

**SECRET****1722  
ZAIRE-ANGOLA**

Angolan President Neto has been un-receptive to recent efforts by Zairian President Mobutu to improve relations between their governments.

Mobutu, who opposed Neto's Marxist-oriented faction during the Angolan civil war, concluded some time ago that he would have to mend fences with the victorious Neto, both for self-protection and to have some influence in southern African affairs. The Zairian leader has taken steps since late last year to reduce support substantially for Angolan insurgent groups fighting Neto's regime, and in January he announced recognition of Neto's government.

So far, Mobutu's gestures have apparently failed to move Neto, who continues to feel strong antipathy to the Zairian. In the past two weeks, both Neto and his foreign minister have again criticized Zaire publicly, claiming it is still permitting "Angola's enemies" to operate from bases in Zaire. The Angolan President also charged his neighbor with receiving US soldiers sent to prepare a military attack on Angola.

Neto is unlikely to be interested in any real improvement in relations with Zaire as long as he is faced with a serious insurgency situation in Angola. Even if Mobutu finally cuts all ties with the guerrillas—and it is by no means certain he intends to do so—Neto would probably continue to suspect him of aiding them. For their part, the various insurgent groups can probably maintain their present levels of activity for some time no matter what Mobutu does.

**Middle East****JORDAN-PALESTINIANS**

Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organization last week began formal talks in Amman aimed at reconciling their feud in the interest of developing a

common Arab position and strategy for peace negotiations with Israel. The initial round of the talks, which are likely to continue intermittently for some time, ended inconclusively.

The Jordanian delegation was headed by Prime Minister Badran, and Palestine National Council speaker Khalid al-Fahum, who had visited Amman in January to set up the talks, was chief spokesman for the PLO. The dialogue between the two parties—bitter foes since King Husayn drove most of the Palestinians from Jordan in 1970 and 1971—was promoted by Egypt and Syria, which are hoping to bring about some form of association between Jordan and the PLO that would overcome Israel's objection to dealing directly with the PLO.

During the discussions, the Jordanians rejected PLO requests for financial and military help for West Bank Palestinians—presumably to be channeled through the PLO. Jordan also turned down requests for permission to open additional PLO offices in Jordan and for the release of Palestinians detained by the Jordanians.

The PLO delegation reportedly was pleased to hear from the Jordanians that they would go to a resumed Geneva Conference on the Middle East only as a "confrontation state" and that the PLO, not Jordan, should represent the Palestinians. Husayn indicated thereby that he was continuing to adhere to the decision of the 1974 Arab summit conference designating the PLO as sole spokesman for the Palestinians.

For its part, the PLO maintained its familiar line that it would accept an invitation to Geneva, but would find it difficult to accept one based on an unmodified version of UN Security Council Resolution 242, which deals with the Palestinians in humanitarian rather than political terms. The PLO representatives made no suggestions on the question of future links between Jordan and a possible Palestinian state on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

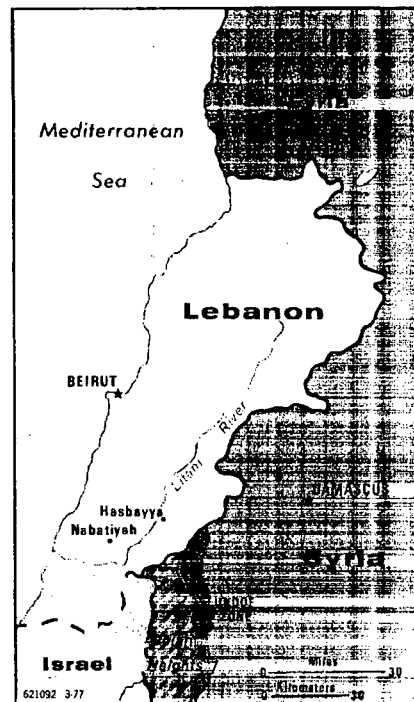
The two parties agreed to meet again to

explore their future relations in greater depth. The delay will allow both the PLO and Jordan an opportunity to obtain a clearer reading of Egyptian and Syrian expectations in the talks.

**25-28  
LEBANON**

Fighting in southern Lebanon between Palestinian-leftist forces and Christian militiamen supported by Israeli artillery fire has continued almost unabated since late January. The Palestinians are getting the worst of it and may lose all access to the border with Israel.

Christian forces initiated the fighting specifically to clear Palestinians and leftists from a "security belt" several kilometers wide along the border, and they clearly are accomplishing their aims. They have the upper hand militarily and

**SECRET**



*Presidents Sadat of Egypt (left), Numayri of Sudan (center), and Asad of Syria sign agreement at Khartoum meeting*

UPI

have gained control of much of the border area from Hasbaya west to the Mediterranean.

Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat and Christian Phalanges Party leader Pierre Jumayyil reportedly agreed in late February to end the fighting, but the two men have apparently been unable or unwilling as yet to follow through. Fighting, consisting chiefly of artillery duels, has not let up since the agreement.

Law and order is all but nonexistent throughout southern Lebanon. Many towns now under Christian artillery attack, including Nabatiyah, are in the hands of leftist hoodlums, and large numbers of Muslim inhabitants are either evacuating the area or supporting the Christians because of excesses by leftists and radical Palestinians.

The government appears powerless to control the situation. The minister of interior told the US charge recently that his ministry could do nothing, and President Sarkis apparently has no ideas on how to end the fighting. He has reportedly been considering asking the UN for troops to patrol the south, but no formal request has been made.

Lebanon has no regular military forces at all and no security forces numerous or effective enough to restore order. Syrian troops are proscribed from venturing deep

into southern Lebanon by Israeli objections. *(An analysis of the damage sustained by Lebanon during the civil war and of President Sarkis' reconstruction plans appears in the feature section of this publication.)*

## SUDAN-EGYPT-SYRIA

A meeting of the presidents of Sudan, Egypt, and Syria held in Khartoum on February 27 and 28 underlined the close relations that have developed among their moderate governments. The three presidents plan to get together privately with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Fahd when he is in Cairo next week to represent his country—their common benefactor—at the first Afro-Arab summit.

The Khartoum meeting produced little in the way of tangible results. Sudan became a member of the largely symbolic joint political command established by Egypt and Syria last December. The three presidents—who can now claim to head a political "union" containing more than half the population of the Arab world—may hope to use the tripartite arrangement to increase their influence in Arab affairs.

The talks were apparently initiated by Sudanese President Numayri. His main object was to obtain an expression of

wider Arab backing for his government, which he believes is threatened by Ethiopia and Libya. Egyptian President Sadat, long at odds with Libyan President Qadhafi and increasingly concerned about developments in the Horn of Africa, wanted to show support for his friend Numayri. Syrian President Asad sought to improve his ties with Arab moderates, in part because of his continuing problems with Iraq.

Saudi Arabia is likely to welcome cooperation among the three countries as helping both to draw Syria further away from the USSR and to prevent the spread of Soviet influence in the Horn of Africa, an area of growing concern to the Saudis. They believe that the widespread turmoil and increasing leftist orientation in Ethiopia and the extensive irredentist claims of Soviet-backed Somalia provide the USSR with opportunities for further gains.

Among other things, the Saudis are worried about what will happen in the French Territory of the Afars and Issas, which is coveted by both Ethiopia and Somalia, when it becomes independent later this year. They want France to retain a military presence there as a counter to Somali and Soviet ambitions and are ready to support an independent government both politically and economically.

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