



The President's Daily Brief

January 30, 1976

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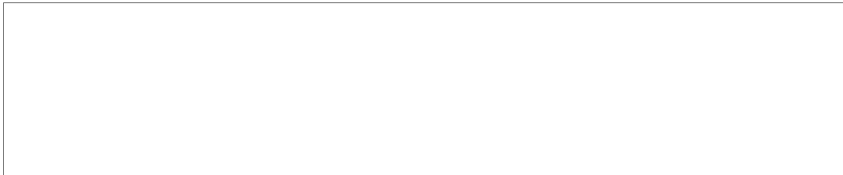
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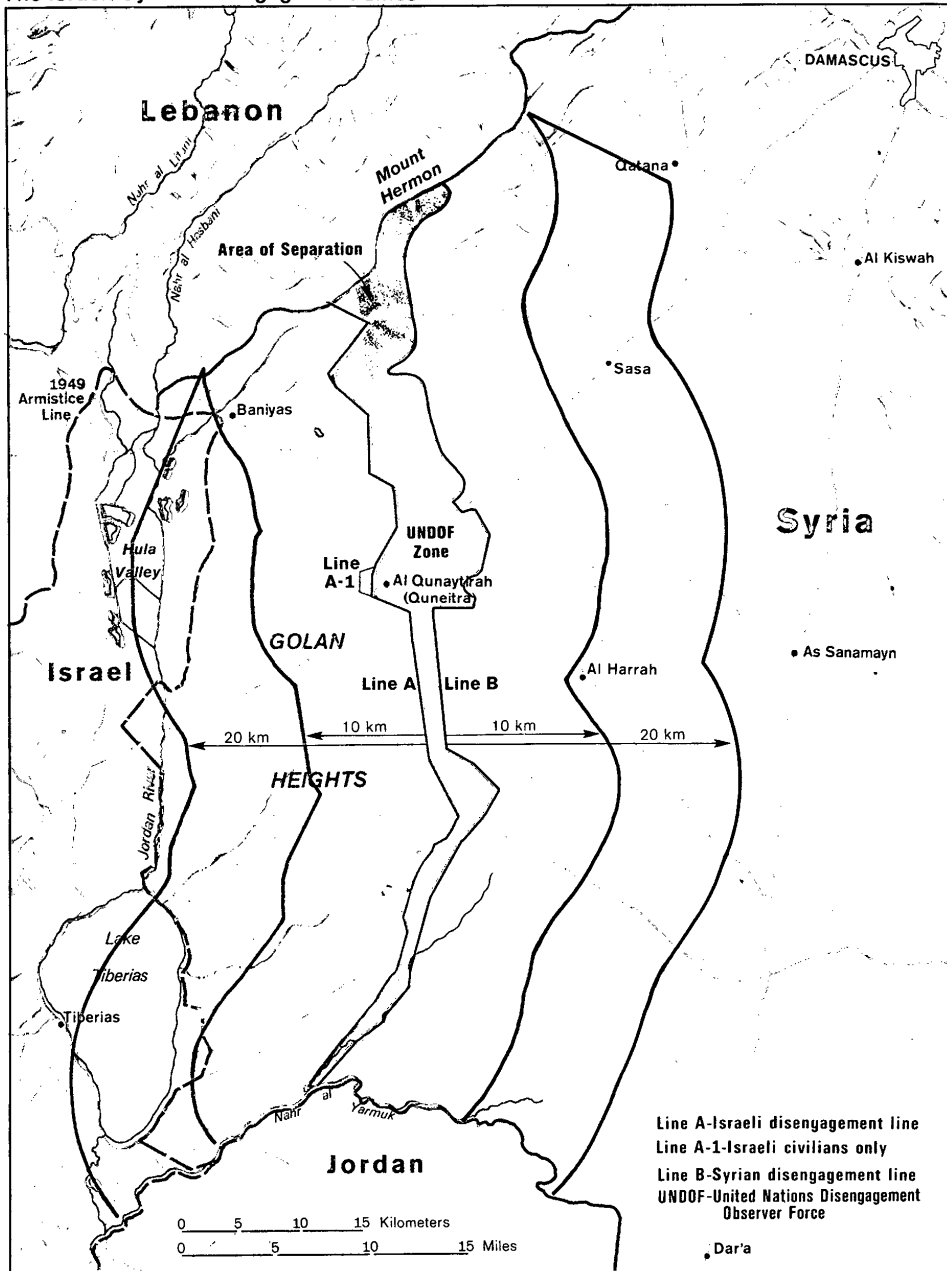
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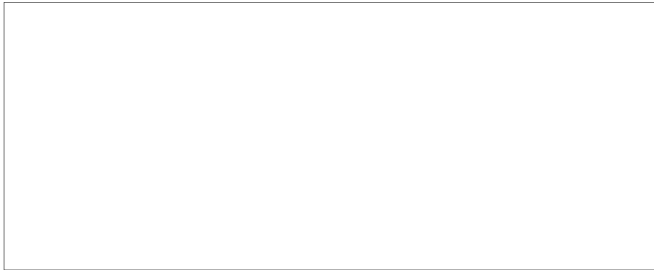
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EGYPT-ISRAEL-SYRIA



