



The President's Daily Brief

February 24, 1976

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~~*Top Secret*~~

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February 24, 1976

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ZAIRE-ANGOLA

Popular Movement Leader Neto and Zairian President Mobutu may be close to a political accommodation.

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Both Neto and Mobutu have good reason to work out a compromise. The Benguela Railroad carries the major portion of Zairian imports and exports, and the loss of this traffic during the fighting has deprived the Luanda government of substantial revenue, as well as contributed to Zaire's economic slump. Moreover, Neto would prefer to come to grips with the problem of political consolidation without the threat of external aggression. He would expect Mobutu to keep the National Front from engaging in guerrilla operations from Zaire.

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SYRIA

Syrian influence in Lebanon has increased sharply as the result of Damascus' decisive moves last month to put a stop to the fighting, and--much to the annoyance of the Egyptians--President Asad's peace-making efforts have boosted his stature in the Arab world. Damascus now faces the task of propping up and helping to reorganize Lebanon's fragile political structure and demoralized security forces.

Asad has played his hand well so far--using the right proportions of force and persuasion to impose his will on the various warring parties.


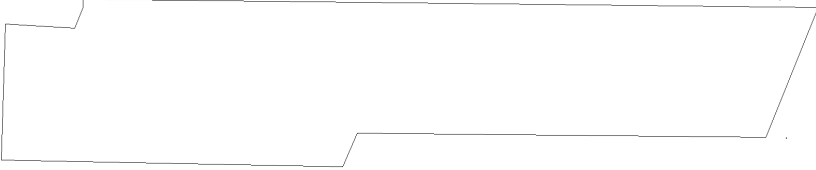
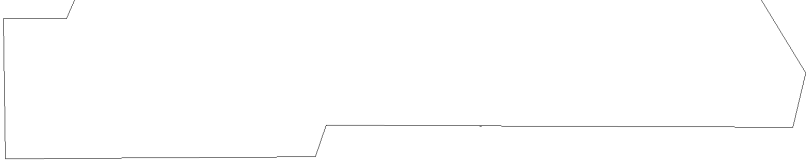
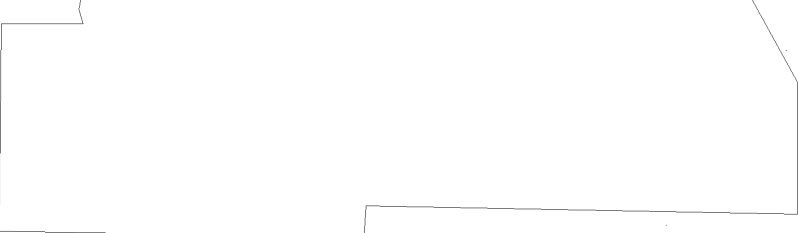

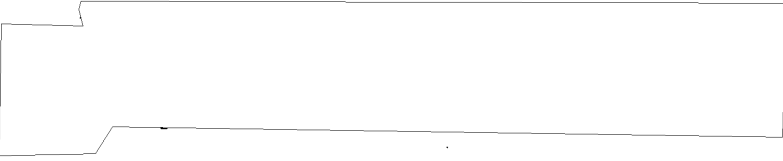
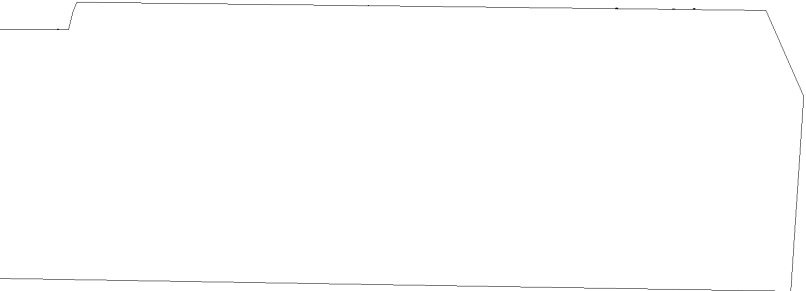
His efforts could still fail. The Syrians must continue to ride herd over the more recalcitrant leftist and fedayeen militants while at the same time soothing the major Palestinian guerrilla groups. These groups are becoming increasingly uneasy about Syrian intentions and are anxious to see Syria's Palestine Liberation Army forces withdraw.

Above all, Asad will have to prod Lebanon's Muslim and Christian leaders to implement and abide by the recently concluded political accord. Asad has too much at stake now to allow another resumption of fighting. The collapse, now or later, of the Syrian-imposed peace would not only be a severe blow to Syria's prestige but could also create political problems for Asad at home.

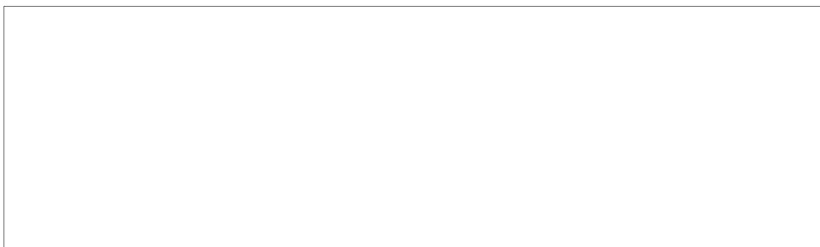
Mindful of this, Asad is unlikely to withdraw the Liberation Army forces under his control from Lebanon until he is satisfied that the security situation is stable and that political reforms are being implemented in good faith. Even then, a small contingent is likely to remain indefinitely to help regulate fedayeen activities.

