



# The President's Daily Brief

*January 14, 1976*

2  
*Top/Secret*

25X1

Exempt from general  
declassification schedule of E.O. 11652  
exemption category 5B(1)(2)(3)  
declassified only on approval of  
the Director of Central Intelligence

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

January 14, 1976

Table of Contents

USSR - Middle East: Soviet airborne forces increased their readiness status yesterday--one of several developments in the Soviet Union and the Middle East that may be related. (Page 1)

USSR: The Soviets may be withdrawing their three naval ships from the Gulf of Guinea.

25X<sup>25</sup>X1

USSR-US: A deputy director of the USA Institute in Moscow says there is growing concern in the USSR that Soviet actions in Angola could prejudice chances for a SALT II agreement. (Page 6)

Portugal-Angola: Portuguese officials claim "legal" considerations have impeded efforts to block Cuban use of the Azores as a transit stop for flights to Africa, but say they are now prepared to make a "political" approach to the Cubans. (Page 7)

Notes: USSR-Morocco; Libya (Page 8)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

USSR - MIDDLE EAST

*Soviet airborne forces increased their readiness status yesterday--one of several developments in the Soviet Union and the Middle East that may be related.*

25X1

We are unable to explain this alert, and it could be no more than the initial step of an impending Soviet exercise. Conceivably it could be a response to what Moscow perceives to be a potential crisis, such as the situation in Lebanon, but we have no evidence pointing in this direction.

25X1

As might be expected, the Soviets have shown some increased concern in recent days over the deteriorating situation in Lebanon. Several days ago a Tass correspondent in Beirut suggested that Washington and Moscow might exert strong pressure on the factions to end the fighting. He raised the possibility of limiting the flow of arms into Lebanon. Yesterday an *Izvestia* editorial said events in Lebanon arouse serious anxiety in view of alleged plans to divide the country along religious lines.

We have not noted any apprehension on the part of the Soviets that their own interests are at stake in Lebanon. There also have been no indications of Soviet concern about Israeli or Syrian military intervention in Lebanon--actions that might trigger a Soviet military response to the fighting.

(continued)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

25X1

25X1

\* \* \*

Israel

25X1

\* \* \*

*In Lebanon, Christian militiamen appear to have gained the advantage over Palestinian forces trying to break the Christian blockade of Tall Zatar refugee camp in suburban Beirut.*

Phalanges forces reportedly are holding a line encircling the camp, despite heavy fire from adjacent Muslim areas and a nearby Palestinian camp. The Christians say they will not lift the encirclement of Tall Zatar and other camps until Palestinian forces in the camps are disarmed and brought under control of the Lebanese army. The Palestinians have countered with threats to blockade Christian communities in predominantly Muslim areas of Beirut.

25X1

(continued)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Clashes continued in nearly all areas of Beirut yesterday, and most roads leading into the capital had been cut as the fighting spread to surrounding villages. The fighting has also intensified in Zahlah and the Tripoli-Zagharta area, where the army has failed in its attempts to separate warring Christian and Muslim militiamen.

President Franjiah met with leaders of the major Christian groups yesterday, presumably to work out a coordinated position before his expected meeting with Syrian President Asad on Saturday. Franjiah almost certainly intends to use Christian military successes as his major bargaining point in negotiations with the Syrians.