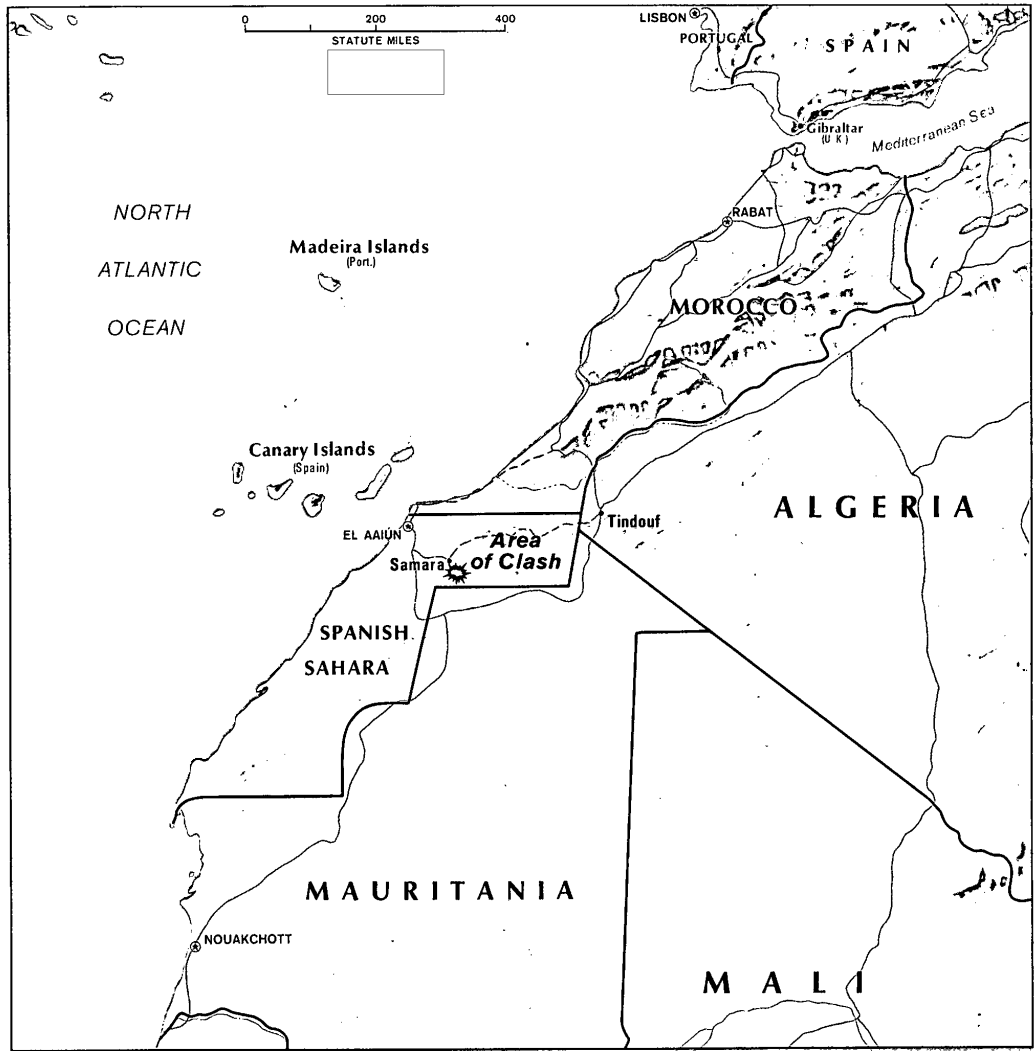
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MOROCCO-ALGERIA

Moroccan forces yesterday occupied the oasis south of the Saharan town of Samara where clashes with Polisario guerrillas, supported by Algerian military personnel, occurred on Tuesday and Wednesday. Fighting has apparently ended.

