



The President's Daily Brief

October 10, 1975

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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USSR-SYRIA

Syrian President Asad arrived in Moscow yesterday on what is billed as a brief visit. One purpose of the trip is to demonstrate Syrian-Soviet solidarity in opposition to Sinai II. Asad and the Soviets will probably direct their primary attention, however, toward the next round of diplomacy.

The Soviets will want to explore Syria's attitude toward new talks, since Damascus, unlike Moscow, has been cool to the idea of reconvening the Geneva conference. The Soviets are sure to stress that they want a substantial role in any Syrian-Israeli talks. The presence of Defense Minister Talas in Asad's party indicates that the question of military assistance will also be raised.

The Soviets are likely to give the Syrians strong assurances of support. The presence of party boss Brezhnev and other top Soviet leaders at the airport to greet Asad indicates the importance Moscow attaches to the visit as a symbol of its continued role in the Middle East.

The Lebanese situation will probably be touched on in the discussions. Moscow has applauded Syrian efforts to mediate the conflict there.

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LEBANON

Fighting in Beirut, which surged again last night, is reported to have eased this morning following announcement that a new cease-fire has gone into effect. The new agreement reportedly was worked out during Lebanese Prime Minister Karami's visit to Syria yesterday. Karami returned to Beirut last night. Fedayeen leader Yasir Arafat is also back in Beirut

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Yesterday, Kuwait called for an Arab foreign ministers' meeting to discuss the Lebanese situation. Initial Arab response has been generally favorable. Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia have agreed, and the Sudanese ambassador in Lebanon is expected to recommend that his government approve.

The extremists at opposing ends of the Lebanese political spectrum can be expected to object to the use of a joint Arab military force to stop the fighting. The Phalangists will fear that any compromise reached after an Arab force imposed a truce would be at the expense of the Christians. For their part, Lebanese leftists and "rejectionist" fedayeen, who hope that continued strife will ultimately result in a government favorable to their interests, will fear that a joint Arab truce force could prevent them from achieving this goal.

Tel Aviv is not likely to take a relaxed view of outside Arab military intervention. Foreign Minister Allon declared, barely two weeks ago, that Israel would not intervene in Lebanon as long as the conflict is limited to the Lebanese. Israel would begin by urging the US and others to intercede with Beirut to call off such a plan.

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PORTUGAL

The cabinet issued a tough statement last night warning that the government would act against any group using violence. It endorsed the recent actions of the anti-Communist political parties and indirectly condemned the Communists for supporting the continuing wave of military, political, and labor agitation.

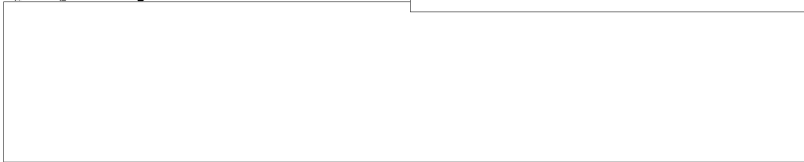
The statement called for a joint meeting between the government and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council to map out measures to guarantee stability. This will be no easy task. The mutiny of leftist soldiers has polarized political and military factions, and the room for compromise is becoming progressively more narrow. The danger of widespread violence is growing.

Leftist soldiers occupying the artillery post in Porto and loyalist forces there are at a stand-off. The regional commander, General Veloso, backed away again yesterday from using force to quell the mutiny. He probably has enough loyal troops to do so, but not without bloodshed.

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Some pro-government military units appear to be preparing for a showdown.

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MOROCCO - SPANISH SAHARA

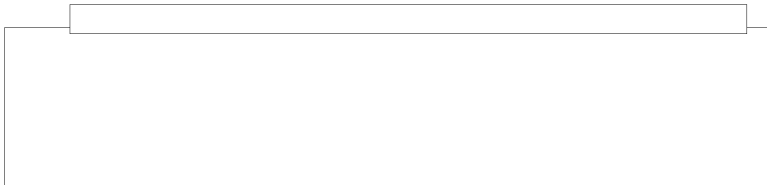
King Hassan has reiterated a promise he made in August to wait for the advisory opinion by the International Court of Justice before resorting to force in Spanish Sahara.

In remarks to the diplomatic corps in Rabat on Wednesday, Hassan said that once the court's opinion is known, he will decide what course Morocco will take. The court's decision may be released soon.

Hassan added that he expected support from other Arab states in return for Moroccan assistance during the 1973 war and during subsequent peace negotiations. He also appealed to African states, reminding them that territorial integrity and national liberation were important concepts in their past.

Hassan's remarks have somewhat eased tension over Spanish Sahara. If the court's opinion should be ambiguous or unfavorable to Morocco, however, Hassan probably will initiate some form of military action.

