



# The President's Daily Brief

*March 29, 1976*

2

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March 29, 1976

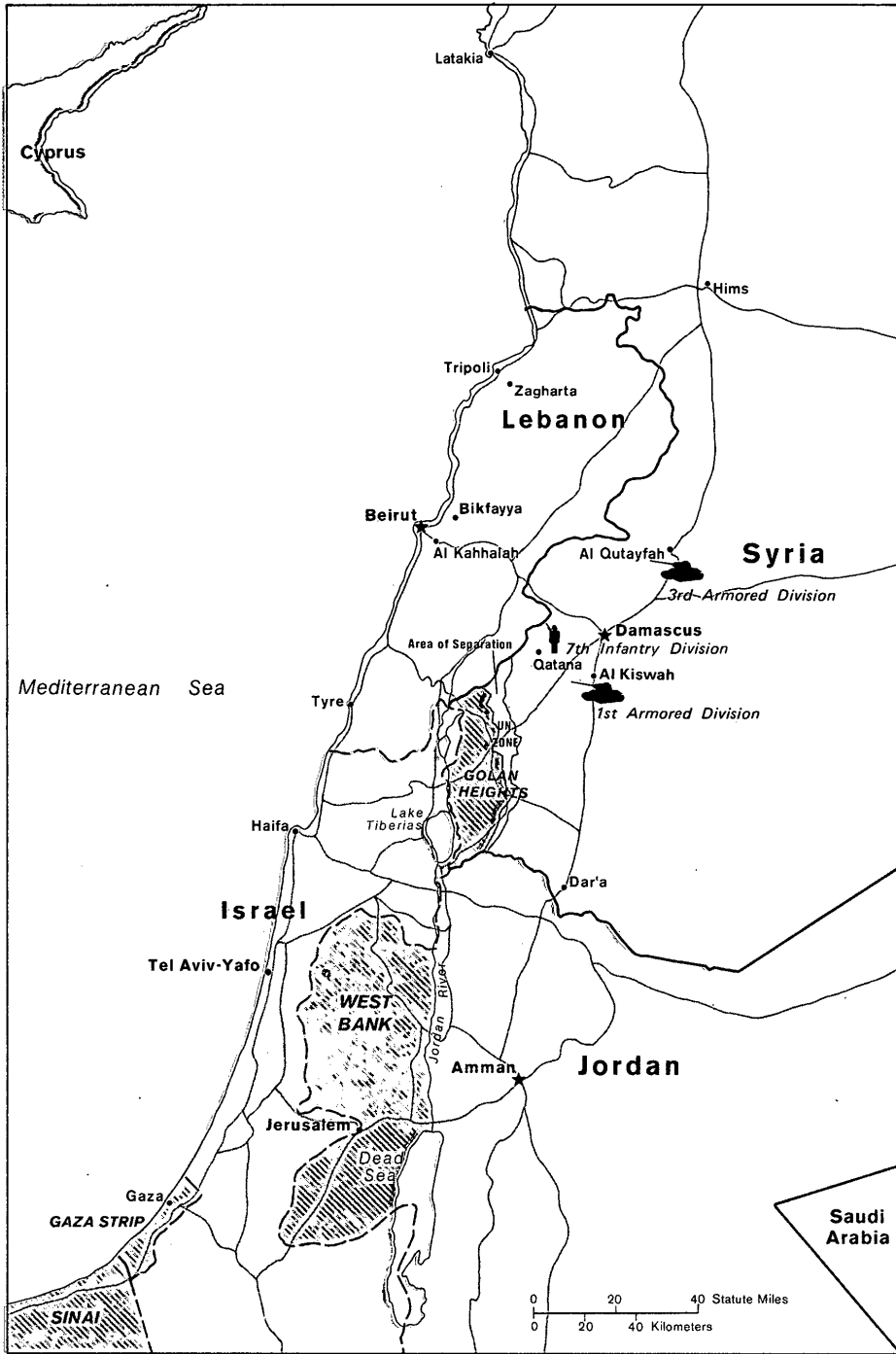
Table of Contents

Lebanon: Syrian President Asad's meeting with left-ist leader Kamal Jumblatt ended late Saturday with no agreement on terms for a cease-fire in Lebanon. (Page 1)

