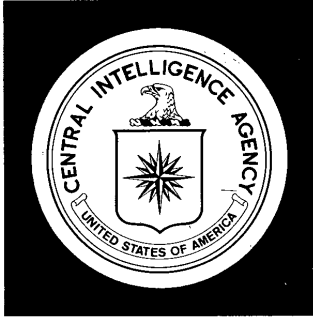


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The President's Daily Brief

April 30, 1976

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April 30, 1976

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

EGYPT-ISRAEL: *Egyptian Minister of War Gamasy has admitted that Egypt has more battalions in the limited armaments zone along the Suez Canal than are permitted by the Sinai II agreement. Gamasy told Ambassador Eilts that within the coming week seven of the battalions would be ordered to move back over the canal, thereby putting Egypt in full compliance with the agreement.*

According to UN observers, [redacted]

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Egypt had 16 infantry battalions in the limited armaments zone, eight more than permitted by the agreement. We have since determined that the UN observers double-counted one of the battalions. Thus, the withdrawal of seven will put Egypt within the limit of eight.

UN observers have reported that the number of Egyptians on the east side has been under the 8,000 man limit. [redacted]

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There is still a problem, however, involving three occupied SA-6 sites which may be deployed closer to the Suez Canal than permitted by the agreement. This issue is being resolved through the UN.

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LEBANON: *Leftist leader Kamal Jumblatt formally requested yesterday that the presidential election scheduled for tomorrow be postponed. His action is an eleventh-hour effort to block Ilyas Sarkis, whose Syrian-backed candidacy has gained a significant edge in the last several days over Jumblatt's choice, Raymond Edde.*

Beirut radio followed up the announcement with warnings--probably at Jumblatt's instigation--that only a compromise on a candidate other than Sarkis or Edde could prevent a "new explosion."

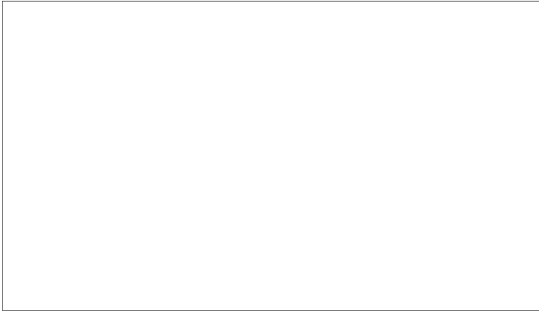
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Sarkis is believed to have close to the 66 votes necessary to give him a first ballot win. [redacted]

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The speaker of parliament, who is responsible for fixing the election date, is polling other deputies on Jumblatt's postponement request and has indicated that his bloc of deputies is prepared to find a compromise candidate, if that will satisfy Jumblatt. The speaker probably will not make a final decision before checking with Damascus.

If Jumblatt succeeds in delaying the session either through legal means or through violence, he will again be on a collision course with the Syrians. His moves will almost certainly elicit a sharp reaction from the Christians, who may counter with threats to withhold President Franjiah's resignation and to press for partition.

* * *

Syria reportedly sent more troops into the Beirut area yesterday. We have no firm information as to the numbers involved, but the addition may total about 400 men. According to the press, the troops were special forces of the Palestine Liberation Army--an often-used cover for regular Syrian forces.

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~~FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY~~

USSR: *The appointment of 67-year-old Party Secretary Dmitry Ustinov--a civilian and already a member of the Politburo--as minister of defense yesterday allows the Soviet leadership to finesse the question of whether a military successor to Marshal Grechko should inherit his Politburo seat. Ustinov may have been chosen to serve in an interim capacity while General Kulikov, aged 55, the chief of the General Staff, acquires more seniority.*

The announcement of Ustinov's appointment only hours after Grechko's interment in the Kremlin wall suggests that the top leadership was anxious to head off any politicking over the selection of Grechko's successor. Ustinov's posting as minister is almost certain to provoke an adverse reaction among elements of the high command opposed to the idea that any civilian should hold the top post in the ministry.

