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The President's Daily Brief

September 9, 1975

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

September 9, 1975

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PORTUGAL

Prime Minister - designate Azevedo, after consultation with the political parties, has announced that a new government will be named in two or three days. The anti-Communist faction of Major Melo Antunes, meanwhile, has taken steps to consolidate its position within Portugal's ruling military councils.

The Antunes group, excluded from recent meetings of the Revolutionary Council, quickly made its presence felt when a revamped council met for the first time yesterday. The council decided:

--To appoint Antunes supporter Vasco Lourenco head of a committee to restructure both the Revolutionary Council and the pro-Communist Armed Forces General Assembly.

--To reinstate anti-Communist former council members Melo Antunes and Vitor Alves.

--To prevent unauthorized announcements about military units and their political views.

--To proscribe interviews by military figures other than members of the council, in an apparent attempt to prevent public statements by former prime minister Goncalves and other pro-Communist officers.

With the announced restructuring of the assembly, the council, which since July has been relegated to a purely advisory role, appeared to be reasserting itself as the supreme authority in the country. The council also confirmed the military's intention to play a dominant political role when it launched an investigation into statements made by a local leader of the center-left Popular Democratic Party. The party official had urged that the Armed Forces Movement be dissolved, that the Revolutionary Council be scrapped, and that the military return to its barracks and leave the running of the country to civilian politicians.

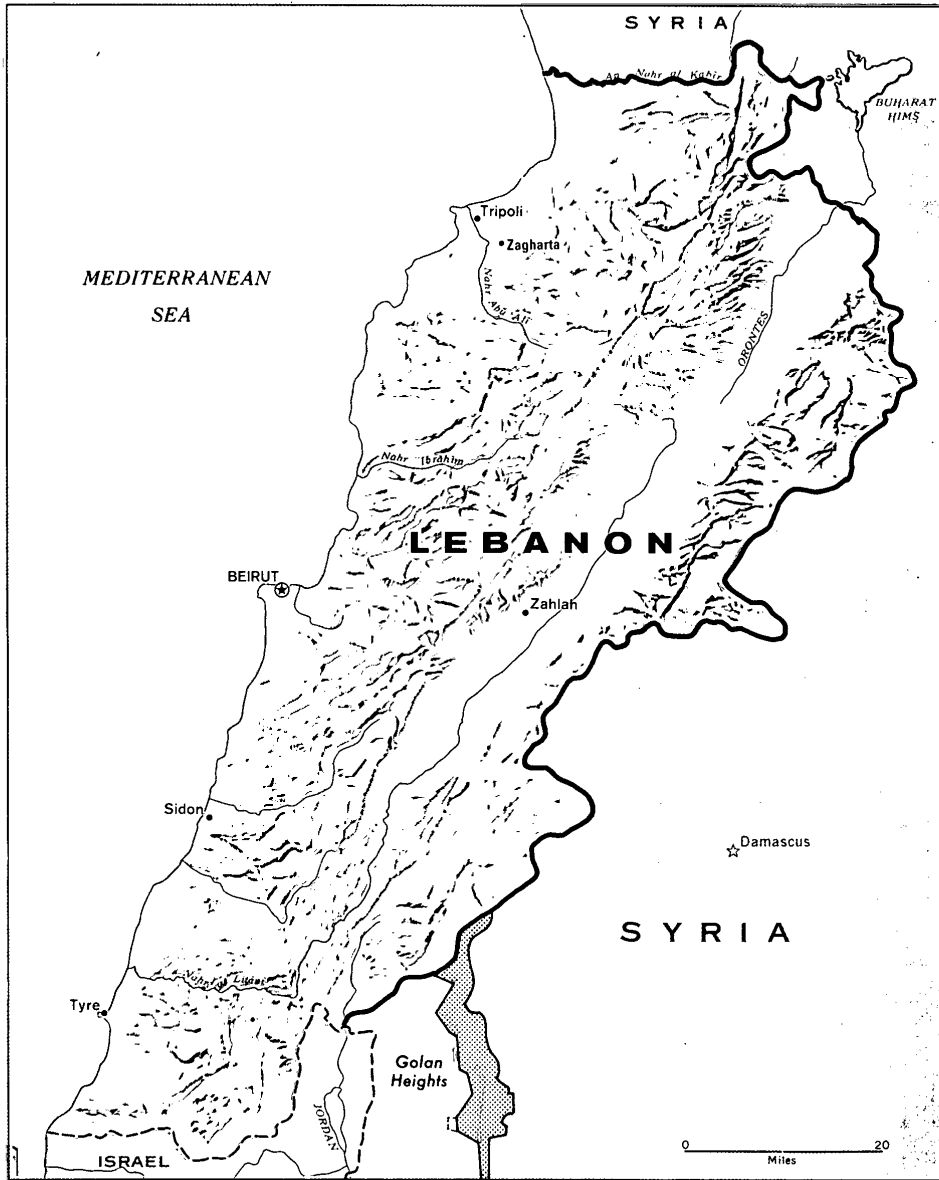
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It is not yet clear what effect, if any, the Antunes group's new assertiveness will have on the formation of the new government. During the struggle to remove Goncalves, the Antunes faction reportedly pursued a joint strategy with the Socialists and Popular Democrats. The goodwill established during that period could easily break down, however, if the political parties' excessive demands for power frustrate the military in its desire to form a government and get the country moving again.