A Moroccan communiqué said some 100 Algerian soldiers, dozens of Polisario guerrillas, artillery, and a large quantity of ground-to-air missiles were captured. Algiers admitted only that its "supply column" supporting the Saharans had withdrawn from the area after an all-day engagement on Wednesday with a much larger Moroccan force that had used aircraft and heavy weapons.

Algeria called in the ambassadors of the permanent members of the UN Security Council yesterday to explain its position in the dispute and its desire to avoid a war. Speaking on President Boumediene's instructions, a senior Foreign Ministry official termed Morocco's presence in the disputed territory "totally illegitimate." He stressed that the only solution to the problem is a referendum on self-determination. Foreign Minister Bouteflika sent a similar message to UN Secretary General Waldheim yesterday.

The Algerian demarche, like that of Morocco on Wednesday, is almost certainly laying the groundwork for a call on the Security Council to discuss the matter as a threat to international security.

Algeria continues to increase its propaganda effort in behalf of the Polisario Front. In letters sent to all nations, Boumediene urged support for the principle of self-determination and emphasized the determination of Saharans, led by the Front, to resist the Moroccan-Mauritanian take-over of the territory. Boumediene will use his influence as self-proclaimed head of the nonaligned movement to develop support for the Front as a legitimate liberation movement.

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LEBANON

After a week of relative calm, Lebanese leaders have turned their attention to the problem of rehabilitating the Lebanese army and security forces. Both suffered many defections during the height of the hostilities and, in effect, ceased to function as effective forces.

According to most accounts, the security forces--which are predominantly Muslim--divided along religious lines during the last days of the fighting. Posts that had been assigned to them were either abandoned or occupied by Muslim and Palestinian forces. Although these positions have been returned to the government, they have been stripped of most equipment, weapons, and vehicles.

The army is in better shape than the security forces, although it suffered heavy losses during the struggle to protect Christian territory south and east of Beirut.

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The Syrian-Lebanese-Palestinian peace commission set up to monitor the truce has assigned limited police duties to the army in Beirut's commercial district and apparently expects eventually to use the army in other key areas of the city. These duties are intended not only to boost the army's morale but also to lower the profile of Palestinian troops, whose presence in Beirut is generating resentment even among Lebanese Muslims.

Prime Minister Karami, aware of the growing controversy over the role of Palestinian forces in Lebanon, expressed a sense of urgency yesterday over rebuilding a national armed force. A universal conscription law recently passed by parliament could eventually be used to strengthen the military and regulate its religious composition more carefully.

