



The President's Daily Brief

April 3, 1976

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~~*Top Secret*~~

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

LEBANON

The ten-day cease-fire that went into effect in Lebanon yesterday is generally being honored by all sides. Sporadic firing continues in some sections of Beirut and in outlying areas.

Both Muslim and Christian leaders have expressed concern that warring factions remain poised for renewed fighting and could interfere with the convocation of parliament.

The speaker of parliament has recalled an announcement issued early yesterday that parliament would convene on Monday. The chamber will not meet until the effectiveness of the cease-fire can be assessed.

Syrian President Asad and the head of the Maronite Church reportedly have guaranteed the resignation of President Franjiah. Leftist leader Kamal Jumblatt and his allies, however, remain skeptical. Franjiah himself has made no public statements for some days; presumably he is awaiting action by parliament.

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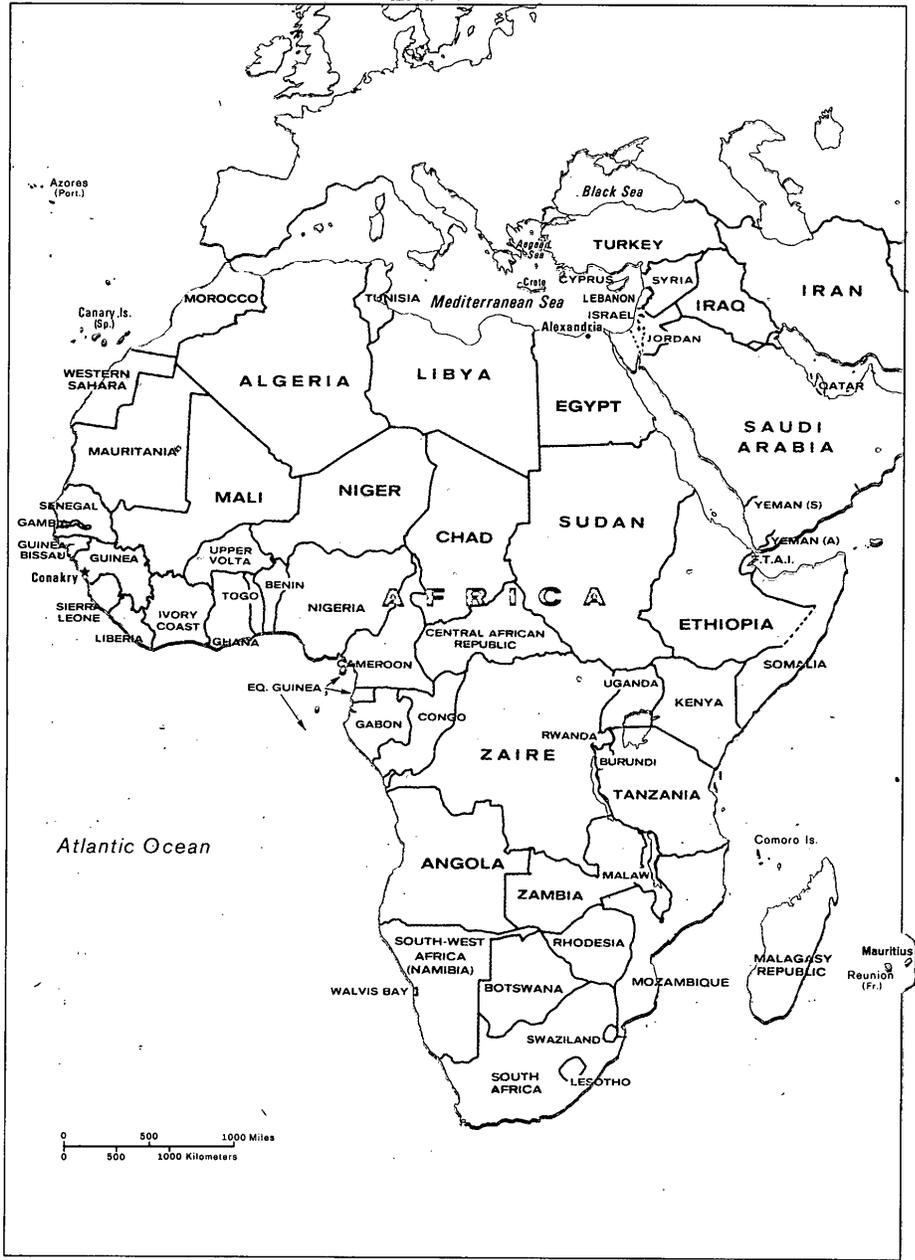
miles north of Damascus, has returned to a high state of alert--possibly a precaution in the event the cease-fire breaks down.