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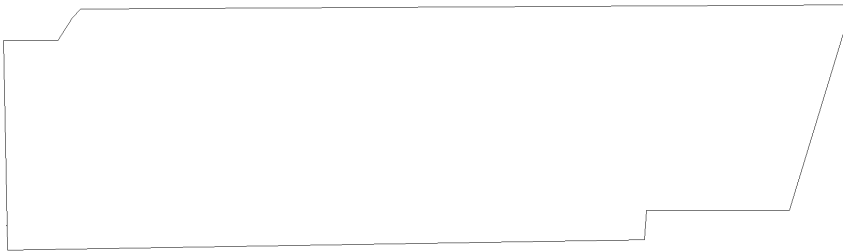
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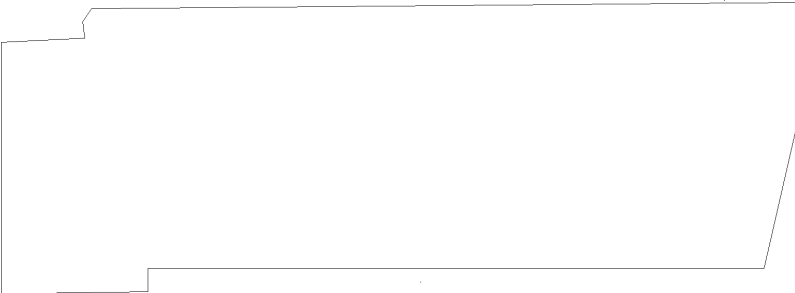
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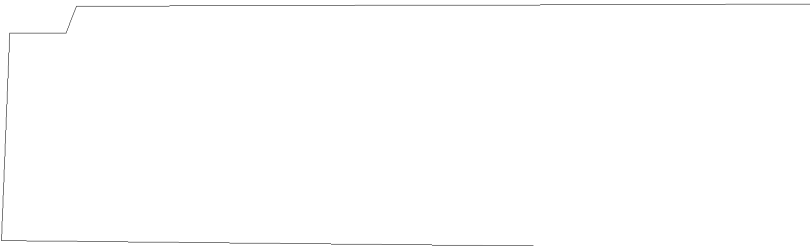
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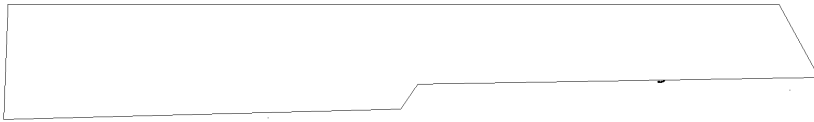
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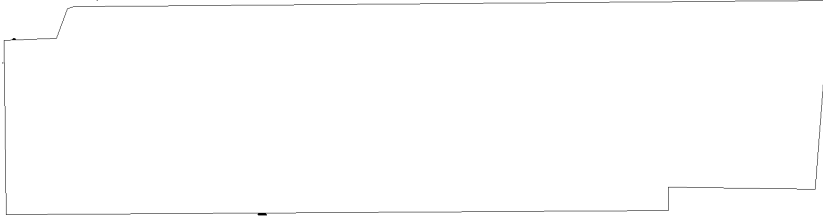
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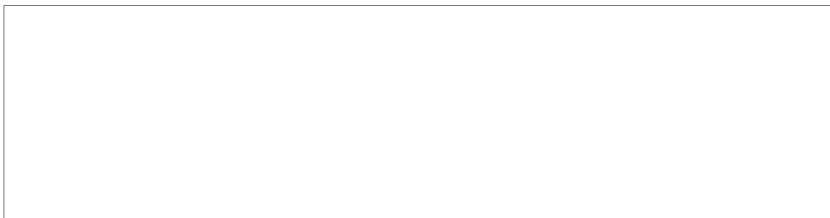
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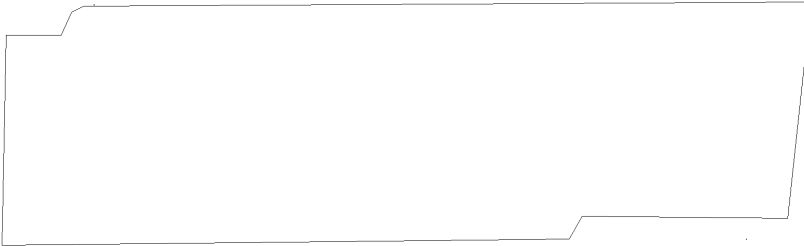
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NOTES

The Japanese Foreign Ministry reportedly is preparing a letter to be sent to you by Prime Minister Miki requesting full US cooperation in clearing up the Lockheed bribery affair.

A resolution passed by both houses of the Diet yesterday urged full US cooperation and called on the Japanese government to send a special envoy to the US to pursue the matter.

The ruling Liberal Democratic Party hopes that the resolution--which is a concession to the opposition--will allow the resumption of normal Diet business, particularly passage of the budget.

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Soviet

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The Turkish government, already hard pressed to deal with continuing student disorders, may soon be faced with widespread urban terrorism.

Turkish National Police officials have told US embassy officers that the Turkish Peoples' Liberation Army--an underground Marxist-Leninist group--has plans for an extensive terrorist campaign directed primarily against Turkish security forces, but US diplomatic and military personnel and their dependents would also be targets. Security officials believe they are confronted by a serious threat and reportedly have placed all their personnel on alert. They have urged US officials to take all precautions, including repainting official vehicles and encouraging US military personnel to wear civilian clothing.

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