



The President's Daily Brief

January 21, 1976

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January 21, 1976

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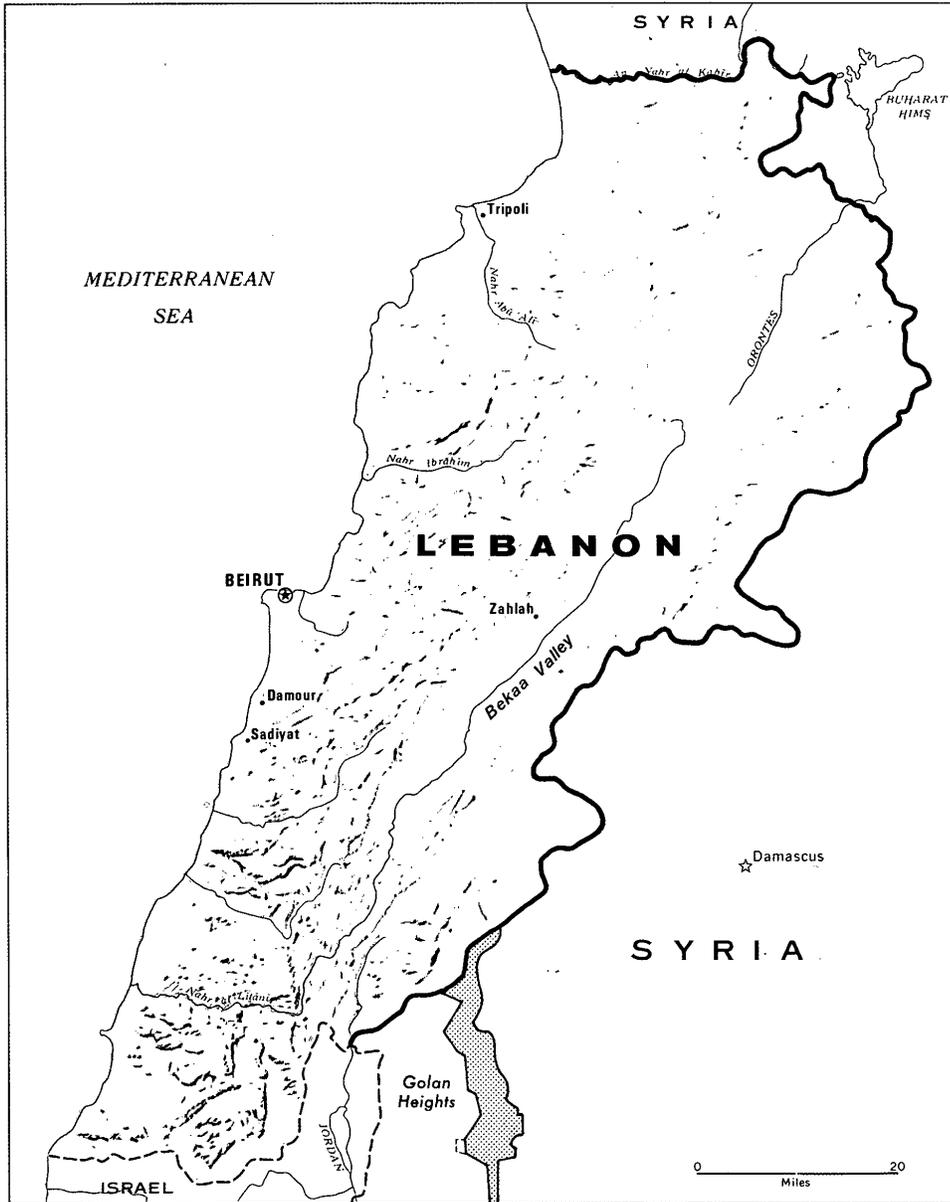
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LEBANON

The fighting continued undiminished yesterday in most areas of the country, despite the cease-fire arranged by President Franjyah and Syrian President Asad. Both leaders met yesterday with representatives of the warring factions.

Christian Interior Minister Shamun, whose private militia has been heavily involved in the blockade of Palestinian refugee camps, reportedly rejected the cease-fire. The plan called for lifting the blockade of the camps in exchange for an end to the siege of Damour and several other Christian cities south of Beirut. Late press reports indicate that Muslims and leftists have captured Damour.