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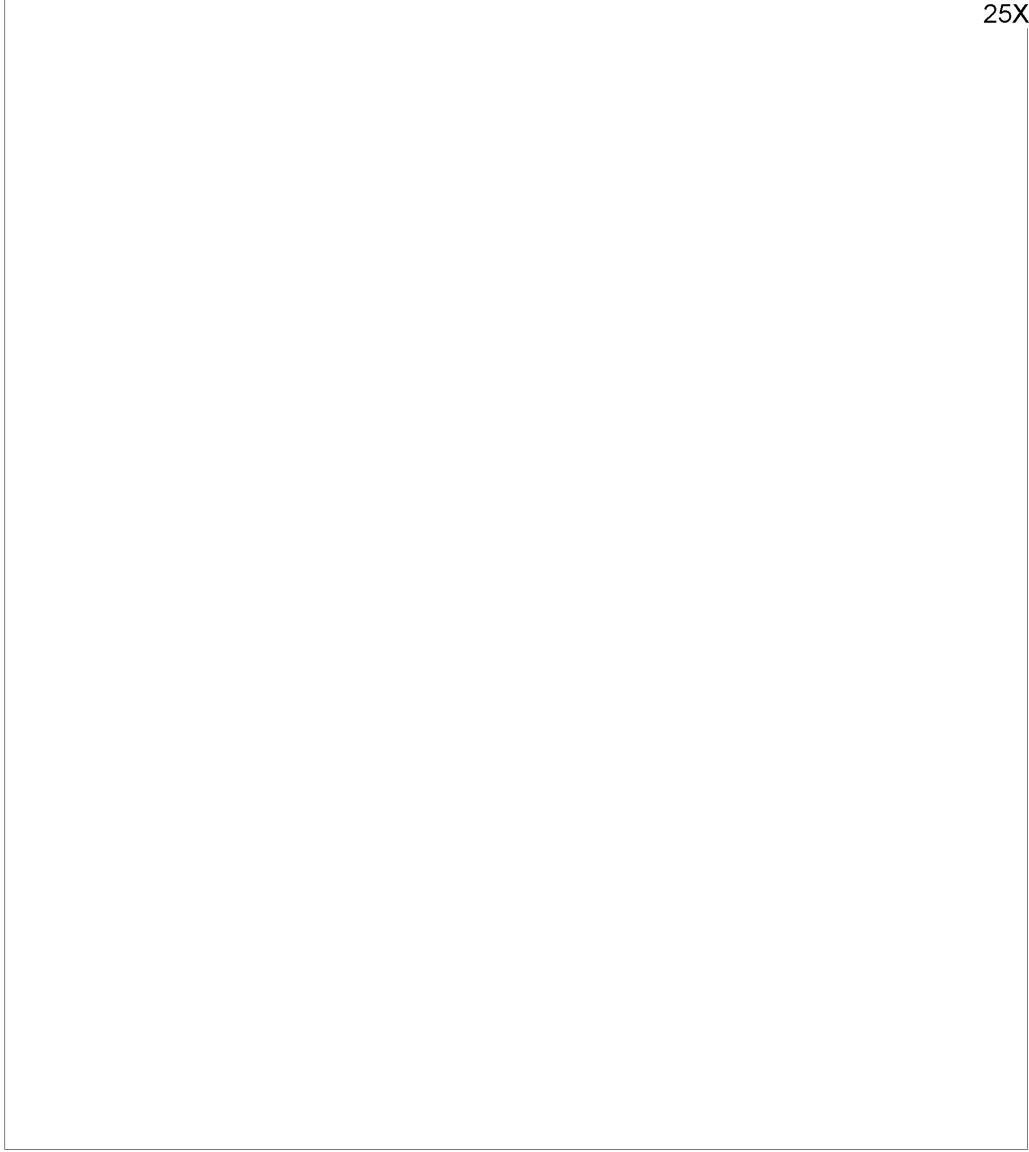
Haggling continues over terms of the political settlement proposed by Syrian President Asad and is delaying President Franjiyah's trip to Damascus. Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam returned to Beirut yesterday, presumably to speed up the negotiations.

One of the sticking points, according to the press, is Christian insistence that the office of president be held by a Maronite Christian. Some Muslims reportedly feel the presidency should be open to any Christian; other Muslims apparently are willing to give Maronites this exclusive right but object to putting the understanding in writing.



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YUGOSLAVIA



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NOTES

The Soviets may be sending more warships to West African waters.

A Sverdlov-class cruiser, a Kashin-class destroyer, and two F-class torpedo attack submarines left the Mediterranean yesterday morning and began moving south along the Moroccan coast. Since midday yesterday, the group appears to have taken a position near the coast northwest of Rabat. The ships' initial course had suggested they might be en route to join other warships now at Conakry or farther south in the Gulf of Guinea. They could, of course, change course and go to Cuba or return to the Mediterranean.

* * *

Sierra Leone yesterday announced its official recognition of the Popular Movement as the sole legitimate government of Angola.

The Popular Movement now has the support of 24 of the 46 members of the Organization of African Unity. Togo and Upper Volta may be next to abandon a neutral position. If the OAU ministerial meeting set for March takes place, the Popular Movement probably will have little trouble in being seated as the government of Angola.

* * *

Britain has given Iceland until tomorrow to accept its terms for a new fishing agreement or face the return of British frigates to the disputed waters.

The British terms come close to meeting the demands Iceland made before the talks broke down in November, but Iceland's position has hardened in the meantime. Prime Minister Hallgrimsson faces the difficult task of trying to sell the compromise to an increasingly brittle coalition and to the Icelandic public, which now is inclined to favor total exclusion of foreign fishermen from offshore waters. If he fails and British frigates return, Hallgrimsson's coalition could fall, leading to renewed questioning of Iceland's participation in NATO.

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