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USSR

The Soviet navy continues to shift forces into the eastern Mediterranean.

Moscow now has four major warships, a mine-sweeper, an intelligence ship, and probably some submarines southeast of Crete. These ships are monitoring the US naval force consisting of two destroyers, a helicopter assault ship, and four amphibious ships. The Soviets have four amphibious ships in the eastern Mediterranean; normally they keep only two in the area.

A Kresta II guided missile cruiser that had been moving north from Conakry, Guinea, entered the Mediterranean yesterday. It may remain west of Sicily, at least temporarily, since the Soviets have no other major surface warships in the western Mediterranean.

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[Redacted] dependents usually seen in the city has declined sharply in recent days. If the Soviets have indeed been withdrawing their dependents from Syria, it probably indicates that they have been concerned about Syrian intentions to intervene openly in Lebanon as well as about Israel's possible reaction to such intervention.

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CHINA

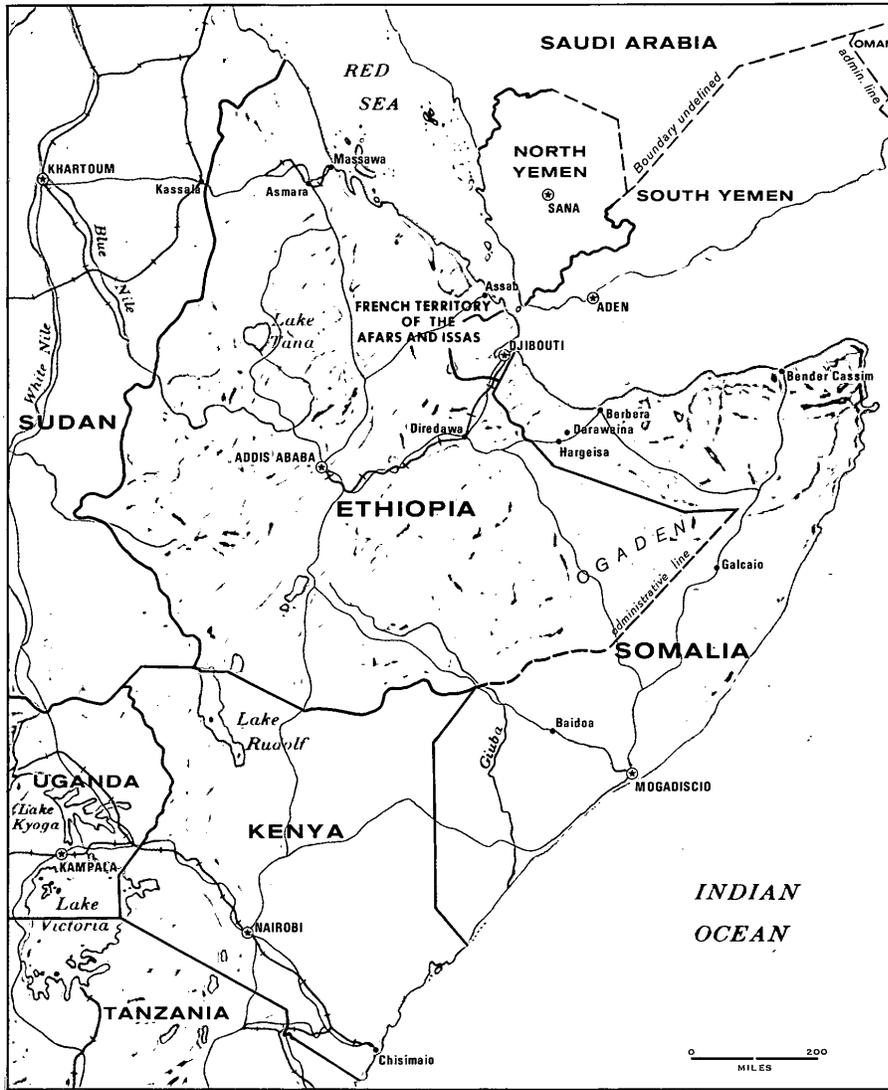
The Chinese leadership, including officials from the provinces, has assembled to discuss the fate of Teng Hsiao-ping. A similar meeting in January blocked Teng from the premiership and resulted in deep divisions within the leadership.