US embassy sources reported yesterday that both the democratic parties and the Communists could cause trouble in the selection of a government, but last evening Azevedo was confident that he could present a cabinet soon. His confidence seemed to be borne out by the Goncalves cabinet's announcement that it will remain in office until the new government is sworn in.



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LEBANON

Heavy fighting between Christians and Muslims continued in the northern port city of Tripoli yesterday. At least 25 persons have been killed and parts of the city have been looted.

Militiamen from the predominantly Muslim city of Tripoli reportedly have taken up positions in the hills overlooking the nearby Christian village of Zagharta, and are shelling the town with mortars and rocket-launched grenades. The attackers are seeking revenge for the slaying on Sunday of 12 Muslims by Christian militiamen on the Tripoli-Beirut highway.

Isolated elements of two fedayeen organizations, Fatah and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, are reported to have joined the Muslims, but so far there is no evidence of involvement by organized Palestinian forces. [redacted]



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Less-radical fedayeen leaders--including Palestine Liberation Organization and Fatah chief Yasir Arafat--are on the defensive, however, as a result of their failure to win any concessions for the Palestinians as part of the most recent Egyptian-Israeli agreement. They will find it difficult to keep their followers on the sidelines if the fighting continues.

Karami, a Muslim, apparently is at odds with Interior Minister Camille Shamun, a conservative Christian, over how to deal with the current situation. Shamun, according to press reports, has threatened to resign unless the Lebanese army is called in to stop the violence. Karami opposes such a strategy on the grounds that use of the predominantly Christian-officered army would antagonize his Muslim and leftist supporters and lead to more serious hostilities.

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The army has not been called on to put down civil unrest in Lebanon since the spring of 1973, when its battle with the fedayeen brought Syria to the verge of moving its troops into the country. The Lebanese government used only internal security forces during the unrest of April, May, and June of this year.

A government spokesman claimed yesterday that the cabinet had "adopted several decisions that hopefully will lead to the pacification of the situation." He offered no specifics, however, and his rhetoric appeared designed primarily to cover the disagreement between Karami and Shamun.

The cabinet will meet again today. If it again fails to come up with effective countermeasures, the fighting is likely to spread to other Lebanese cities, and ultimately could lead to the collapse of Karami's two-month-old "salvation cabinet."

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ISRAEL--SYRIA

Government leaders in Tel Aviv appear to have launched a press campaign to quiet widespread fears that Israel will be forced into early interim negotiations with Syria. At the same time, Prime Minister Rabin has hinted that Tel Aviv may have to confront the issue of negotiations with Damascus before the UN forces' mandate on the Golan expires at the end of November.

