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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Monday 19 December 1977

CG NIDC 77/293C

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NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION

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Approved For Release 2005/07/28 : CIA-RDP79T00975A030400010110-1

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Monday, 19 December 1977.

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

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SOUTH AFRICA: Views of Namibia

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[] South African Foreign Minister Botha's public comments on Namibia on 11 December amounted to the most positive official statement to date concerning the Western contact group's effort to devise an internationally acceptable independence program for the territory. Botha probably intended to show both his domestic audience and foreign governments that the South African government still wants international support for a Namibian settlement and therefore will continue to accept at least some of the Western proposals. The Foreign Minister no doubt also intended to place the onus for the present impasse in negotiations on the leaders of the South-West Africa People's Organization.

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[] Botha's opening statement stressed South Africa's determination to grant independence to Namibia by the end of 1978 in accordance with certain basic principles. The territory, he said, will not be fragmented along ethnic lines, racial discrimination will be ended, and a constituent assembly--to decide on a constitution for an independent state--will be elected by all inhabitants of the territory on the basis of one-man, one-vote.

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[] Although Botha implied that Pretoria had decided unilaterally to observe these principles, in fact they were put to the South Africans by the Western contact group, which in turn was following UN guidelines.

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[] The Foreign Minister also said Pretoria had agreed with the contact group that the UN Secretary General "can send a representative to the territory to satisfy himself that the election would be fair and open, that the election regulations would be reasonable, and that there would be no intimidation." Botha acknowledged, in response to an interviewer's question, that the agreement might provide for the presence of a sizable UN team to monitor the election closely.

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[] This is South Africa's most explicit public commitment to the principle of conducting countrywide elections on the basis of one-man, one-vote. It is a significant shift from the provision for indirect selection of a constituent assembly by legislative bodies in the ethnic homelands, which was adopted by the Turnhalle constitutional conference last March.

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25X1 [] Although the elections could still be gerrymandered, Botha's latest statement indicates that South Africa will follow the contact group's approach in electing a constituent assembly, even if the entire Western settlement package is not accepted by either South Africa or SWAPO.

25X1 [] In his broadcast comments, the Foreign Minister explained why Pretoria intends to accept at least some of the contact group's proposals. "Now of course," he said, "the five Western countries also are members of the Security Council, where severe decisions can be taken against us. On the other hand, if the West can be persuaded that we are reasonable, then I would expect a reasonable attitude on their part."

25X1 [] The acknowledgement that South Africa is anxious to avoid further UN sanctions is at least a tactical shift away from the defiant stand that Botha and other leaders of the National Party took while campaigning in the recent general election.

25X1 [] The Foreign Minister's comments, however, were not entirely candid. He did not announce the decision--told to the contact group on 3 December--that South Africa will conduct a preindependence election next June with or without UN observers on the scene or a truce with SWAPO. Pretoria's rejection of the contact group's proposal that South African troops in Namibia be reduced to 1,500 and that some 2,000 UN troops be sent in, was also glossed over.

25X1 [] Botha's reticence about disagreements between South Africa and the Western contact group may be attributed to Pretoria's objective of gaining some Western diplomatic support for an independence program that is implemented unilaterally, despite SWAPO's rejection. Botha very likely was aware when he spoke that the SWAPO leaders, when they met with the contact group on 27 November, had merely reasserted their longstanding demands.

25X1 [] The Foreign Minister's unusual verbal restraint suggests that the South Africans may refrain for a while from implementing measures in Namibia that would scuttle prospects for concluding an internationally enforced truce with SWAPO. []

DJIBOUTI: More Resignations

25X1 [] *Djibouti Prime Minister Ahmed Dini and four other Afar cabinet ministers resigned Saturday to protest the government's crackdown on the Afar community following a terrorist attack Thursday by the Popular Liberation Movement, a dissident Afar group supported by Ethiopia. The resignations further polarize Djibouti's Afar and Somali ethnic groups. President Gouled, a member of the Issas--the most prominent Somali ethnic group--is taking measures to restore public order, but he will probably be hampered by his own ineptitude and the weakness of Djibouti's security forces. France is reluctant to use its troops stationed in Djibouti in an internal security role, but without French intervention the situation is likely to deteriorate further.*

25X1 [] Only two Afar ministers are now left in the 16-member cabinet, and they may resign shortly. The Afars' resignation is a serious blow to the tenuous government of national unity--made up of representatives of all major ethnic groups. The Afar ministers who resigned had for the past two years cooperated with Gouled and his Issas followers--a policy opposed by the militant MPL.