The campaign to criticize Teng has been static in recent weeks. Teng's supporters have not been able to stop criticism of him, and his detractors have been unable to push the campaign further toward ousting him.

A leadership meeting, apparently held in late February, may have decided to narrow the focus of criticism to Teng alone. Thereafter, efforts to include other officials in the attack began to decline, and propaganda began referring to an individual wrongdoer.

The campaign has consistently left open the possibility that Teng can retain a measure of power through some form of recantation. There is thus far no evidence that Teng has admitted his mistakes, but if he is prepared to accept some blame at the current meeting, it is possible that the campaign against him may begin to subside. If, on the other hand, Teng and his supporters remain adamant in their defense of current policies and of Teng's implementation of them, Teng's position is not likely to suffer any slippage. Rather, the leadership will be in for a protracted period of stalemate.

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SOMALIA-FRANCE

President Siad has declined to give formal assurances to France that Somalia will respect the sovereignty of the French Territory of the Afars and Issas (FTAI) after it becomes independent. Siad's refusal probably will not deflect France from proceeding with plans to hold an independence referendum sometime this year. It will, however, reinforce Paris' determination to obtain guarantees of the territory's sovereignty from the Organization of African Unity, the Arab League, and perhaps the UN.

During the visit of Jean Francois-Poncet, the French secretary of state for foreign affairs, to Mogadiscio on Wednesday, Siad would promise only that Somalia would not incorporate the territory. The French official was seeking written guarantees.

In an official statement on the meeting, the Somali government asserted that the French had come to the talks with proposals "which were not in the interest" of the people of the territory and did not satisfy Somali demands for "complete and unconditional" independence--Somali codewords for a French military withdrawal and transfer of power to a new government dominated by pro-Somalis. The Somali-backed group--the Front for the Liberation of the Somali Coast--has also announced a strong anti-French stand.

Before going to Mogadiscio, Francois-Poncet visited Egypt, Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia to sound out the Africans and Arabs on prospects for securing Arab League and OAU guarantees for the territory's independence. He also wanted to discuss the French proposal that the Arab League and OAU send observers to monitor the independence referendum. An OAU fact-finding mission will visit the territory later this month.

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At the Arab League foreign ministers' meeting last month, many of the participants--led by Egypt and Kuwait--reportedly urged Somalia to follow a cautious policy in the Horn of Africa. The resolution adopted by the Arab League, however, was strongly pro-Somali. It said any aggression against Somalia would be considered as aggression against all Arab countries.

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NOTES

Turkey's opposition Republican People's Party will vote to ratify the US-Turkish Defense Cooperation Agreement [redacted] when the government submits the pact to parliament. Party leader Bulent Ecevit may, however, chide the Prime Minister in debate for not getting better terms.

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If the Republican People's Party does support the agreement, it almost certainly will pass. Prime Minister Demirel may have had some indication of Ecevit's position before announcing Thursday that he would seek legislative approval. The government is not expected to submit the agreement to parliament prior to US Congressional approval of the new pact.

* * *

Iceland, clarifying its earlier proposal, has now signaled its willingness to compromise on certain key issues in the fishing dispute with the UK.

Acting through a Norwegian intermediary, the Icelandic government has informed London that it will accept an agreement for six months and is willing to raise the number of British trawlers permitted to fish inside the 200-mile limit from 20 to 23. [redacted]

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and army officers were recently arrested for two separate incidents of rioting. Another 50 have reportedly been forced into early retirement.

President Sadat's military policies, including that on arms supply, reportedly prompted the dis-sension.

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[redacted] that surfaced at several air bases about two weeks ago. All those involved are said to have been apprehended.

The incidents are the first reported instances for some time of open dissatisfaction with Sadat's policies among the armed forces. They may explain his extended visit to military units along the Suez Canal late last month.

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Egyptian military readiness along the Libyan border, raised since mid-March, is now on the decrease.



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