Syrians capture guerrilla stronghold

By MICHAEL ROSS

BEIRUT, Lebanon (UPI) - Syrian forces sliced through Lebanon's central mountains from three directions Wednesday and captured at least three key Palestinian-held towns after battling guerrillas through the streets. Palestinian defenders retreated, vowing to "fight until the last man."

A Palestinian military spokesman conceded the loss of Aintoura and Metein, two key mountain towns 19 miles northeast of Beirut, to Syrian troops backed by tank and surface-to-surface missile batteries Wednesday night.

In Rhodesia

A third key town, Hammana, five miles further south, was also later reported to have fallen when Syrian troops stormed it from the north and the east and battled their way through it in fierce street fighting.

The loss of the three towns left two more, Qurnayel and Falougha, surrounded. At last report, they were both under heavy attack and might already have fallen.

The Christian Phalangist Party, whose forces took part in the Aintoura and Metein attacks, reported that the towns had already been taken but this was not

immediatly confirmed by the Palestin-

"The battle to liberate the mountains is over," a Phalangist official said. The Christian Phalangists had boasted they would drive the Palestinians from their entrenched mountain positions within three days of the offense launched by Syrian tanks and troops Tuesday.

A Palestinian spokesman said Syrian troop and tank reinforcements brought into battle after nightfall had turned the tide against them after defenders held off advances during a day of artillery sparring in which shells fell at a rate of one every 15 seconds.

"Our situation, good for most of the day, began to deteriorate seriously after nightfall with the new Syrian attacks much heavier than before. Our position is now serious," the Palestinian spokesman

There was one report that Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat had ordered his forces to withdraw from the mountains front but a Palestinian Liberation Organization spokesman denied it.

"No, we will give no such orders. We will fight in our positions until the last man," he said.

Smith rallies diehard vote

SALISBURY Rhodesia (UPI) - Kissinger's plan for peace, party to rule the breakaway colony.

LONDON (UPI) - God works his ark:

Good News Bible.

of wine.

God keeps up with math

updated version, how to build the liter of wine as an offering."

says Good News Bible

Prime Minister Ian Smith, fearing officials said. The "frontline" presidents of

a collapse in efforts to give Britain said it was ready to black Afrtica insisted that Britain Rhodesia black majority rule and convene a conference within two should take charge of the move to end the guerrilla war, Wednesday weeks, "anywhere in southern form an interim government persuaded conservatives in his Africa acceptable to all the parties because they rejected Smith's ruling Rhodesia Front party to involved," to from an interim version of the Kissinger peace support Secretary of State Henry government of blacks and whites plan.

There was no immediate reaction to the British proposal from Smith. He had asked London to send its African affairs expert to Salisbury for discussions.

Government sources said Smith feared a breakdown in efforts to implement the proposals to avert miracles in mysterious ways-in "Make it 133 meters long, 22 a race war, bring Rhodesia's meters and liters-according to the meters wide and 13 meters high. overwhelming black majority to Make a roof for the boat and leave power and end world ostracism of The new Bible, billed as "to- a space of 44 centimeters between the white supremacist regime.

day's English Version" and tip- the roof and the sides." Des Frost, chairman of the ped as a runaway best-seller In the book of Exodus, the Good Rhodesia Front and a hard-line when it goes on sale next month, News Bible has God telling Aaron conservative, said after a meeting shows God knows how many about the daily sacrifice of two with Smith, "Our attitude now is centimeters there are in a meter lambs and says "with the first that we have to make the best of and us up on His metric measures lamb offer one kilogram of fine the job and see of we can some up wheat flour mixed with one liter with a constitution which will He told Noah, according to the of pure olive oil. Pour out one allow all people a permanent future in this country.

The World In Brief

Britain seeks to rescue pound

LONDON (UPI) - Britain moved Wednesday to exhaust a \$5 billion International Monetary Fund credit in a desperate effort to rescue the crumbling pound.

The Bank of England, which has already shelled out \$1.1 billion of the standby credit granted by the IMF last June, asked for the remaining \$3.9 billion.

The appeal brought some relief to the hard-pressed currency, once the strongest in the world. But bankers and foreign exchange dealers doubted the move would restore confidence in the pound, which broke through the "psychological" barrier of \$1.70 earlier this week.

Japan accuses Soviets of slander

TOKYO (UPI) - Japan accused the Soviet Union Wednesday of "groundless slander" in charging that the defecting Soviet pilot of a top secret MIG25 fighter was taken to the United States against his will.

A Foreign Ministry note delivered to Soviet Embassy Counsellor Victor Denisov said Moscow has been "falsifying the facts" surrounding the defection of Soviet air force Lt. Viktor I. Belenko.

Toxic gas escapes from factory

MANFREDONIA, Italy (UPI) - Authorities Wednesday sealed off a sparsely populated zone on the southern Adriatic coast which may have been contaminated by a toxic cloud containing arsenic which killed several sheep.

The gas cloud formed Sunday when a cooling pipe used in the production of ammonia burst at the ANIC petrochemical plant. ANIC officials said almost all the gas remained inside the plant.

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