The Palestinians and their Muslim and leftist allies also objected to halting the fighting in the face of new advances by the Christians on Muslim areas of Beirut.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Karami has not pressed his threat to resign, despite the failure of the cease-fire to take hold. Prominent Sunni Muslims have made it clear they would refuse to participate in the government if Karami submitted a formal resignation that was accepted by President Franjyah.


President Asad talked with leftist leader Kamal Jumblatt in Damascus yesterday and is scheduled to meet other leftist and Muslim leaders later this week.

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Syrian and Lebanese leaders, with the notable exception of Shamun, appear to have intentionally kept silent on political and military developments over the last several days. This silence and a breakdown in communications between Beirut and other areas of the country have prompted what appear to be exaggerated press accounts of sweeping attacks by Muslims and Palestinians in the north around Tripoli and in the Bekaa Valley region near Zahlah.

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Muslim and leftist forces have had the upper hand in the north for some time, and may have increased their pressure on the predominantly Christian communities in Zahlah. They also may have launched a countrywide campaign against government facilities and military installations. There is no evidence, however, that they have gained control of the northern and eastern regions.

Our defense attaché in Damascus was told by the commander of the Palestine Liberation Army that the Yarmuk Brigade--the military arm of Fatah--recently entered Lebanon and is now located south of Zahlah. The Yarmuk force may include as many as 2,500 troops. The PLA commander also said that five of the PLA's seven battalions are now in Lebanon. No mention was made of the total number of troops involved.



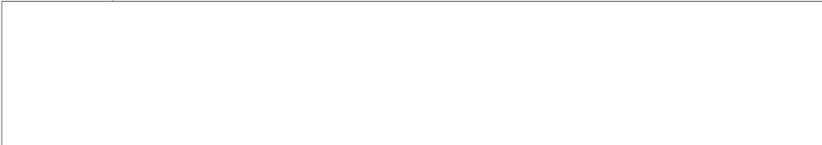
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The Israelis are monitoring developments in Lebanon very closely, but are continuing to react in a low-key manner.

Defense Minister Peres is the only top Israeli official who has commented directly on the Lebanese situation in recent days. Speaking to graduating Israeli army officers last Monday, he explicitly directed his comments toward Syria, warning that if a "foreign army" intervened in Lebanon, Israel would be forced to take the "necessary defensive measures."

Other Israeli officials are emphasizing the moderation shown by Syria during the crisis. They are playing down the recent movement of Palestinian troops from Syria into Lebanon and are suggesting that President Asad may be using these forces to pressure the Lebanese factions into reaching a political compromise.



