

The President's Daily Brief

October 19, 1976



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~~Top Secret~~ 25X1

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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LEBANON: Syrian President Asad and Egyptian President Sadat papered over their differences, making it possible for the mini-summit on Lebanon to agree on a formula for ending the Lebanese civil war.

The compromise reached during the summit meeting in Saudi Arabia suggests that Asad acknowledged Sadat's claim to Arab leadership and Sadat recognized Syrian primacy in Lebanon. Moreover, Egypt and Syria agreed to stop their propaganda war and to resume normal diplomatic relations.

The summit resolutions leave several questions open. It is unclear which countries will contribute to the Arab League force, which is to be expanded to 30,000 troops, and whether Syrian troops are to be considered combatants or part of the peace-keeping force. The question of Syrian troop withdrawals is left to the discretion of Lebanese President Sarkis, who is susceptible to Syrian and Christian influence.

At any rate, the call for a complete cease-fire by October 21 and a withdrawal of all combatants from major areas of fighting within five to ten days thereafter cannot possibly be implemented without Syrian cooperation.

Because of the Syrian and Egyptian agreement, the present plan appears to offer the best chance yet of ending the fighting.

The pact could still fall apart as a result of mistrust or the continued opposition of the allies of the Palestinians and Syrians, who were not represented at the summit meeting. The Lebanese Christians are likely to be reluctant to give back any of the territory they recently gained. Nor is PLO leader Arafat likely to have an easy time persuading the Lebanese leftists or more radical fedayeen groups to come around.

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Although Arafat got some relief from Syrian military pressure and some room for maneuver between Sadat and Asad, he now knows that Egypt and Syria are willing to compromise at the expense of the Palestinians in order to promote their own national interests.

Meanwhile, Christian forces apparently captured the Palestinian stronghold of Marj Uyun in southern Lebanon near the Israeli border.

The USSR still gives no evidence that it is willing to go beyond rhetorical support for the Lebanese leftists.

An authoritative Observer article in yesterday's Pravda castigated the recent Syrian military offensive in Lebanon, but made no call for a Syrian withdrawal. A subsequent statement from the unofficial Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee called for an "immediate termination" of military action against the Palestinians.

The Observer article also accused Damascus of continuing its offensive even though the Palestinians were willing to negotiate. It warned against talks that did no more than provide a screen to hide continued attacks against the leftist forces. The article also called on the Palestinians to negotiate in good faith.

There was no indication in the statements that Moscow is considering any cutback in military assistance to Damascus. Soviet arms carriers continued to arrive at Syrian ports during August and September; the most recent delivery took place on October 4.

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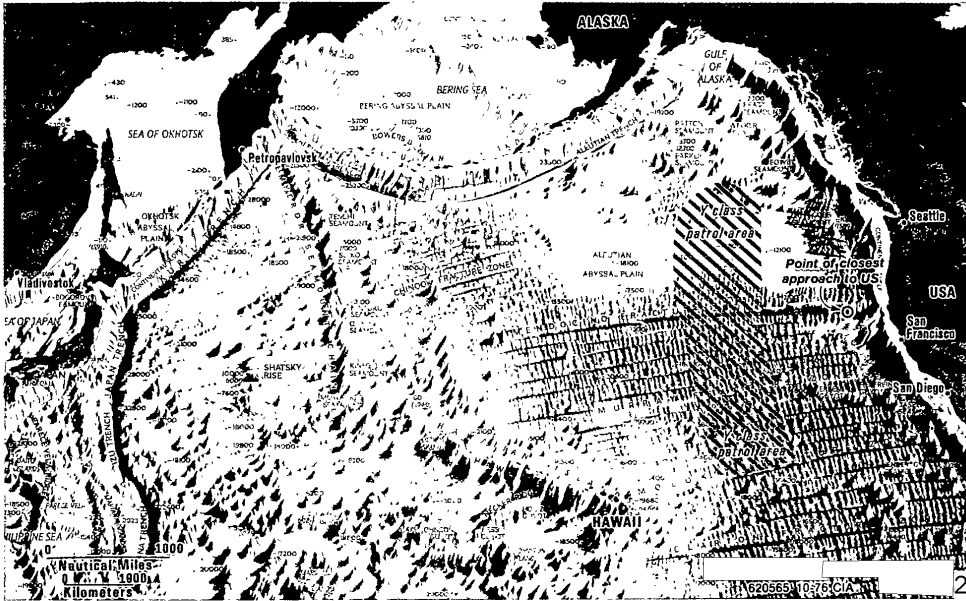
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Pacific Y Class Patrol Area



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NOTES

A Soviet Y-class ballistic missile submarine conducted an unprecedented patrol last week about 300 miles off the California coast.

The USSR normally has two Y-class units on patrol in the Pacific, but they have never been detected closer than about 700 nautical miles off the US west coast. In general, they remain 900 to 1,000 nautical miles away in a broad area stretching from northwest of Hawaii to just south of Alaska. About two years ago one Y-class did approach within 300 miles of southern Alaska.

The reason for the recent close approach to the US is unclear, but it may have been to test US antisubmarine detection capabilities. A similar patrol was made last year by a Y-class unit off the US Atlantic coast.

Guyanese Prime Minister Burnham sharply criticized the United States in a major speech honoring the victims of a Cuban airliner crash.

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Burnham stopped short of accusing the United States of complicity in the terrorist act that claimed the lives of 11 Guyanese, but he insinuated that the US government was at least morally responsible because of its support for Cuban exile organizations.

The Prime Minister seemed to be inviting demonstrations against the US embassy when he warned that "those who perpetrate violence must now expect they will have violence visited upon them." There is no evidence, however, that the government is planning a campaign of harassment or violence against the US embassy or its personnel.

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Unrest within the Ethiopian armed forces has increased markedly in recent weeks.

The US defense attache has received reports that noncommissioned officers of the Second Division in Asmara, the capital of Eritrea Province, late last week detained the second vice chairman of the ruling military council and a number of senior officers. The council's first vice chairman visited the Third Division in eastern Ethiopia also late last week to mediate a dispute between opposing factions within the units. Earlier this month troops in western Eritrea took control of their battalion and detained their commander.

Specific military grievances have contributed to the increased tensions. The government's security situation has deteriorated throughout Ethiopia in recent weeks because of increased insurgent activity. New strains have been imposed on the government's inadequate military logistics system. The resulting shortages of supplies and ammunition have further weakened morale and discipline.

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West German concern over the state of the British economy may lead West Germany to make proposals for long-term aid to the UK.

Chancellor Schmidt, speaking the day after his meeting on October 10 and 11 with Prime Minister Callaghan, declared that Bonn must be prepared to assist European neighbors who find themselves in difficult financial circumstances.

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Schmidt believes short-term aid on a small scale is not sufficient and that larger, long-term help is needed to solve Britain's economic problems. The idea is to bridge the gap between current problems and the arrival of North Sea oil, which will sharply increase government revenues and reduce the UK's chronic balance-of-payments deficit.

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Norway announced yesterday that it is expelling the entire staff of the North Korean embassy in Oslo.

The announced reason for the expulsion is that the North Koreans have been involved in black market sales of liquor and tobacco. Norway apparently does not intend to break diplomatic relations.

Several days ago the Danish government requested that the North Korean ambassador and his staff be withdrawn from Copenhagen because of their involvement in smuggling and selling narcotics, liquor, and cigarettes. Sweden may be the next Scandinavian country to act against the North Koreans; yesterday police in Stockholm arrested three Swedes for receiving illegally imported goods from North Korean embassy personnel.

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