Interviews with Rabin, Defense Minister Peres, and Foreign Minister Allon--the team that negotiated the pact with Egypt--appeared late last week in all major Israel dailies. All three denied that negotiations for an interim agreement with Syria are linked to the latest accord with Egypt. Rabin emphasized that the government has committed itself only to a willingness to discuss an overall settlement with Damascus, and that the pact with Egypt stands on its own.

Rabin acknowledged that the expiration of the UN forces' mandate on the Golan on November 30 may force Tel Aviv to deal with the issue of negotiations sooner than it would like. Rabin hinted strongly, however, that Israel would not take the initiative but would leave it to the US to come up with a proposal. Rabin prefers to put off negotiations with the Syrians not only until the agreement with Egypt is fully implemented--a matter of about five months--but also until a trial period has verified that Cairo is living up to the accord.

In a carefully worded statement, Rabin said he sees virtually no possibility that Damascus would accept the limited concessions Tel Aviv is prepared to make as part of another interim settlement on the Golan. He described the concessions as "cosmetic changes of a few hundred meters in a few sectors" of the present disengagement line. Rabin specifically ruled out anything that would interfere with the status of the Israeli Golan settlements or with the present Israeli defense lines.

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Defense Minister Peres, who has publicly advocated renewed contacts with Damascus, said there is little chance of negotiations "in the foreseeable future" because Israel will be too involved in implementing the agreement with Egypt. He added that although Israel might make some "gesture," no major steps in Middle East peace negotiations were likely until after the US presidential elections.

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TURKEY

Our embassy in Ankara has assessed possible Turkish reactions to Congressional reconsideration of the arms embargo. It concludes that a reconfirmation of the embargo is likely to result not only in immediate retaliatory measures, but also could lead to long-term changes in Turkey's foreign policy orientation. Even if the embargo is lifted, the Turks will insist on renegotiating the defense cooperation agreement with the US, and there will be no return to the status quo ante.

Should the embargo be sustained, the embassy believes the Turks will intensify their search for new sources of military equipment and take new actions against the US that would probably include:

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--Evicting the US [redacted] and requesting that personnel be withdrawn from Turkey.

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--Requesting that US military aid teams depart.

--Tightening customs and administrative controls that are already creating difficulties for US military personnel assigned to Turkey.

The embassy believes the Turks would be interested in maintaining only [redacted] the F-4 squadron at Incirlik, the two NATO headquarters at Izmir, and possibly communications sites related to the foregoing activities.

Over the longer term, the Turks are likely to seek a new foreign policy orientation if the embargo remains in effect. The embassy believes that Turkey would seek out a new political-military formula from among several options. These are listed in the order in which they might be tried:

--Stay in NATO despite deteriorating relations with the US; the inability of the other NATO countries to fill the military equipment gap would incline Turkey to search elsewhere.

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--Gradually disengage from NATO; a final break would be avoided for some time and accomplished only after extensive national debate.

--Seek closer relations with Iran and Pakistan; this is likely in any event, but would be pursued with greater vigor in the wake of a NATO withdrawal.

--Seek closer relations with the Arab countries; again, efforts in this direction are likely anyway, but they would be emphasized much more if Turkey decided to reduce or sever its ties to NATO.

--Reorient its foreign policy toward the Third World; such a shift from Ataturk's pro-Western outlook would be wrenching and could only come if there had been a complete break with NATO.

--Pursue a policy of detente with the USSR without altering Ankara's fundamental distrust of that country; efforts in this direction have, in fact, been under way for some time, but would likely be accelerated after, or in conjunction with, a phase-out from NATO.

--Move toward closer relations with the USSR; such a drastic step would only be adopted in extreme circumstances and with great reluctance, but cannot be ruled out if other options failed.

If Embargo is Lifted

The embassy believes that even if the embargo is lifted, the strain on US-Turkish relations would remain. The Turks probably will not agree to turn the clock back to the pre-embargo period. They are likely to seek early negotiations to revise the defense agreement and to maintain the current "provisional status" of US bases until a new arrangement is developed.

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Even in this most favorable of circumstances, the Turks would probably try to incorporate many of the features of the current "provisional status" in any new agreement.

