



The President's Daily Brief

April 15, 1974

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

April 15, 1974

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Israeli aircraft sorties over the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon were unusually heavy over the weekend, and Israeli military authorities claim that the Syrians are moving SA-7s and conventional anti-aircraft artillery to the Mount Hermon area. Israeli President Katzir, meanwhile, is consulting with party leaders about forming a new government, and reportedly will turn to the right-wing Likud if the Labor Alignment has not come up with a candidate within the next two weeks. (Page 1)

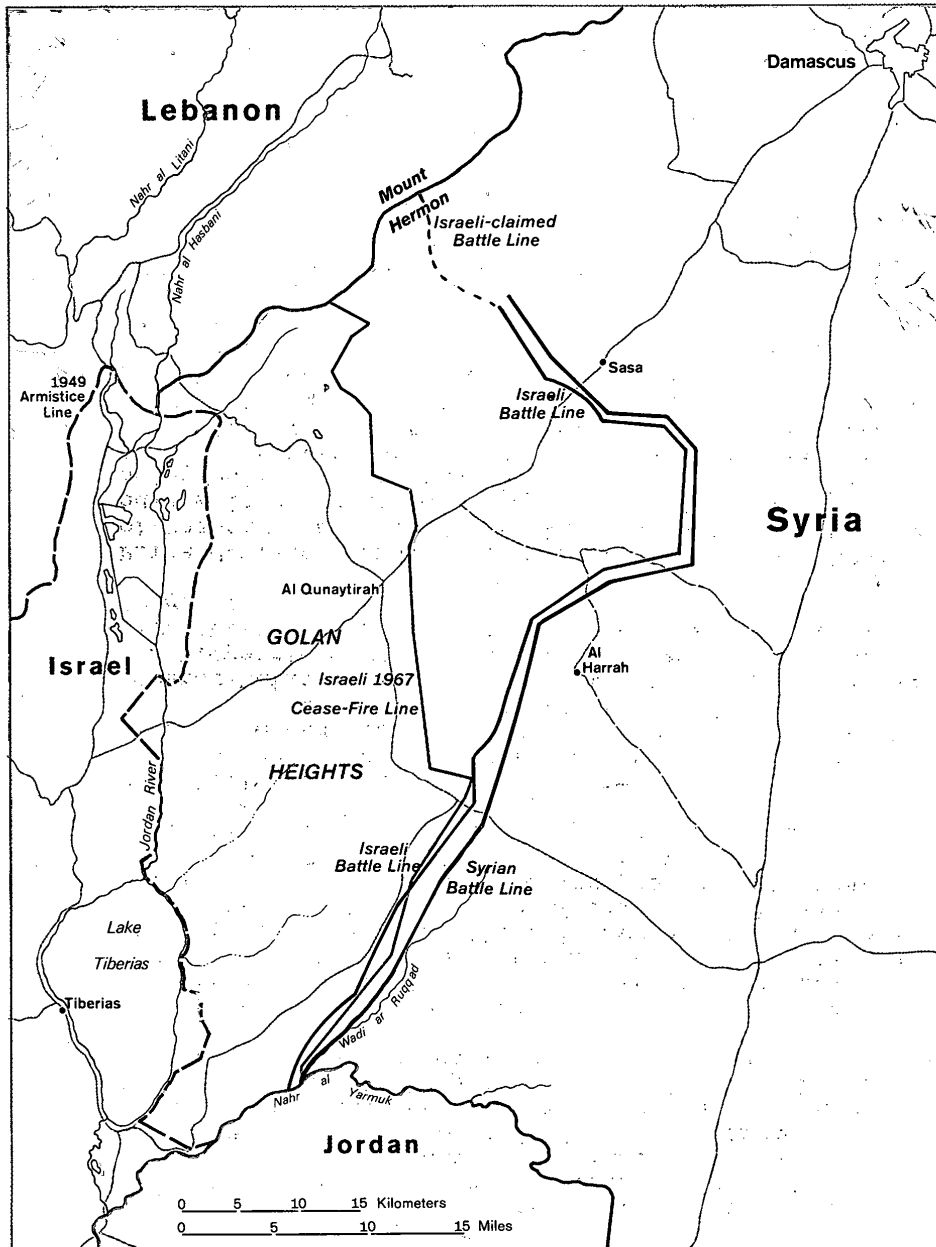
Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia yesterday named his 21-year-old grandson as his successor, removing Crown Prince Asfa Wossen as heir to the throne. (Page 2)

Prime Minister Tanaka will press for ratification of the civil air agreement with Peking, which reportedly will be initialed today, despite possibly damaging political effects to him and Foreign Minister Ohira. (Page 3)

Recent statements by Chinese officials to diplomats in Peking confirm earlier indications that the crew of a captured Soviet helicopter will be tried for espionage. (Page 4)

A note on the USSR appears on Page 5.