\* \* \*

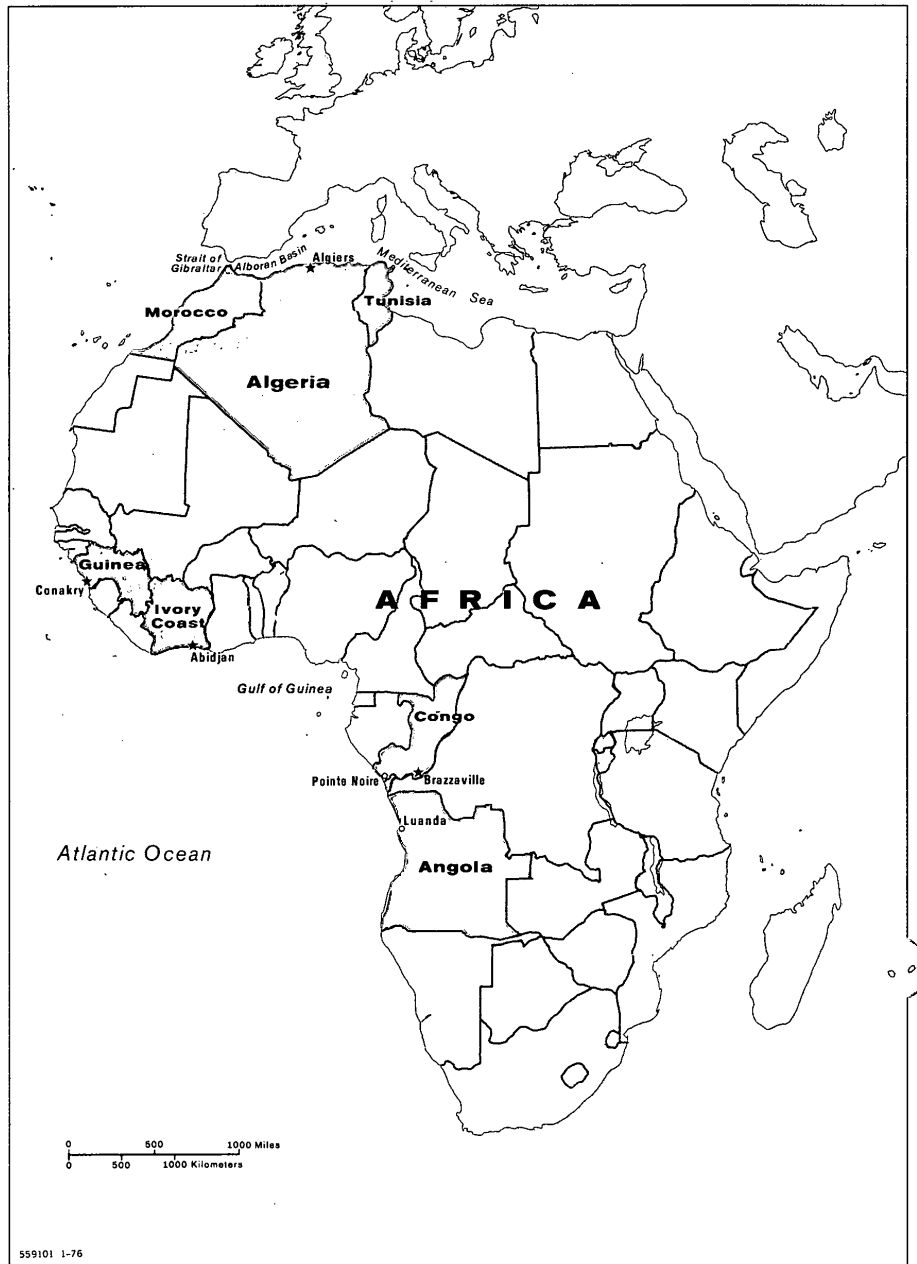
*Apparently in reaction to an appeal from Yasir Arafat for Arab action to relieve Beirut's embattled Palestinians, Egypt yesterday called for an Arab League initiative to end the "intolerable" Christian blockade.*

President Sadat, declaring Egypt's concern to preserve the Palestinian presence in Lebanon, later denounced the recent turn of events there and added an injunction against Israeli intervention. Without elaborating, he said Egypt would "assume its responsibilities" if Israel intervened.

The Palestinians' current uncomfortable situation gives Egypt a new cause for concern that could alter the relatively detached position it has adopted thus far toward the Lebanese crisis. Involvement of the Palestinians on a large scale and a deterioration in their position would force Egypt to undertake a more vigorous effort at mediation in order to preserve its Arab credentials.

This is apparently all Sadat has in mind at present. He reiterated yesterday that Arab or other foreign intervention is not the way to resolve the crisis.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



USSR

*The Soviets may be withdrawing their  
three naval ships from the Gulf of Guinea.*

Yesterday morning the destroyer, landing ship,  
and naval tanker were about 200 miles southwest of  
Abidjan, Ivory Coast, moving northwest. The ships  
are probably en route to Conakry, Guinea.

the destroyer would make a port call at Pointe  
Noire, Congo, from January 18 to 25;

25X1

25X1

The Kresta-II-class cruiser that arrived at  
Conakry last Saturday is still there, and two naval  
oil tankers also are at Conakry. Although the So-  
viet intelligence collection ship has not been lo-  
cated since January 10, we believe that it, too, is  
en route to Guinea.

The movement of these Soviet naval units could  
have resulted from a decision in Moscow last week to  
quiet international speculation about Soviet activ-  
ities having to do with Angola. On January 8 Tass  
issued a statement asserting that there were no So-  
viet warships "off Angolan shores." The following  
day, the Soviet LST at Pointe Noire--which had been  
scheduled to remain there until January 12--made  
preparations to put out to sea, and by January 10  
it was already well out of port.

If an effort is indeed under way to appear to  
step back from the Angolan situation, the Soviets  
will probably have to send the destroyer and the  
cruiser back to the Mediterranean and end the IL-62  
shuttle between Havana and Luanda.