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USSR

Two prominent members of the USSR's Institute of the USA and Canada have written articles defending Soviet detente policy against Western critics, and perhaps against domestic skeptics as well. The articles seem to be fresh evidence of Moscow's concern over what it regards as a new outbreak of anti-Soviet sentiment in the West, particularly in the US.

In an article published in *Izvestia* on September 4, Georgy Arbatov, the director of the Institute and Moscow's leading authority on the US, seems to be reassuring his domestic readers that support for detente remains strong in the US. He implicitly cautions his Soviet readers not to overestimate the strength of detente's opponents and not to turn away from a policy that has brought the USSR "striking" achievements.

In a clear message to Western critics, Arbatov denies that the Soviets are seeking to use detente to "nudge forward" class and national liberation struggles. At the same time, however, he rejects the idea that detente entails a Soviet obligation to preserve the "social status quo." In essence, Arbatov argues that the USSR has every right under detente to support its friends.

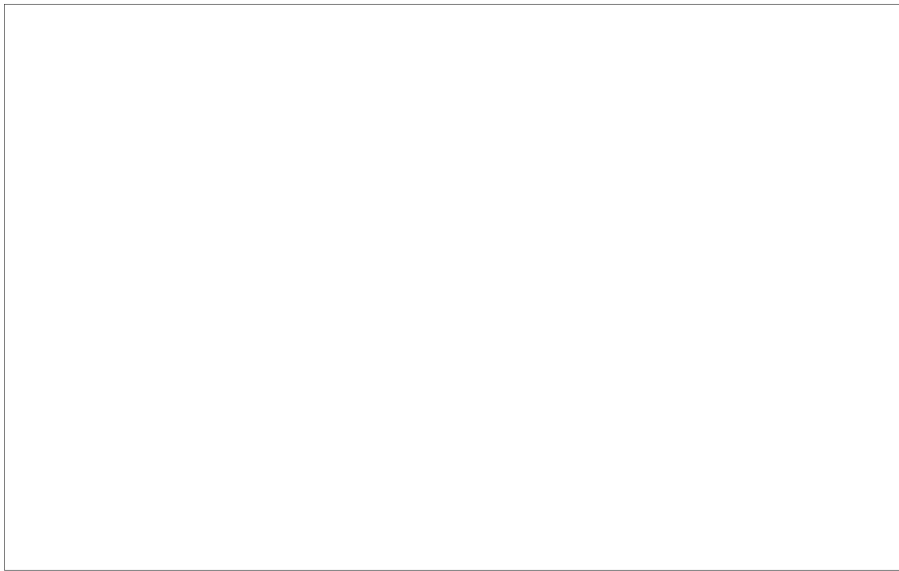
In an article in the current issue of the Soviet journal *International Affairs*, Genrikh Trofimenko, a senior staff member in Arbatov's Institute, contends that bilateral relations have attained a "certain stability" that can sustain tension-producing shocks. He cites the Middle East war in October 1973 and US trade legislation of last year as sources of tension whose effects have been fully overcome.

Trofimenko adds to this rosy assessment the view that enemies of detente in the US will be overcome. In support of this assertion he claims that even the US "establishment" now supports detente with the USSR. Trofimenko professes confidence that economic relations will be normalized and that further progress will be made on limiting strategic weapons.

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The Romanian and Polish agricultural ministers will be in Washington this month to discuss bilateral cooperation with the US.

Romanian minister Miculescu, who also is deputy prime minister, hopes to sign a statement of agricultural cooperation when he returns to Washington this week from a Midwest tour. He also wants to establish cooperation on long-term agricultural research with several US universities, obtain seeds to replace those lost in the July floods, and receive additional US credits to buy cotton. Poland's agricultural minister Barcikowski will arrive on September 20 to discuss credits and purchases of US grain. Warsaw probably wants to import 3 to 4 million tons of grain this year to support an expansion of livestock production and to offset shortfalls in grain and drought-stricken fodder crops. Because of the USSR's poor grain harvest, any of these requirements will likely have to be met by purchases of US grain.

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