

Top Secret 233

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Monday November 1, 1976

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Monday November 1, 1976.

The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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CONTENTS

ITALY: Debate Page 1

LEBANON: Situation Report Page 2

RHODESIA: Insurgency Page 4

EGYPT: First Round Election Results Page 6

INDIA: Elections Postponed Page 7

EC: Will Declare Fisheries Zone Page 8

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ITALY: Debate

[redacted] Italy's Christian Democrats over the weekend rejected Communist chief Berlinguer's proposal for a more formal system of consultations with the Andreotti government. The Christian Democrats decided instead to schedule a parliamentary debate on the government's austerity program. The vote on the program could become a vote of confidence on the government.

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[redacted] Last week Berlinguer termed the austerity program inadequate and proposed that economic policy be set by conferences involving the government, the Communists, and the other four parties that support Andreotti indirectly by abstaining in the parliament. The collegial approach suggested by Berlinguer would have replaced the government's practice of holding informal bilateral talks with these parties.

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[redacted] Three of the four other parties--the Socialists, the Social Democrats, and the Republicans--gave varying degrees of support to Berlinguer's idea. Only the small Liberal Party rejected it outright.

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[redacted] In ruling out Berlinguer's proposal, the Christian Democrats apparently chose to risk weakening their parliamentary support rather than to give Berlinguer a concession he might have used to edge closer to Communist membership in the government. The roundtable conferences suggested by Berlinguer would have closely resembled the broadly based emergency government that the Communists and Socialists claim is necessary in the present economic situation.

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[redacted] By keeping the Communists at arm's length, the Christian Democrats may have hindered Berlinguer's ability to deliver his party's cooperation in the enactment and implementation of a tough austerity program. Despite his critical stance, Berlinguer has generally supported the government's efforts, and the Communist unions have played a decisive role in keeping labor protests within manageable limits.

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[redacted] There have recently been increasing signs of dissent in the Communist Party over Berlinguer's policy of cooperation with the government. If he fails to win further concessions from the Christian Democrats, the Communist leader may find it more difficult to counter influential critics who say that the party is getting little in return for cooperating with the Christian Democrats. [redacted]

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LEBANON: Situation Report

[redacted] Right-wing Christian leaders yesterday refused to attend a meeting that Major General Ghunaym, military commander of the Arab peacekeeping force, attempted to arrange among all parties to the Lebanese conflict. Ghunaym had hoped to win general agreement on a timetable for opening main roads, creating buffer zones, and deploying the peacekeeping force.

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[redacted] //Christian leaders have been meeting privately with Ghunaym and with President Sarkis, who is working with Ghunaym to prepare for the introduction of additional peacekeeping troops into Lebanon this week.// The Christians' unhappiness with the security situation in Beirut and in the mountains southeast of the capital and their internal divisions on negotiating tactics, however, prompted their refusal to take the more formal step of participating in a meeting that included their leftist and Palestinian opponents.

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[redacted] Phalangist leader Pierre Jumayyil is publicly urging Christian support for Sarkis' efforts to implement the latest cease-fire accords. National Liberal leader Camille Shamun, however, continues to oppose the movement of the peacekeeping force into Christian-controlled areas. He threatens renewed fighting by Christian militias if leftist and Palestinian forces do not withdraw from the mountains southeast of Beirut.

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[redacted] Shamun's obstinacy was reinforced by an attack late last week on the Christian village of Maasir Bayt ad Din. The attack took place in a mixed area of Christian, Muslim, and Druze villages that includes Shamun's birthplace, Dayr al Qamar, and leftist leader Kamal Jumblatt's home, Al Mukhtarrah.

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[redacted] Leaders of the leftist groups that follow Kamal Jumblatt announced Friday night that they will not withdraw from areas they control unless the Christians pull back their forces. Similarly, the leftists say they will not allow the Arab peace-keeping force to move into their areas until the Christians permit entry into their strongholds.

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[redacted] So far, only the Palestinians appear to be withdrawing, and only in limited numbers to Beirut and to southern Lebanon.

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[redacted] Fatah's primary aims now are to protect its dominant position in the Palestine Liberation Organization, to win some control over the Syrian-dominated Palestine Liberation Army, and to minimize its dealings with Iraq, whose increasingly independent forces in Lebanon are causing concern among fedayeen leaders.//

[redacted] Syria, following the latest reconciliation with Egypt, has halted its propoganda attacks on Egypt and the Palestinians and intensified its attacks on Iraq. The Syrians obviously believe they have reversed their growing isolation in the Arab world and can turn the issue of Arab unity against their ideological opponents in Baghdad.

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[redacted] The Syrian media are attempting to portray Iraq, which condemned the Riyadh accord, as deviating from the other Arabs on the Lebanon issue. This propoganda is designed to induce the other Arabs to urge Iraq to limit its disruptive activities in Lebanon, and to prepare the way for blaming Iraq if the current cease-fire breaks down.

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[redacted] //The US interests section in Baghdad believes that Iraq, by denouncing a formula aimed at achieving a peaceful solution in Lebanon, has destroyed much of the diplomatic progress it has made in the past few years to reduce its isolation in the Arab world. In the view of the interests section, Baghdad's unpopular and inflexible stand can be explained only by its refusal to accept an outcome favorable to its arch-rival, Syria.//

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[redacted] The Iraqis will have trouble extricating themselves from their current predicament. They may try instead to stir up Palestinian extremists and Lebanese leftists in an attempt to block implementation of the Cairo summit decisions.//

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RHODESIA: Insurgency

[redacted] Rhodesian insurgents using automatic weapons and grenades struck at a tourist hotel Saturday night near Victoria Falls on the border with Zambia. The operation was probably launched from Zambian territory.