As a civilian, Ustinov will have a somewhat different outlook on defense matters from that of a professional soldier. His background in the armaments field and in industry will probably facilitate better integration of strategic planning with such matters as resource allocation, research and development, armaments programming, and national mobilization than would be possible under a career military man. Unencumbered by service loyalties, Ustinov may be expected to weigh more impartially the claims on resources and advice on defense matters offered by the various members of the high command.

We doubt that Ustinov's appointment will lead to any change in the Soviet position at either the SALT negotiations, with which he has been involved, or at the MBFR talks.

For the moment, Ustinov's appointment means that the military have been left without a representative on the Politburo. Although

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Ustinov has an extensive background in defense production and has been made a general of the army, he is not a professional soldier, and has had no command experience.

Consequently, it seems likely that a good deal of the command authority that the defense minister has had over the armed forces will pass to the General Staff. It also is possible that General Secretary Brezhnev, recently identified in public for the first time as the chairman of the Defense Council, will acquire more command authority over the armed forces.

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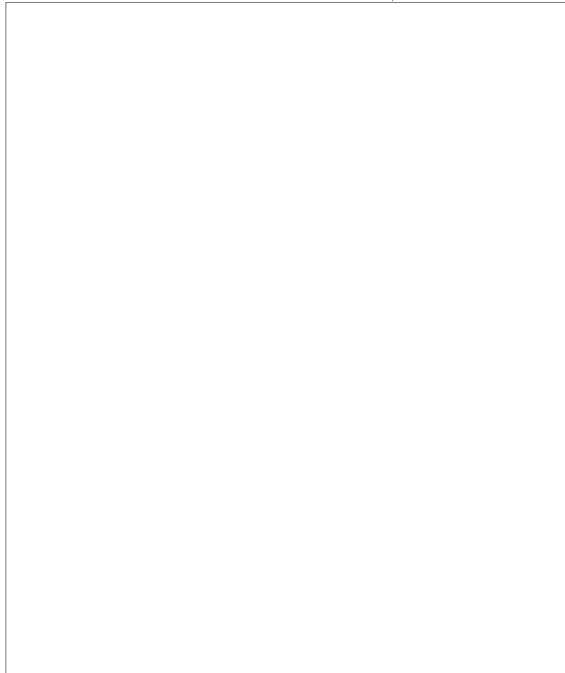
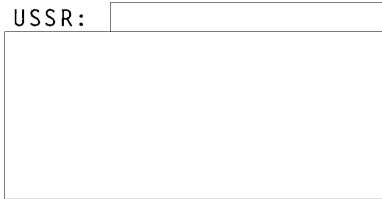
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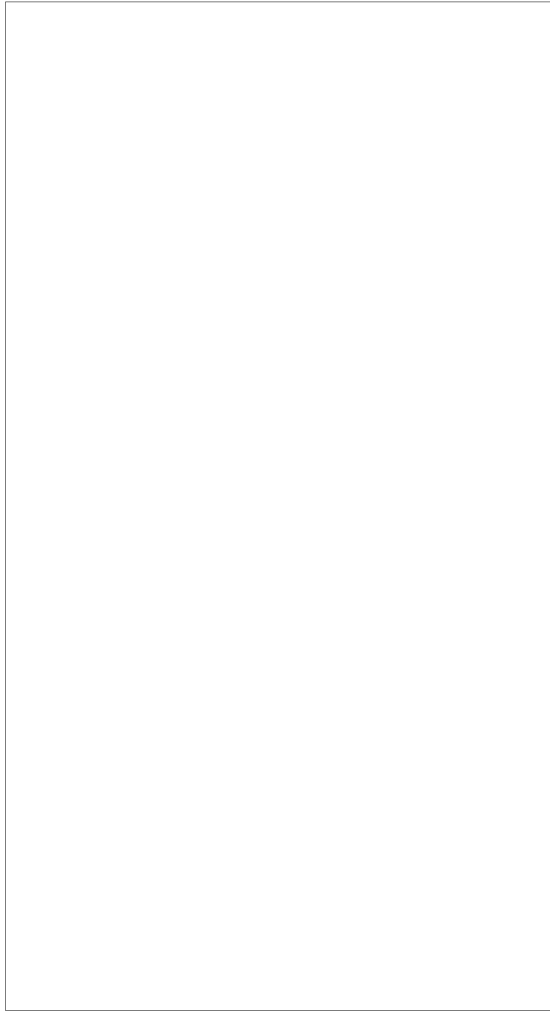
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5 **USSR-CHINA:** *The Soviet leadership has published in Pravda a lengthy article on China which holds out little hope for change in Sino-Soviet relations unless Peking takes the initiative.*