In a parallel speech to the UN General Assembly, Moroccan Foreign Minister Laraki also appealed for international support. He argued that the assembly, in recommending proposals for the decolonization of Spanish Sahara, must respect the "fundamental law" of the territorial integrity of Morocco and Mauritania. He reaffirmed Morocco's claim to the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in northern Morocco and called on Spain to negotiate their return, drawing a parallel between his country's claim to the enclaves and Spain's to Gibraltar. Morocco may be hinting that it will support Spain on Gibraltar in return for an overall settlement on the Sahara and the northern enclaves.



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ANGOLA

Angola's three nationalist groups are moving toward a fresh round of fighting aimed at improving their respective military positions before independence on November 11. Each group apparently is being hampered by operational problems.

The immediate strategy of the Soviet-backed Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, which controls Launda and other important points, is to drive the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola from its headquarters in Nova Lisboa. Control of Nova Lisboa would give the Popular Movement a major foothold in Angola's densely populated central highlands and damage the National Union's control of the area. A Popular Movement force is already moving on the city.

The two Portuguese battalions stationed in Nova Lisboa were withdrawn on October 4, upon the termination there of the refugee airlift. The troops abandoned most of their equipment to the National Union and the National Front for the Liberation of Angola. The equipment included small arms and ammunition, fuel, and light vehicles.

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The Portuguese army has now withdrawn from all its posts in the interior of Angola except for the one at Sa da Bandeira. That post will probably be evacuated within the next two weeks.

The National Union recently began an advance on Angola's major port of Lobito, which it lost to the Popular Movement last August.

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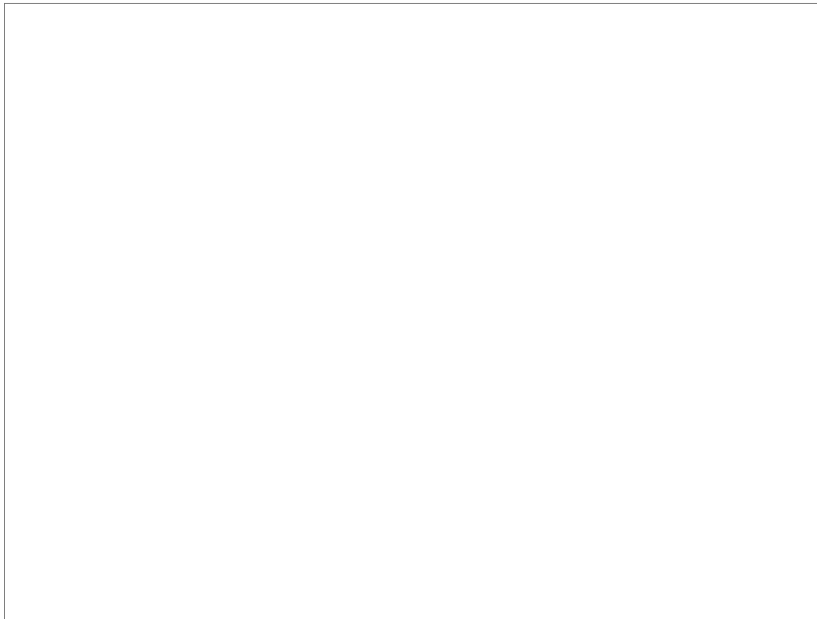
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Portuguese military authorities in Luanda expect that the northern-based National Front will begin a drive against the capital soon. Since it recaptured the important junction town of Caxito last month, the National Front has been strengthening its logistic base there. The Front is being assisted by at least 1,100 Zairian troops.

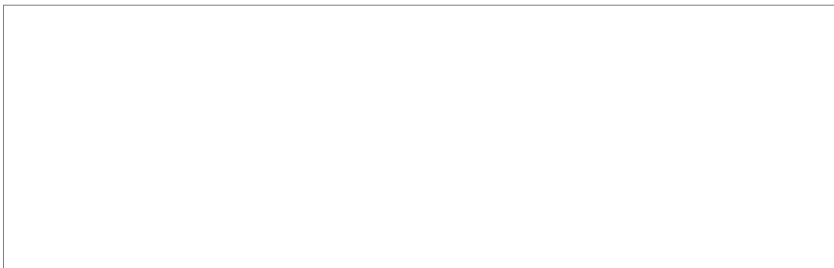
Although there has been some heavy skirmishing around Caxito and in central Angola in recent days, the three groups apparently are having problems preparing for full-scale offensives. According to the US consul general in Luanda, all three are finding it difficult to provide supplies to their frontline troops.