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ISRAEL-SYRIA-LEBANON

Israeli aircraft sorties over the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon were unusually heavy over the weekend, totaling about 180 on Sunday and more than 50 on Saturday. In yesterday's action, Israeli ground forces also were thrown into the Mount Hermon battle. At least 15 Syrians were killed in the attack. The Israelis admit to only 17 wounded.

Israeli military authorities claim that the Syrians are moving SA-7s and conventional anti-aircraft artillery to the Mount Hermon area. The Israelis reported yesterday that the Syrians fired numerous surface-to-air missiles of all types at Israeli aircraft.

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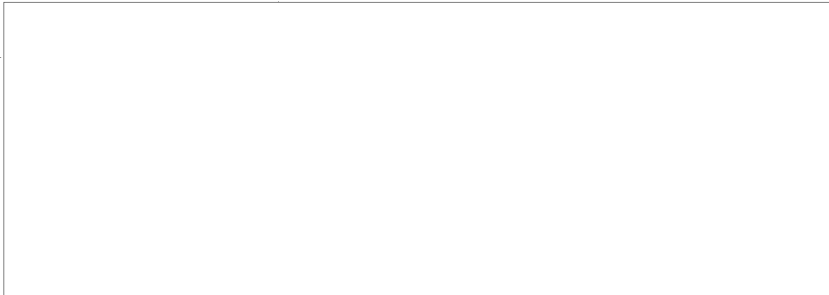
Israeli President Katzir has begun consultations with party leaders over the formation of a new government. According to press reports, if the Labor Alignment has not found a suitable candidate within the next two weeks, Katzir will turn to the right-wing Likud.

The Israeli cabinet yesterday named Major General Mordecai Gur as chief of staff of the Israeli Defense Forces with the rank of Lieutenant General. Gur, who was serving as military attaché in Washington at the outbreak of the October war, is free of any taint of responsibility for Israel's unpreparedness.

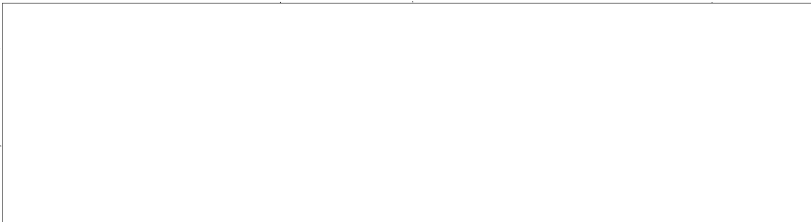
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ETHIOPIA

Emperor Haile Selassie yesterday named his 21-year-old grandson Zara Yacob as his successor, removing Crown Prince Asfa Wossen from the line of succession.



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CHINA-JAPAN

Prime Minister Tanaka will press for ratification of the civil air agreement with Peking, which reportedly will be initialed today, despite possibly damaging political effects to him and Foreign Minister Ohira. Taipei has reacted to the agreement by announcing its readiness to suspend air service with Japan, and Tanaka's critics in the right wing of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party will attack the government's failure to reach a prior agreement with Taipei.

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The Taipei government is not averse to cooperating in the effort to weaken Tanaka and Ohira, but the Tokyo air link is important to Nationalist China both politically and economically. In the end the Nationalist leaders will probably consent to new air arrangements on a "private" basis with Tokyo.

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CHINA-USSR

Recent statements by Chinese officials to diplomats in Peking confirm earlier indications that the crew of a captured Soviet helicopter will be tried for espionage. Peking will probably heavily publicize the trial and attempt to link the incident with the expulsion from China in January of five Soviet diplomats accused of spying. The Chinese could use both events to continue their polemics against alleged Soviet expansionism and worldwide espionage activities.

The Soviets are also spreading the line that the Chinese may hold a show trial of the helicopter crew. Moscow, however, will probably be restrained in its treatment of the trial itself, in line with current efforts to keep comments on Sino-Soviet affairs in a low key.

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NOTE

USSR: The Soviets early Saturday morning brought down the unmanned spacecraft they had launched on April 3. During the ten-day flight, the craft, probably a modified Soyuz, performed a series of orbital maneuvers that may have been designed to test modifications in the control and propulsion systems. The flight probably is related to a manned mission expected soon and could also be in preparation for the joint Apollo-Soyuz mission scheduled for next year.

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