\* \* \*

*The Sverdlov-class cruiser and naval tanker  
remain in the Mediterranean near the Strait of  
Gibraltar. The Kresta-I-class cruiser that joined  
them on Monday is moving toward a Soviet anchorage  
off the coast of Tunisia.*

(continued)

4

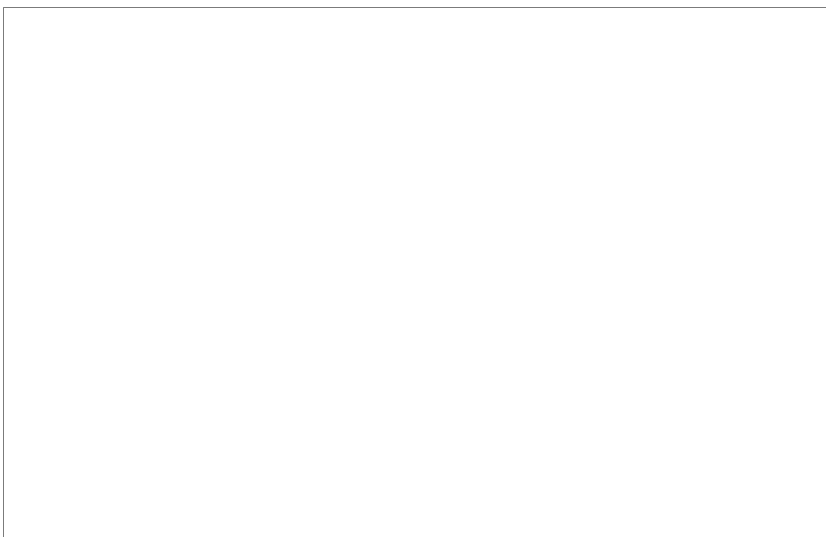
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



The Kashin-class destroyer that accompanied the Kresta-I from the Northern Fleet continues to linger in the Atlantic approaches to the Strait. It was refueled yesterday by a Soviet merchant tanker that has returned to the Mediterranean from Conakry. The fact that the destroyer did not enter the Mediterranean with the Kresta-I raises questions about its future operations.

25X1

\* \* \*



USSR-US

*V.V. Zhurkin, a deputy director of the USA Institute in Moscow, told [redacted] that there is growing concern in the USSR that Soviet actions in Angola could prejudice chances for a SALT II agreement.*

25X1

25X1

Zhurkin's remarks offer one of the few signs that some influential Soviets have begun to consider seriously US warnings about the potential ramifications of the Angolan situation. As a leader of the USA Institute, however, Zhurkin is probably particularly sensitive to the impact of Angola on the US-Soviet relationship.

Zhurkin defended Soviet assistance to the Popular Movement, reiterating Moscow's position that the USSR would not sacrifice its long-standing policy of support to national liberation movements for the sake of detente. He expressed confidence that detente would continue despite periodic irritants and debates within Western countries.

He acknowledged that Western public opinion entailed an element of risk for Soviet policy, especially if that opinion jeopardized chances for US Congressional ratification of a new SALT agreement. He said progress toward strategic arms limitation remains the linchpin of improved US-Soviet relations, both because of its intrinsic importance and because a new agreement would give impetus to other negotiations, such as the mutual force reduction talks.

PORTUGAL-ANGOLA

*Portuguese officials claim "legal" considerations have impeded efforts to block Cuban use of the Azores as a transit stop for flights to Africa, but say they are now prepared to make a "political" approach to the Cubans on the matter.*

25X1

25X1

A Portuguese Foreign Ministry official said yesterday that Lisbon had felt constrained by the commercial air agreement between Portugal and Cuba. An official claimed publicly last week that there was no evidence that the Cuban planes in question were transporting military personnel or equipment.

25X1

Portuguese hesitation to come to grips with the Cuban airlift may result from disagreement within the ruling military over Lisbon's policy on Angola.

25X1

A Foreign Ministry official told the US embassy yesterday that Portugal intends to be guided by an African consensus on recognition of the government set up by the Popular Movement. He did not indicate how many African countries would have to recognize the regime before Portuguese recognition would be forthcoming.

## NOTES

*The Soviet fishing trawler that was seized on December 30 by the Moroccan navy was released Saturday, according to the US defense attaché in Rabat.*

The trawler had been stopped some 10 miles northwest of Agadir and was subsequently detained at that port. Rabat probably believed the ship was running arms to the Polisario Front, a Saharan independence movement backed by Algeria. Morocco alleged that the ship was inside its 70-mile economic zone. The Soviets claimed the vessel was in international waters.

\* \* \*

*Clashes between Libyan university students and police last week resulted in at least ten deaths. The occupation of the embassy in Washington by about 60 Libyan students yesterday was in protest against the Libyan police action.*

The trouble began on January 4 when students at the University of Benghazi demonstrated against government manipulation of the election of student representatives to the national congress of Libya's sole political party. According to several accounts, the students beat three policemen to death and were then fired upon.

Libyan students have become increasingly resentful of Qadhafi's dictatorial rule and his constant interference in their curricula. The incident at Benghazi is one of several indications of intensified tribal and regional frictions.

*Top Secret*