



The President's Daily Brief

January 16, 1976

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Top Secret



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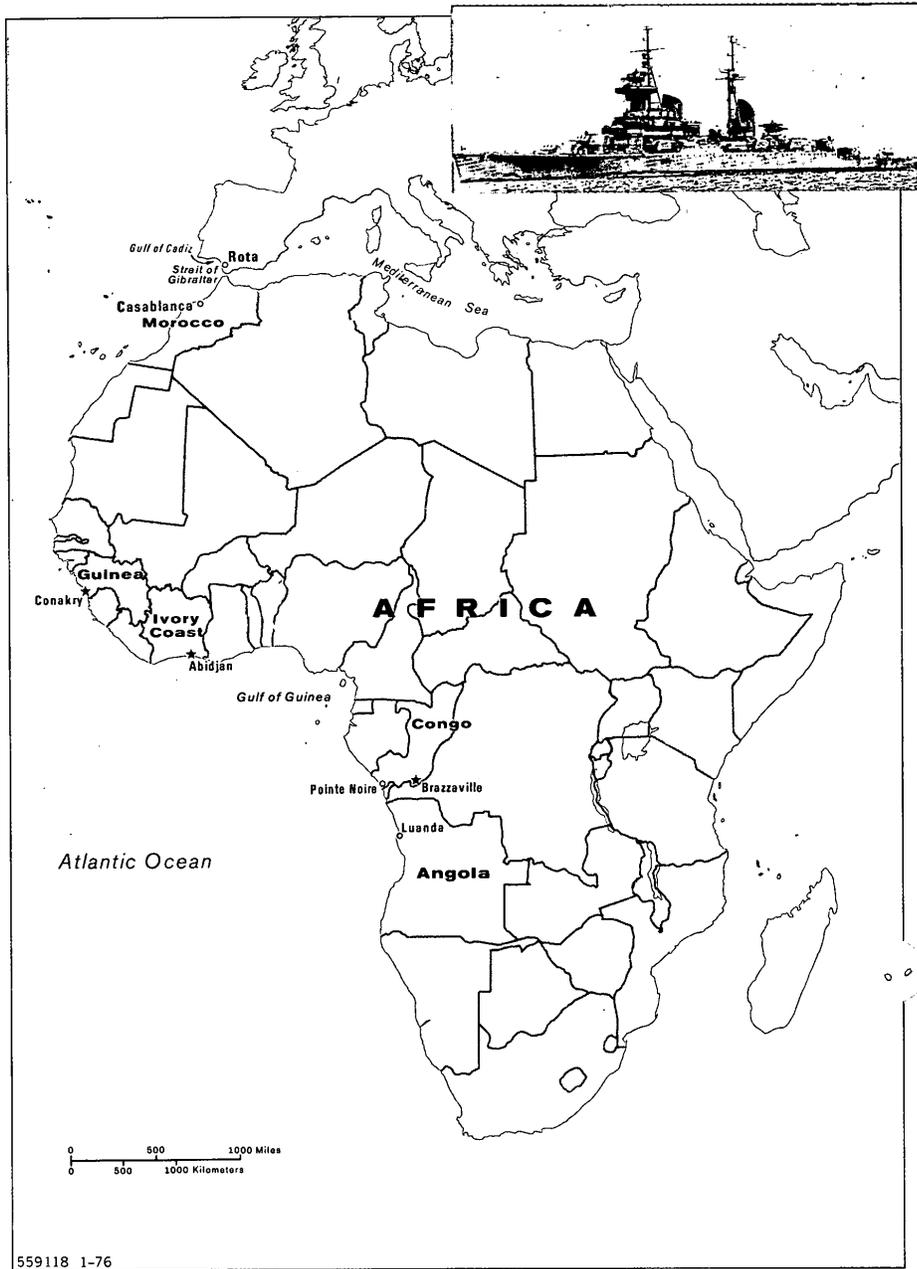
USSR: Further changes have been noted in the position of Soviet ships in the western Mediterranean and in African waters. (Page 1)

Lebanon: Christian Phalangists launched operations yesterday to take over the Palestinian refugee camps in east Beirut that have been blockaded by Christian militiamen since early January. (Page 2)

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



USSR

Further changes have been noted in the position of Soviet ships in the western Mediterranean and in African waters.

The Sverdlov-class cruiser left the Mediterranean yesterday afternoon in company with two F-class diesel-powered attack submarines. Some 14 hours later, the three ships returned to the Mediterranean.



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The Kresta-II-class cruiser that was in Conakry, Guinea, left port yesterday morning and was moving north.

The Kotlin-class destroyer that arrived in the Conakry vicinity Wednesday night was not sighted in port, suggesting that the cruiser and destroyer made a rendezvous at sea and are currently operating together. The Soviet LST and oiler are still about 200 miles southwest of Abidjan, Ivory Coast, where they have been for the past three days.



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Palestinian Refugee Camps



LEBANON

Christian Phalangists launched operations yesterday to take over the Palestinian refugee camps in east Beirut--Tall Zatar and Jisar al-Basha--that have been blockaded by Christian militiamen since January 4.

[Redacted]

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25X1

The Christians took over the Palestinian refugee camp at Dibayah on Tuesday. In retaliation, the Palestinians have surrounded the predominantly Christian villages of Damour and Jiyah south of Beirut.

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We have no new information on Palestinian involvement in the fighting.

[Redacted]

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Clashes in the north have been especially heavy around Tripoli and Zagharta.

[Redacted]

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Beirut airport remains open, but British Airways has suspended operations, and several major international airlines have delayed plans to resume scheduling.

The severity of the fighting has prompted another call from the Secretary General of the Arab League for Arab action. Members of the League are unlikely to consider convening a summit until after President Franjyah meets President Asad in Damascus this weekend to discuss Syria's peace proposals.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

NOTES

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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* * *

The first reports of local bread shortages have appeared in the Soviet press.

The Ministry of Agriculture's newspaper, *Rural Life*, has acknowledged receiving complaints of shortages from widely spread rural areas. The article made no mention of last year's harvest failure, blaming instead mismanagement by local supply organizations. We expect the overall bread supply will be adequate, but spot shortages will continue.

* * *

The Argentine cabinet shake-up adds to the instability of the political scene.

President Peron's appointment of politically inexperienced men to the portfolios of interior and justice and her failure to fill top jobs in the foreign and defense ministries have left the government even weaker than before. Peron's decision to remove those advisers [Redacted]

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[Redacted] is widely interpreted in Buenos Aires as an act of defiance.

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The constraints against military action against the President continue to diminish, but one major element--the potentially disruptive role of Peronist labor--remains. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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(continued)

* * *

Fidel Castro made a lackluster defense yesterday of Cuba's military role in Angola.

Speaking before foreign journalists, Castro acknowledged for the first time that Cuban "soldiers" were in Angola; previous regime spokesmen had claimed they were "volunteers." His use of this type of press conference rather than a public speech to get this point across is significant; he uses this technique when he wants to make foreign headlines but keep the information from the Cuban people. Castro's Angola policy is unpopular in Cuba.

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