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[redacted] Most insurgent activity so far has been in eastern Rhodesia--near Mozambique, where the bulk of the guerrillas are based. The latest raid, in Rhodesia's westernmost corner, points up their increasing capability to operate in other sectors of the country.

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[redacted]. All black nationalist leaders have persistently called for the fighting to continue until an interim government is formed.//

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[redacted] The toughest stand has been taken by Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union and its guerrilla forces based in Mozambique. [redacted] guerrilla leaders would rather fight than see their influence eclipsed by a negotiated political settlement. [redacted]

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EGYPT: First Round Election Results

 Returns from the first round of the Egyptian parliamentary election, held on October 26, suggest that the centrist, progovernment organization within the Arab Socialist Union--the country's only legal political party--will emerge with a strong majority when the election process is completed later this week.

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[redacted] The Egyptian radio has announced that 90 of 112 candidates elected in the first round are members of the centrist group, four are from the rightist opposition within the party, two are from the leftist opposition, and 16 are independents. These results are within the range most observers expected.

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[redacted] Most of the 350 races will be decided in a run-off election this Thursday; an absolute majority was required for election on the first ballot.

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[redacted] Leaders of the centrist and leftist party factions and all but two government ministers won election in the first round. The leader of the rightist group and the remaining two ministers qualified for the second ballot.

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[redacted] The first round of voting was carried out with a minimum of violence or government interference. Diplomatic observers were impressed with official efforts to ensure the secrecy of balloting. [redacted]

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INDIA: Elections Postponed

[redacted] The government's announcement Saturday that the life of the present parliament will be extended until March 1978 ran counter to a growing expectation in opposition circles that parliamentary elections would occur by next March, when the present term--already extended for one year under the state of emergency--was to expire. Some of the more onerous provisions of the 16-month-old emergency had been relaxed in recent weeks and several opposition leaders had been released from jail.

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[redacted] The government's move has been denounced by the opposition parties, most of which are boycotting the present session of the parliament. A spokesman for the pro-Moscow Communist Party of India, which has generally supported the emergency, also criticized the postponement. His remarks were the latest indication of a growing rift between his party and the ruling Congress Party.

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[redacted] Prime Minister Gandhi's reasons for this latest election postponement are unclear. Most observers believe that with the opposition ineffective and unable to unite and with

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[redacted]

the economy in relatively good shape--especially given the past year's record-breaking harvests--the Congress Party would probably have been returned to power in national elections with an even greater parliamentary majority than the one it currently holds.

[redacted] Law Minister Gokhale, in announcing the extension of the parliament, said the primary reason for it was a continuing danger from "disruptive forces" that had originally caused the imposition of the state of emergency last year. He said the government had not abandoned the process of elections, although he avoided promising that they would be held by March 1978.

[redacted] Gandhi has been denouncing her domestic opponents with increasing frequency in recent weeks, alleging that they are supported by unnamed foreign countries attempting to interfere in Indian elections. Her charges, although she may believe them, are unsubstantiated, and reports from New Delhi reveal that the overall stability and security of her position remain unshaken.

[redacted] The decision may be related to indications of widespread opposition to the government's compulsory family planning program. Gandhi may also hope that her government's flagging momentum on economic reform can be revived during the next year.

[redacted] Gandhi, moreover, may want more time to settle difficulties within her own government before calling elections. She reportedly wants to carry out a major cabinet shuffle and she is believed to be increasingly at odds with the president of India, essentially a figurehead.

[redacted] The Prime Minister is reported to have received conflicting advice from those favoring and those opposing elections within her own group of advisers. For the present at least, the hardliners, including her son Sanjay, appear to have won the argument. [redacted]

EC: Will Declare Fisheries Zone

[redacted] //The EC foreign ministers, meeting in special session at The Hague on Saturday, agreed to declare a 200-nautical-mile fishing zone effective January 1.//

[redacted] The decision clears the way for the EC Commission to begin negotiations on fishing agreements with third countries--most notably Iceland, Norway, Canada, and the US--which already have declared their own 200-mile zones or plan to do so shortly.//

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[redacted] Negotiations with Iceland should begin next week. The UK's bilateral fishing agreement with Iceland, which brought an end to their "cod war," expires on November 30 and the Commission has been anxious to begin negotiations on a follow-up accord.//

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[redacted] The foreign ministers promised to take into account the special interests of Irish and British fishermen when an internal fisheries regime is established for the Community. This apparently satisfied the Irish, who had blocked EC action last month on a 200-mile declaration and negotiations with third countries by insisting that agreement be reached simultaneously on an internal EC fisheries policy. Irish and British fishermen would be hit hardest by strict conservation policies the Commission has proposed for EC members' waters.//

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[redacted] The UK and Irish foreign ministers maintain they made no concessions Saturday on the internal fisheries question and reiterated their demands for exclusive fishing rights up to 50 miles from their shores. Debate on this issue--which now can proceed separately--will be heated and is likely to extend well into next year. [redacted]

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