Jordan: Jordan is becoming a significant factor in the Middle East power balance as a result of its efforts to bolster its military capabilities and to improve defense coordination with Syria. (Page 3)

At Annex we present an assessment of the insurgency situation in Rhodesia following the collapse of talks between Joshua Nkomo and Prime Minister Smith.

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LEBANON

*Syrian President Asad's meeting with leftist leader Kamal Jumblatt ended late Saturday with no agreement on terms for a cease-fire.*

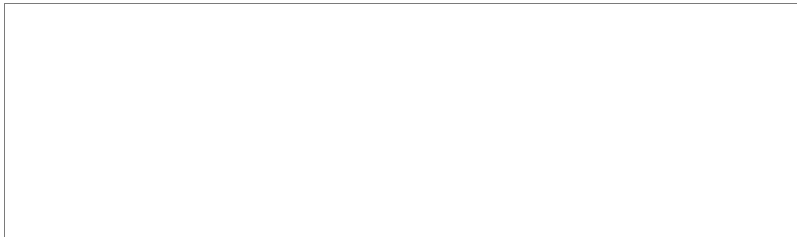
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*Jumblatt's refusal to agree to an immediate truce has prompted Syria to seek "international guarantees" allowing it to intervene in Lebanon with regular Syrian troops.*

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Damascus, [redacted] intends to ask for assurances from a number of countries that no other outside military force will interfere if Syria decides to move into Lebanon. The Syrians believe it would take only two days to enforce a cease-fire if their troops were to enter Lebanon.

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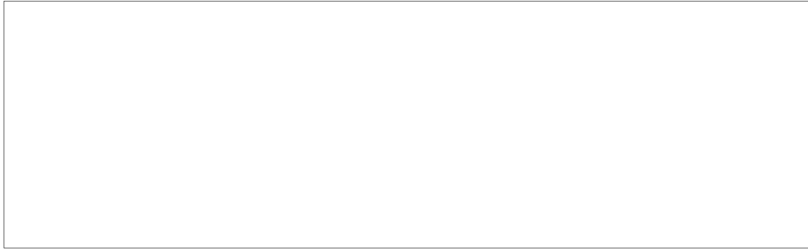
Syrian forces generally remain in a high state of alert, according to the US defense attaché in Damascus. During his travels this weekend in and around the city and the northern part of the Golan Heights, he saw no indication of actual or impending military moves toward Lebanon by Syrian troops.

The attaché believes, however, that the Syrian 1st Armored Division--based at Al Kiswah, ten miles south of Damascus--has significantly increased its state of readiness. The attaché observed the division's military police in full combat gear, armored vehicles uncovered and fully loaded, and ammunition trucks heading toward Al Kiswah. Throughout the area around Damascus, antiaircraft units remain on alert.

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Egypt yesterday called for joint Arab mediation of the Lebanese crisis and asked for the dispatch of "token joint Arab security forces" to maintain peace while the mediation effort proceeds. Cairo has asked the Arab League to contact all Arab states urgently to obtain agreement on the Egyptian initiative.

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## JORDAN

*Jordan is becoming a significant factor in the Middle East power balance as a result of efforts to bolster its military capabilities and to improve defense coordination with Syria. The October 1973 Arab-Israeli war made Jordan especially aware of its own military weaknesses compared to Israel and Syria, and Amman is concerned that it has been steadily losing ground as a result of massive arms aid to its neighbors.*

The Jordanian armed forces suffer in firepower and mobility compared to the Israelis and have an inadequate ground-based air defense system. The air force is small, generally equipped with obsolescent aircraft, and based at only two vulnerable airfields. There has been a chronic manpower shortage in the armed forces, and logistical and maintenance capabilities are relatively limited.