The article's recital of what the Soviets have done to encourage better party and state relations with China is the longest authoritative rendition in years. Citing General Secretary Brezhnev at the recent Soviet party congress, it implies that Moscow has made its last offer.

The article refers to the recent political turbulence in Peking as evidence that the Chinese people are not reconciled to Maoism. The message for China's moderates would seem to be that the USSR recognizes that not all Chinese are anti-Soviet and believes the situation may improve after Mao goes.

NOTES

Panama plans to provide the press with the names of US boats allegedly fishing within the country's claimed 200-mile limit.

Panama will demand for each a maximum fine of \$100,000.

If the Panamanians take a tough public stance on US fishing boats in the Canal Zone, domestic pressure will make it difficult for General Torrijos to retreat from his aggressive position. The Panamanians yesterday captured a fishing boat of Senegalese registry. -25X1

Meanwhile Torrijos has indicated he will abandon efforts to extradite the captain of a US-registered fishing boat that transited the canal and is now in port on the Atlantic side of the Canal Zone. He has apparently decided the demand for extradition would be tacit admission that the zone is foreign territory.

* * *

Recent satellite photography of Angolan ports indicates that Cuban merchant ships have moved military equipment from northern to southern Angola.

Coverage of Lobito in late March showed three Cuban ships berthed there. One had on deck five T-34 tanks, an unidentified armored vehicle, and two oil trucks. The presence of cargo on deck indicated that the ship probably was shuttling equipment over short distances. Photography of Luanda in early April showed several light tanks, 15 armored personnel carriers, support vehicles in open storage, and a Cuban freighter at dockside.

The Luanda regime has been shifting its armed forces southward over the past month to support operations against UNITA-FNLA guerrillas and to meet the potential threat of South African forces in neighboring Namibia. Satellite photography of mid-April also showed MIG-21 and MIG-17 fighters for the first time at a southern Angolan airfield.

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Reports of unrest within the Syrian military and of confessional tensions resulting from Syria's involvement in Lebanon continue to circulate in Damascus.

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While opposition to President Asad's Lebanese policy exists among middle-level and junior officers, it does not appear to have reached unmanageable proportions. [redacted]

[redacted]

Tensions within the military are likely to continue so long as Syria remains heavily involved in Lebanon.

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The Italian parliament will conclude a debate on Prime Minister Moro's Christian Democratic minority government today. There is now only the slimmest chance that dissolution of parliament and an early election can be avoided.

Moro cannot win the confidence vote scheduled to follow the debate because the three parties on which his survival depends--the Socialists, Social Democrats, and Republicans--have decided to vote against him or abstain. Moro may decide to resign in advance of the vote.

* * *

The Israeli government is bracing for a possible confrontation on Saturday with Arabs who are expected to hold May Day rallies in northern Israel and on the occupied West Bank.

Officials fear that the rallies could turn violent and lead to a new wave of widespread anti-Israeli demonstrations.

Arab Communists have received permission to hold an open air meeting in Nazareth, Israel, which they expect several thousand people to attend. Any demonstration there would help Arab nationalists on the West Bank whip up support for a march they are reportedly planning next week. It would protest the Passover march of mid-April that was sponsored by an Israeli group pushing for more Jewish settlements in the area.

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