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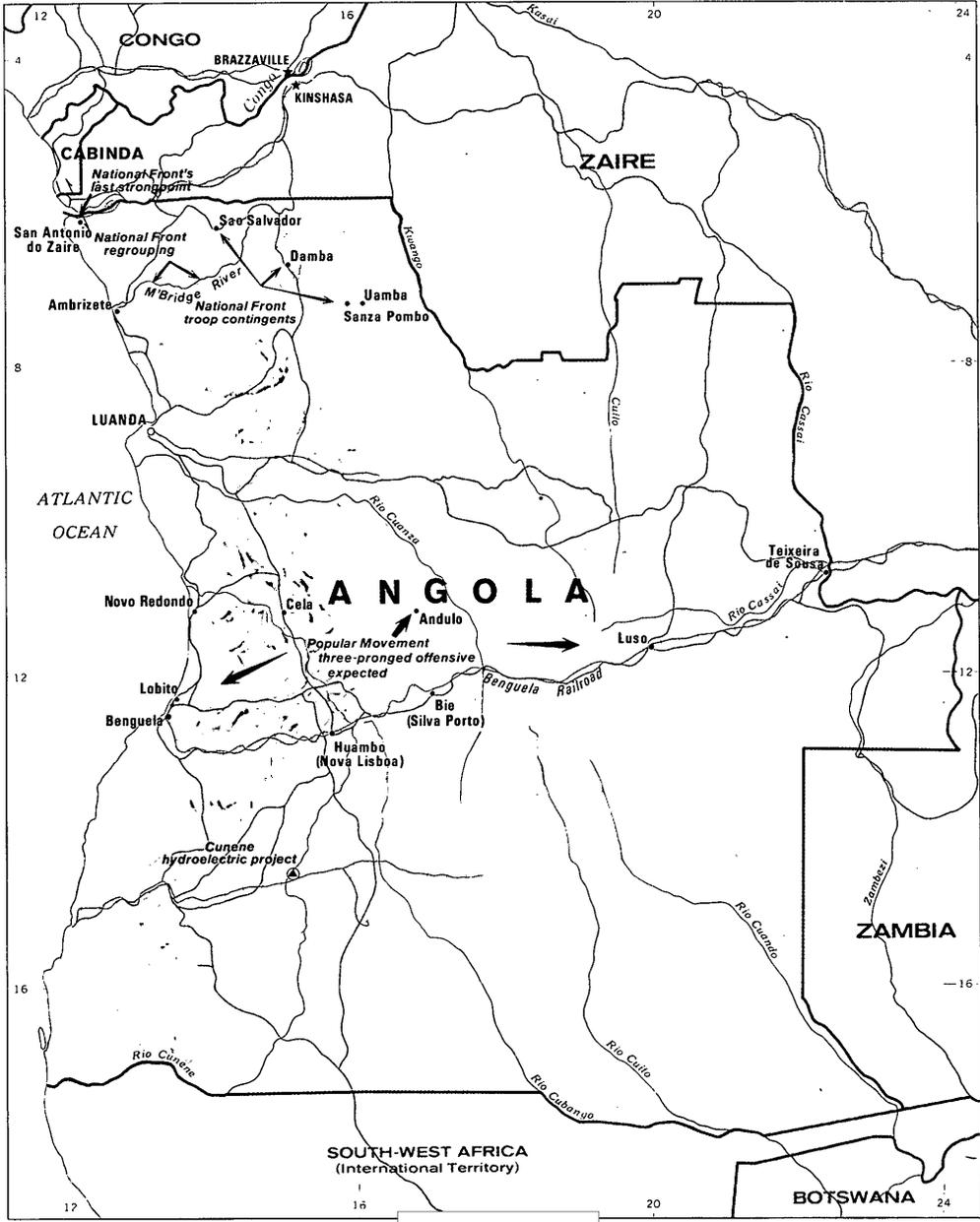
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Current Military Situation



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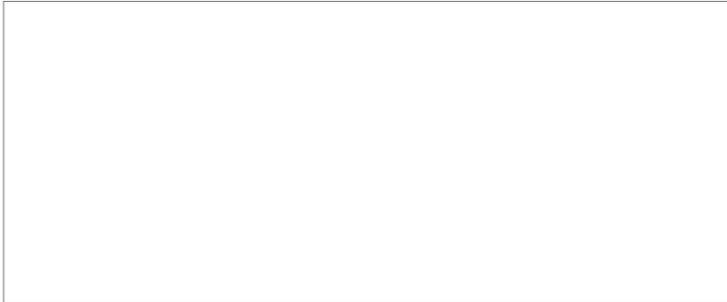
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ANGOLA - SOUTH AFRICA



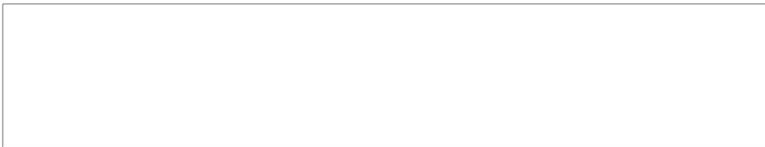
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The military situation in northern Angola, for the time being, is relatively quiet. The Popular Movement appears not to have advanced beyond Ambrizete.

[Redacted]

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Intercepts indicate little activity around Santo Antonio do Zaire, the Front's last major strongpoint in the north. The Front also still has contingents at Sao Salvador--reported earlier to have been evacuated--and at Damba, Sanza Pombo, and Uamba.

In central Angola, heavy fighting is continuing around Cela, Luso, and Teixeira de Sousa but neither side has scored any gains. National Union leader Savimbi [Redacted] is preparing to resist an expected three-pronged offensive [Redacted] against Luso, Andulo, and Lobito-Benguela.

