



The President's Daily Brief

17 April 1973

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

LATE ITEM



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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

17 April 1973

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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[redacted] Cambodia. (Page 1)

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[redacted] South Vietnam-
[redacted] (Page 2)

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Thailand [redacted]
[redacted] China. (Page 3)

Salyut-2, the unmanned Soviet space station, may have exploded in space. (Page 4)

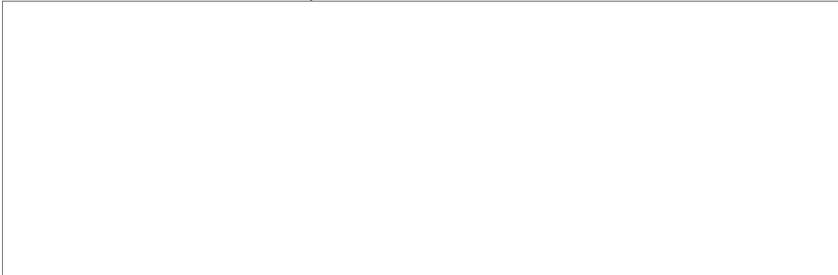
The Soviets appear to be transporting tanks and other equipment of the Moroccan expeditionary force to Syria. (Page 5)

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Soviet media are preparing the atmosphere for Brezhnev's forthcoming visit to the US. (Page 6)

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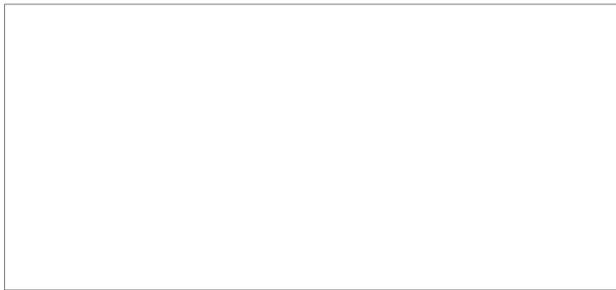
CAMBODIA



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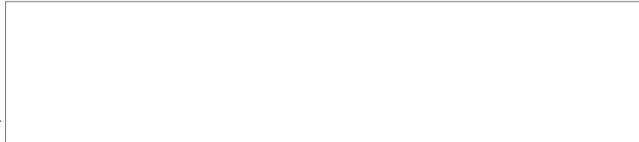
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SOUTH VIETNAM

Several recent intercepts indicate the Communists are planning attacks in northern South Vietnam in an attempt to force the government to keep Marine and Airborne units committed to the Quang Tri battlefield. The messages show that the Communists hope to complete plans by April 19 to seize eleven unidentified objectives in the area.

The Communists apparently think Saigon might divert its first line units now in the area to other parts of South Vietnam. It seems unlikely, however, that Saigon would weaken its northern defense line by sending all of these units elsewhere until it is sure that local forces can contain the current threat in Quang Tri Province.

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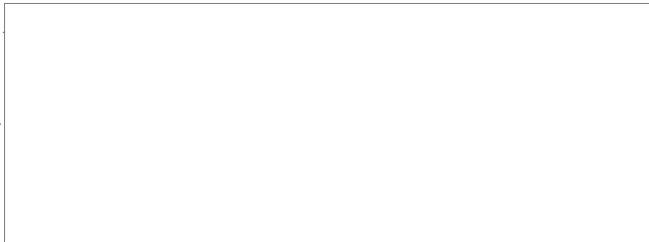


