



The President's Daily Brief

November 29, 1974

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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ETHIOPIA

The ruling military council yesterday elected 52-year-old General Teferi Benti as its new chairman. Teferi, who was commander of the Second Division in Eritrea Province, will act only as a figurehead.

Teferi became Second Division commander only in October and lacks broad support either within the division or within the armed forces.

Major Mengistu Hailemariam, the council's first vice chairman, will still be operating behind the scenes. He is not believed to control the council, however, and his present assumption of a leading role is by no means accepted by the armed forces as a whole.

Opposition to the council's arbitrary tactics is widespread, but the opponents are dispersed throughout the military and seem to lack leadership, organization, and a clear sense of purpose. [REDACTED]

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A spokesman for the military council denied to the US embassy on Wednesday press reports that Haile Selassie had been moved to a town outside Addis Ababa to await execution. The spokesman said the deposed emperor is still in the capital under guard for his own protection.

The council also announced that there would be no more summary executions, but held open the possibility that some former officials still under detention would be executed after trial.

The council is proceeding with plans to send reinforcements to fight the Eritrean Liberation Front. The insurgents have refrained from large-scale attacks for several months, but have nevertheless gained control of large parts of the Eritrean countryside as a result of the government's inactivity.

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EGYPT-JORDAN-FEDAYEEN

Egyptian efforts to smooth relations between Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organization may be achieving some success. Salah Khalaf, second in command of Fatah and chief of the Black September Organization

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[redacted] told a press conference on November 27 that the PLO was "prepared to give King Husayn's goodwill a chance." Only a few days earlier, Khalaf had said that the plot to assassinate Husayn in Rabat would not be the last.

The Egyptians take credit for Khalaf's turn-about. An aide to Foreign Minister Fahmi told US embassy officials the Egyptians had written the statement Khalaf used at the press conference. Whether the BSO leader maintains his newly adopted moderation after he leaves Cairo remains to be seen.

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Meanwhile, a PLO crackdown on extremists appears to be under way.

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The arrest by PLO security forces of a number of fedayeen for alleged participation in the recent hijacking of a British Airways VC-10 apparently is part of this move.

In pressing for the crackdown, Yasir Arafat said Fatah can no longer tolerate extremist and undisciplined activities within the fedayeen movement, and that he would purge Fatah of all opposition to his leadership.

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SYRIA-UN

The UN Security Council will this afternoon formally extend the mandate of the UN observer force on the Golan Heights for another six months.

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Resolution 338 calls upon the parties concerned to commence peace negotiations under appropriate auspices, which for Syria presumably means an early resumption of the Geneva talks. The resolution also urges implementation of Resolution 242, which calls for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from territories occupied in the 1967 war.

The group of nonaligned countries at the UN is preparing a draft resolution to meet Syria's condition.

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VIETNAM

Reports from a variety of sources over the past several days have thrown more light on communist preparations for the 1974-75 dry season campaign. The new information generally fits

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call for intense fighting beginning next month.

The coming offensive will be aimed primarily at disrupting Saigon's pacification effort and inflicting heavy losses on government forces. The new reports, many of which are captured documents and defector interrogations, vary with regard to the anticipated timing and intensity of the increase in military action. In some areas, military planning has been completed and the fighting could begin with little or no warning. In others, there are signs that the communists will not launch large-scale attacks until some time after mid-January.

Several documents captured in the delta allude to "counter-pacification" efforts designed to eliminate the government presence in much of the countryside.

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NOTES

Syria-Israel: [REDACTED]

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Saudi Arabia - Pakistan: [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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Mexico-Chile: Mexico's decision to sever relations with Chile was probably taken to curry favor in the Third World by portraying Mexico as a philosophical and political opposite of the Chilean military junta. President Echeverria, moreover, was friendly with the late president Allende and has been decidedly cold toward the Pinochet government. Mexico is also upset at the junta's refusal to allow Chilean citizens such as Allende's sister to take asylum in Mexico.

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