25X1 [] Dini and like-minded Afars, while keeping their distance from the MPL, had become increasingly disturbed by government policies they viewed as favoring the Issas domestically and Somalia in its war with Ethiopia. The government's current crackdown on the Afar community pushed Dini and the other Afar ministers to break completely with Gouled.

25X1 [] The Afar section of the city of Djibouti was sealed off and subjected to an intensive house-to-house search; at least 100 Afars were arrested. The Afar community, about 45 percent of Djibouti's population, is now largely alienated from the government.

25X1 [] Gouled is a Djibouti nationalist who favors ethnic cooperation and prefers to remain neutral between Ethiopia and Somalia. He is a weak leader, however, and has been unable to cope with Djibouti's social and economic problems or to resist Somalia's increasing influence over his country. Last Friday Gouled banned the MPL and warned all governments--especially Ethiopia--against interference in Djibouti's internal affairs. He also instructed the military to increase security measures and called on the people to organize committees to stop "the irregular movement of persons."

25X1 [redacted] Gouled's call for vigilante action reflects the weakness of Djibouti's security organizations. An indigenous army, created only after independence last June, is still being trained by the French. The new army has incorporated into its ranks members of the Front for the Liberation of the Somali Coast, an organization that now has legal-status in Djibouti and is controlled by Somalia. The army is also likely to split along ethnic lines if called on to play a larger role in restoring public order. Its Front members might even be used by Mogadiscio to mount a coup against Gouled, if his actions offend Somalia.

25X1 [redacted] The Somali-backed Afar Liberation Movement, which consists of Afar residents of Ethiopia, is another group that has challenged Djibouti's sovereignty. These Afars, unlike those in the MPL, oppose the Ethiopian Government [redacted]

25X1 [redacted] Gouled, as part of his security crackdown, might attempt to expell the ALF from Djibouti if Ethiopia agrees to stop supporting the MPL. A move against the ALF, however, would jeopardize Gouled's relations with Somalia.

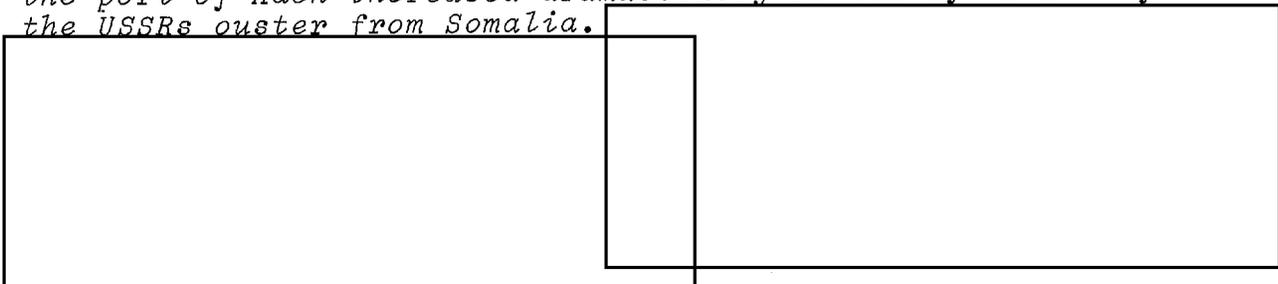
25X1 [redacted] The situation in Djibouti is posing some hard choices for France. Because of the weakness of Djibouti's security forces, France may be pressed to use its local force of 4,000 troops for internal security--a role the French renounced when they gave Djibouti independence. President Giscard's major concern will be to avoid further French casualties, particularly during the current pre-election period in France.

25X1 [redacted] A failure to take a firm stand in Djibouti, however, might lead to criticism from the French Government's Gaullist allies. [redacted]



USSR - SOUTH YEMEN: Aden Port

[Redacted] //Soviet interest in South Yemen and in using the port of Aden increased dramatically in the aftermath of the USSR's ouster from Somalia.



[Redacted] //The Soviet Navy has been making periodic visits to Aden for the past ten years, using the port for replenishment, crew rest, minor maintenance, and taking on water, which is scarce and expensive in the area. In the two months prior to their expulsion from the facilities at Berbera--just across the Gulf of Aden from the South Yemeni port--the Soviets began to increase the rate of their visits to Aden.//

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Soviets probably view Aden as the only logical choice to replace Berbera. The Soviets have a degree of access to ports in Ethiopia and Iraq, but the Ethiopian facilities are insecure and the Iraqi facilities are too far from Soviet operating areas. The Soviets have access to anchorages near Socotra-- a South Yemeni island just off the northeastern tip of Somalia-- but they do not provide the storage, repair, and aerial resupply options that Berbera offered.