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THAILAND-CHINA



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USSR

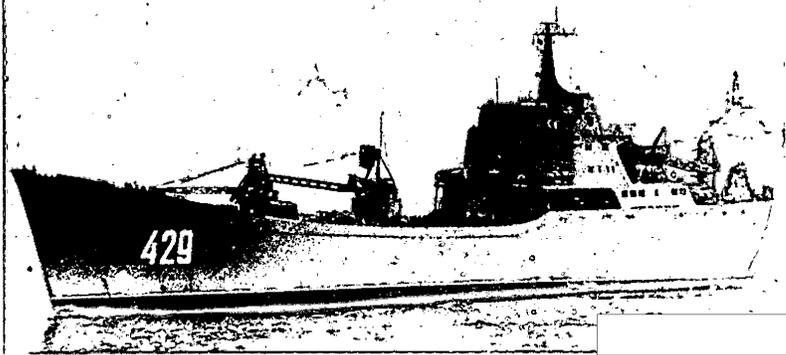
Radar tracking on April 14 indicated that Salyut-2, the unmanned space station orbited by the Soviets on April 3, was tumbling in orbit, apparently out of control. The next day, US radars detected about 30 fragments in the orbit of the space station, indicating that the vehicle may have exploded.

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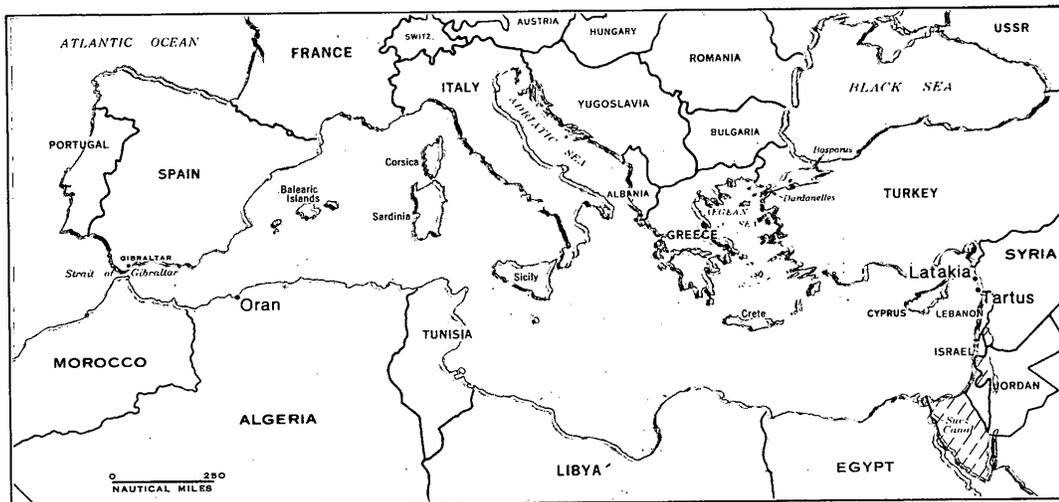
Preparations for the launch of a Soyuz spacecraft to transport cosmonauts to the Salyut were under way late last week. No additional preparatory activity has been noted, however, since April 14. The space support ships in the Atlantic and Pacific have not been detected returning to port, but a delay of a few days while the Soviets assess the nature of the failure would be expected. The Soviets might still launch the Soyuz to perform some type of solo mission.

The Salyut-2 space station was expected to be manned by at least two separate teams of cosmonauts for extended missions of about four weeks. A combined Soyuz-Salyut mission scheduled for last summer also ended in failure when the space station failed to achieve orbit.

Soviet Alligator-Class LST.



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USSR-MOROCCO-SYRIA

Two Soviet LSTs made a port call in Oran, Algeria, from April 13 to 15 and currently are en route to the eastern Mediterranean in the company of a destroyer.

[Redacted]

The two landing craft are now carrying armored vehicles and trucks on deck.

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These ships may be involved in transporting Moroccan military equipment to Syria.

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[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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Hassan's expeditionary force is designed to demonstrate his commitment to the Arab cause, to distract popular attention from problems at home, and--perhaps most important--to employ military troublemakers far away.

The sealift could provide the Soviets with a cheap opportunity to improve their generally poor relations with Morocco.

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NOTE

USSR: During recent weeks, Soviet media have been stressing the improved state of relations with the US. Existing differences have been given low-key treatment or have even been perfunctorily dismissed. The Soviets are probably beginning preparations for Brezhnev's forthcoming visit to the US. In addition, the Paris Agreements have made it easier for Moscow to project a positive image of relations with Washington.

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