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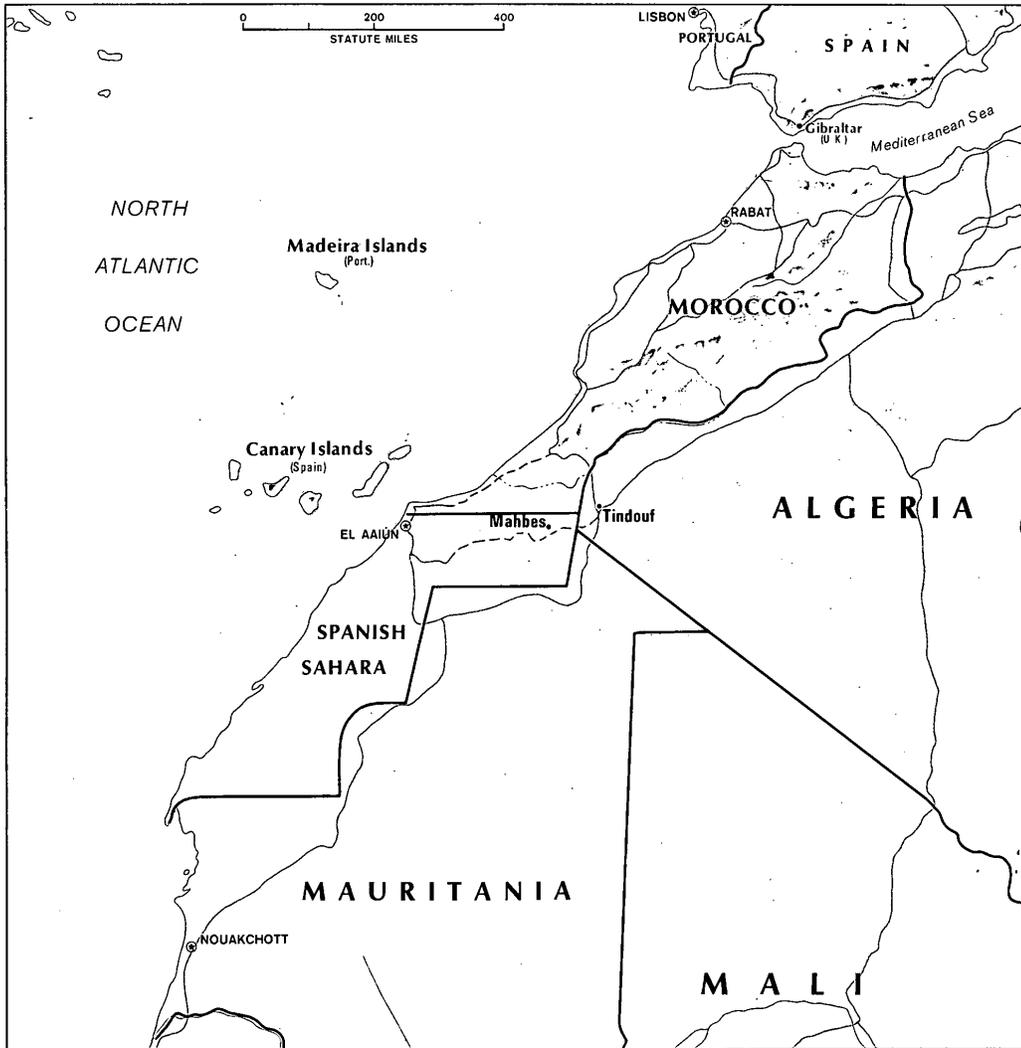
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[Redacted] Press reports that the National Union will airlift several thousand troops to assist the National Front probably are without foundation. The National Union cannot spare troops for northern operations at this time.

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NOTES

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[Redacted] Moroccan [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted] Algerian-

[Redacted]

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Spanish police used tear gas and clubs to prevent leftists from holding the rally they had planned in Madrid last night.

The would-be demonstrators, fewer than 8,000 of them, were diverted into side streets before they could begin their march. The government was apparently able to prevent the rally without using extreme measures that would have brought accusations that it was reverting to the repression of the Franco era.

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The Soviet landing ship and oiler that have been in the Gulf of Guinea have moved to the vicinity of Conakry and probably will arrive there sometime today.

Two Soviet naval oilers currently are in port at Conakry and the Kresta-II guided-missile cruiser and Kotlin-class destroyer are at sea nearby. The positions of other Soviet ships in the western Mediterranean have not changed since yesterday. The Kashin-class destroyer that followed the USS Saratoga into the Mediterranean remains near Malaga where the US ship is making a port call. Two F-class submarines and the Sverdlov-class cruiser have not left the Alboran Basin since they returned from their brief trip into the Atlantic last week.

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