To overcome its weaknesses, Jordan has accelerated its efforts to modernize and strengthen its armed forces since the 1973 war. It has acquired about 130 tanks and 320 armored personnel carriers from the US since 1973, and plans to have nearly 750 tanks and 1,350 APCs in its inventory by the end of the decade. Large numbers of TOW antitank missiles and self-propelled artillery also are on order. The air force is obtaining new F-5E fighter aircraft, constructing additional air bases, and operating improved radars. It has 75 combat aircraft and should have over 100 within the next several years. Amman now is also attempting to obtain modern Vulcan and Hawk air defense systems from the US, although the deal has run into difficulties because of Saudi funding limitations.

Despite the modernization program, Jordan remains aware that it continues to be unable to sustain military action effectively against Israel. It will be several years before Jordan can build up the logistical infrastructure and technical expertise to absorb and use all the new military equipment it is receiving. Amman, therefore, has turned to increased military cooperation with Syria

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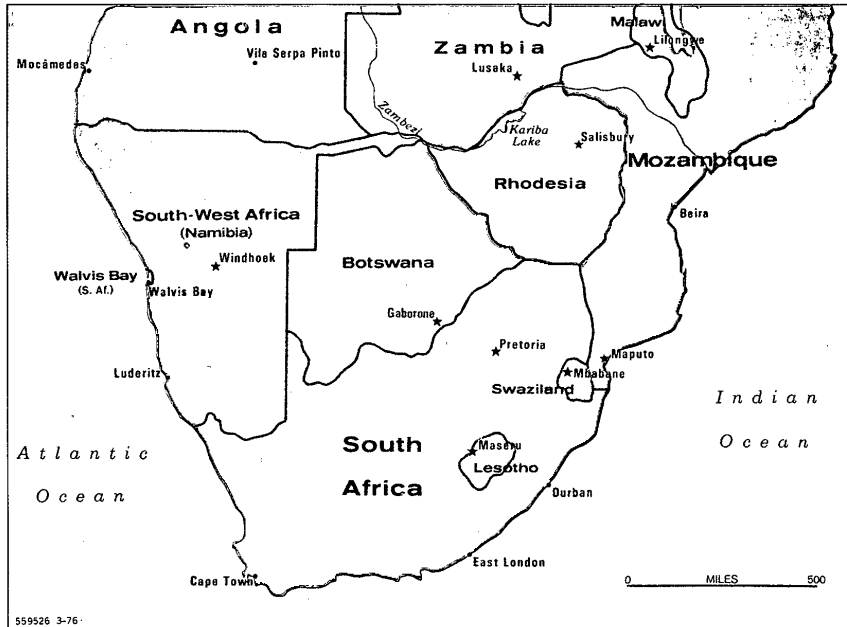
to improve its potential to participate more effectively in any new hostilities. Such coordination serves to improve Jordanian credentials as an Arab confrontation state and increases its political and military leverage against Israel.

Amman has become increasingly dissatisfied with US military aid over the last few years as a result of rising costs and long delays in delivery. The government also is unhappy with the lower priority apparently accorded Jordan compared to Israel, as well as the political conditions being attached by the US Congress. If the Hawk air defense sale with the US falls through, Amman conceivably could turn to the Soviets for arms, particularly air defense missiles and strike aircraft. Such a move, however, would risk disrupting the entire US aid effort and the modernization program.

If the current trend in Jordanian military cooperation with Syria continues, as now appears likely, the two countries could considerably enhance their joint capabilities against Israel by the end of the decade. Because of its modernization program, Jordan could play a far more effective role in any new fighting by then, even without concluding a formal alliance with Syria.

The two countries are unlikely to be able to match Israeli military strength for the foreseeable future. Despite any quantitative edge they may achieve in manpower or weapons, Israeli qualitative superiority in such factors as leadership, technology, tactical flexibility, technical proficiency, and manpower utilization is likely to continue to be decisive. Nevertheless, improved Jordanian defense cooperation with Syria over the next several years will increase both countries' ability to put military pressure on Israel and make any action against them more costly to Tel Aviv.