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NORWAY



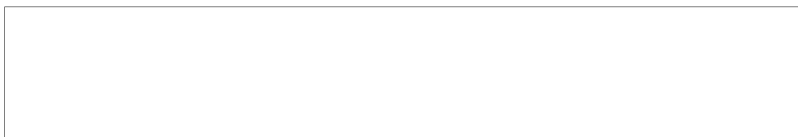
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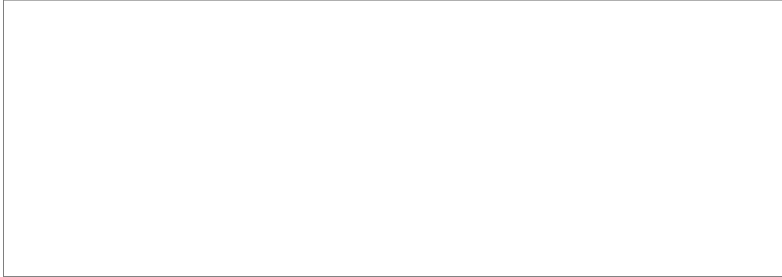
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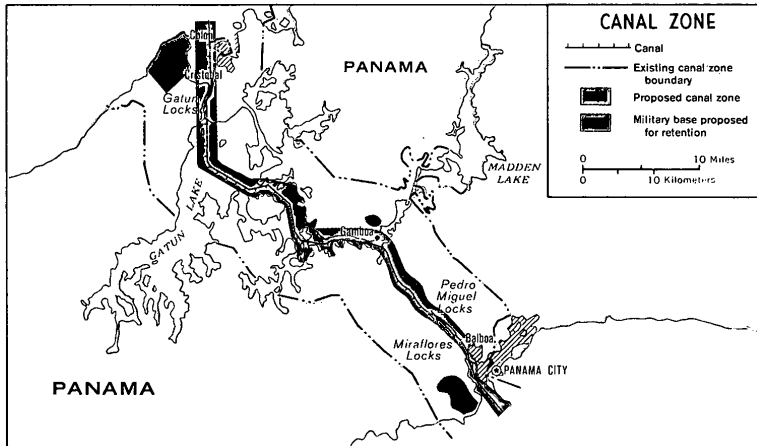
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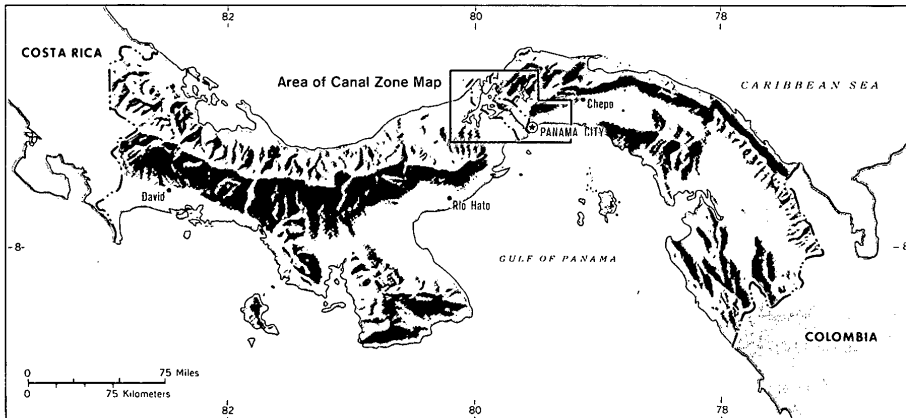
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PANAMA



The Canal Zone showing reduced zone and base holdings Panama proposes for US retention.



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NOTES

Panama's General Torrijos apparently intends to use the seventh anniversary of his assuming power tomorrow to demonstrate massive support for his negotiating position on a new canal treaty. Disorders are possible, but we believe the government will make every effort to keep events under control.

We believe Torrijos remains committed to the negotiations, and that he still thinks he can get a treaty that will meet Panama's aspirations and benefit him politically. The Panamanians will make concessions only grudgingly and probably expect the talks to drag on through 1976. Partly for domestic reasons, Torrijos will try to show that he is keeping pressure on the US through gestures to third world and communist countries.

* * *

Argentina's President Peron apparently is determined to resume her duties next week, despite strong pressure on her to extend her leave or even resign. The government has announced she will return to the capital on October 16 and attend an important Peronist rally the next day.

Both Acting President Luder and Interior Minister Robledo flew to the presidential retreat on Tuesday to confer with Peron. Luder almost certainly urged her to remain out of the picture, but Robledo, who is said to differ with Luder on the issue, may well have urged her to come back. According to a press account, the commander of the air force also visited the President to tell her of the military's desire that she prolong her vacation. The officers regard the controversy over her role and her demonstrated inability to lead as detrimental to the pursuit of their principal goal, the suppression of terrorism.

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