

TC 18-79 began 171400Z June 1979 as a monsoon depression in the Arabian Sea and tracked virtually westward throughout its life, finally dissipating over the Oman coast (Fig. 3-31). Although TC 18-79's movement was confined to a narrow 2-degree latitudinal band, the extent of the meteorological hazard from gale force winds encompassed roughly half of the Arabian Sea. These gale force winds were produced by the interaction of TC 18-79 with the normal southwest monsoonal flow over the Arabian Sea.

During this season, a climatological low-level wind maximum develops off the coast of Somalia. Normal wind speeds can reach 35-40 kt (18-21 m/sec), but the gale area is generally localized near the coast. However, beginning 2 days prior to TC 18-79's forma-

tion, a surge in the monsoonal flow occurred and a low-level jet could be traced from the Somali coast extending eastward across the entire Arabian Sea. The strength and persistence of this feature aided the formation of TC 18-79 in the cyclonic shear side of the wind maximum. As TC 18-79 intensified and moved westward, the southwesterly flow strengthened to a point where 65 kt (33 m/sec) surface winds were observed 600 nm (1111 km) away from TC 18-79's center. Examination of the visual data of Figure 3-31 shows cloud streets indicative of this strong low-level flow from 05N to 12N between 55E to 62E. The gale area persisted during TC 18-79's dissipation over land, weakening gradually with time. Interestingly, post-analysis reveals the maximum winds in the gale area exceeded the maximum sustained winds estimated in TC 18-79's center.

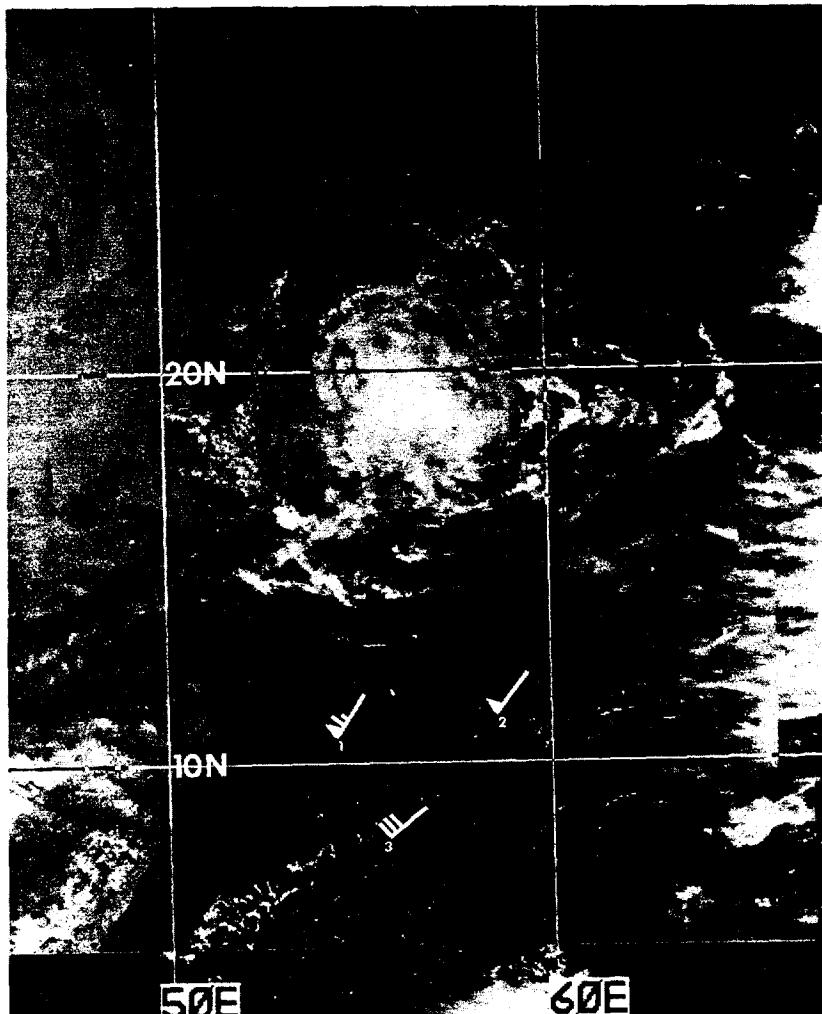


FIGURE 3-31. TC 18-79 located just off the Oman coast with gale force winds to the south, 20 June 1979, 0731Z. Superimposed are ship observations at 200600Z. (DMSP imagery from AFGWC, Offutt AFB, Nebraska)