served up a potpourri of proposals on disarmament, including a call for a conference of the five nuclear powers on nuclear disarmament. Although this marks the first time the USSR has broached this concept on its own initiative, Moscow has given support to a similar French proposal along these lines.

Brezhnev reiterated the Soviet desire to see SALT produce "positive results," while stressing that the talks can only be successful if "no one seeks unilateral advantage."

His remarks on China routinely combined a firm rejection of Peking's "anti-Soviet line" with a pledge to continue to seek better state relations. The party chief took note of China's territorial claims and the border clashes in 1969 but carefully avoided any hint of saber rattling. He specified the "useful steps" that recently have been taken to improve state ties, but could only offer his audience a hope that a restoration of friendly relations would be achieved in "the long run"--i.e., after Mao.

Brezhnev duly noted a "substantial shift" in relations with West Germany. He contended that the treaties signed by Bonn with the USSR and Poland "confirmed with all precision" the inviolability of postwar borders in Europe and thus contributed to a stable peace. He repeatedly called upon Bonn to ratify the treaties.

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EGYPT-JORDAN

In recent days Cairo has shown its pique over events in Jordan in several ways. Last week it recalled its chairman of the joint Arab committee in Amman which was trying to ease disputes between the government and fedayeen, and last night it announced that all other Egyptian members of the committee were also being withdrawn. Over the weekend Sadat publicly deplored the outbreak of fighting in Jordan and vowed that the Palestinian resistance would not die. On Monday broadcast facilities in Cairo were restored for the Palestinian guerrilla program, the Voice of Fatah--suspended last summer after the Palestinians criticized Nasir's acceptance of the US peace initiative. The program immediately renewed its attacks on the Jordanian Government.

*During the past week the Jordanian Government's continuing efforts to clear cities of armed fedayeen resulted in several clashes in Irbid and some firing incidents in Amman. Cairo views the fedayeen movement as an important element in its effort to apply pressure on Israel to withdraw from occupied territories. Sadat may also believe that a show of support for the guerrillas will improve his own position within Egypt during the current diplomatic maneuvering.*

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