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## RHODESIA

*The collapse of talks between Joshua Nkomo and Prime Minister Ian Smith leaves Rhodesia's black nationalists with almost no option but to use military means to achieve majority rule.*

Even before talks broke off, nationalist guerrilla forces based in neighboring Mozambique had renewed the insurgency against the Smith regime after a lull of more than a year. The guerrillas now are getting greater support than before from Rhodesia's black neighbors and from their long-time communist sources of supply.

The Fighting

Beginning last fall, veteran insurgents moved from camps in Tanzania and Zambia to bases along Mozambique's border with Rhodesia. In late January, small, lightly armed units began infiltrating Rhodesia again, staging hit-and-run attacks, mining roads, and terrorizing local villagers. The guerrillas are now spread out in small groups in Mozambican villages along most of the 700-mile border with Rhodesia.

Thus far, Rhodesian defense forces--although stretched thin--have been able to contain the incursions to within a few miles of the border. The Rhodesians have used their limited air power to chase the guerrilla bands back into Mozambique. Several recent air attacks, in fact, have inflicted casualties on Mozambican regular forces and civilians as well as the guerrillas.

The ability of the insurgents to expand their activities beyond the current level depends in large part on whether they have overcome serious divisions within their ranks. The final plans for the guerrilla campaign may have been set in a meeting in Mozambique in early February, at which Zambian President Kaunda, Tanzanian President Nyerere, and Mozambican President Machel met with guerrilla leaders Muzorewa and Sithole and some of Nkomo's representatives. Machel and Nyerere made a strong

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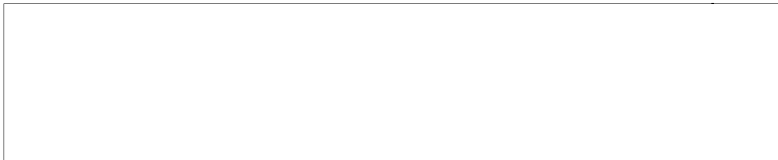
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effort to put together a new guerrilla leadership, but it remains to be seen if tribal, personal, and factional rivalries will continue to jeopardize the unity they have sought.

Insurgent Strength and Foreign Assistance

Estimates of the size of the guerrilla forces vary widely. Some nationalist leaders have claimed a strength of up to 20,000 guerrillas, but this figure appears to be highly exaggerated. At present, at least 500 guerrillas probably are in action inside Rhodesia, with at least 2,000 more in the Mozambican border area. We do not know how many are in training in Tanzania, but there could be as many as 500 in Zambia.

It is not clear what ties exist between the insurgents and blacks inside Rhodesia, particularly in the important urban areas. With the settlement talks broken off and the fighting likely to increase, the insurgents might try to stage terrorist attacks in urban areas and promote political action against the Smith government.



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Nyerere and Kaunda want to avoid direct Cuban and Soviet involvement such as occurred in Angola; they fear that such a development would transform an African problem into a US-Soviet confrontation.



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Rhodesian Forces

The Rhodesians have about 7,000 active army troops and an equal number of police to deploy against the insurgents. Army reserves total about 10,000 and police reserves some 35,000 to 45,000. About half of the army regulars and nearly three fourths of the police are black, but all of the

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army reserves and three fourths of the police reserves are white. These defense forces, including the small air force, are fairly well equipped to deal with the current level of insurgency, but over the long term they will have considerable difficulty replacing equipment.

Outlook

Although the fighting seems certain to increase in the coming months, it may be some time before we are able to judge the effectiveness of the insurgents. The onset of the dry season, which begins shortly, will make them more vulnerable for a time to Rhodesian counterinsurgency operations. When the rains come next fall, they presumably will try to take advantage of the lessened mobility of the Rhodesian military.

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