[REDACTED] Aden's location is also superior to potential alternative facilities in Mozambique or Ethiopia. Mozambique is too far south to provide convenient access to the main shipping channels of the Indian Ocean and to the Suez Canal. Ethiopian ports are limited in capacity, and their location on the Red Sea presents a possible impediment to operations in the Indian Ocean.

[REDACTED] The Soviets will probably be able to maintain the same level of ship operations in the Indian Ocean without the facilities at Berbera, but Soviet air reconnaissance would be severely curtailed unless suitable airfields were found elsewhere. Aden has an airfield that could accommodate routine operations of IL-38 antisubmarine-warfare patrol aircraft and, if enlarged, long-range TU-95 reconnaissance aircraft.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The signing of any agreement by South Yemen presumably could be part of an effort to ensure the continued flow of Soviet arms and economic assistance now that the Saudis have halted economic aid to Aden. Aden's recent actions in support of Soviet involvement in Ethiopia, as well as the increase in the Soviet military presence in South Yemen over the past few months, indicate that pro-Soviet individuals continue to wield significant influence in the South Yemeni Government.

[REDACTED]

South Yemen is presumably aware that granting the Soviets privileges similar to those they had in Berbera would further anger the Saudis and intensify Yemeni's isolation from Arab moderates.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SPAIN: Regional Tensions

[REDACTED] The Spanish Government's efforts to come to terms with increasingly insistent regional demands for autonomy appear to have suffered a temporary setback following a series of violent clashes this month. As long as the major opposition parties continue their policies of nonconfrontation, the government should be able to weather the storm. Prime Minister Suarez' political ingenuity will be further tested, however, by trouble looming again in the volatile Basque region, by stepped up calls for early municipal elections, and by demands for economic and social aid to depressed regions. In dealing with these demands, Madrid will have to keep a wary eye on the military, which is already showing signs of apprehension about weakening the central government's authority.

[REDACTED] The Suarez government's success so far in controlling public disorder is due in large part to the restraint shown by all major political parties, including the Communists and Socialists.

[REDACTED] The left has again called for calm; although Communists and Socialists strongly support regional demands, they also back the government's contention that pro-autonomy demonstrations are potentially dangerous and unnecessary at this time. The new constitution, which could be ratified as early as next summer, will reportedly provide for "the right to autonomy of the different nationalities and regions of Spain."

25X1 [] Leftists do, however, attribute the clashes between demonstrators and police to the inflexibility of Francoist local officials, and they are calling for municipal elections as soon as possible. Suarez has apparently been holding off on the elections to give his disparate centrist coalition time to pull itself together.

25X1 [] The central government is also held responsible for not taking steps to relieve economic and social distress in poor regions such as Andalusia and the Canary Islands, where much of the recent violence has taken place.

25X1 [] One palliative that the government could administer at relatively little cost is some form of cosmetic autonomy pending approval of the new constitution. A decree law issued in late September granted limited autonomy to Catalonia, and talks between Madrid and various other regions on passing similar legislation are, in fact, well under way.

25X1 [] A decree establishing provisional autonomy for the turbulent Basque region has not yet been issued, however, apparently because of violence in the province of Navarra, which is bitterly divided between pro- and anti-Basque forces. The draft statute for Basque autonomy approved last month by Basque members of the national parliament left the decision on the inclusion of Navarra up to the inhabitants of the province.

25X1 [] Conservatives who oppose the inclusion of Navarra have already clashed with leftist and pro-Basque demonstrators in Pamplona, the provincial capital. The government is doubtless negotiating behind the scenes; until tempers have cooled, it is unlikely to issue a decree that could pit the rival forces against each other in earnest.

25X1 [] Delay, too, could be costly. At least one faction of the Basque terrorist organization ETA--which sees its goal of an independent Basque nation compromised by the autonomy statute--has stepped up efforts to provoke confrontations. It has claimed credit for the recent assassination of the chief of Pamplona's armed police and for the killing on Friday of a "turncoat" Basque town councilor. In the wake of the latest slaying, Basque members of parliament have called on Suarez to implement the autonomy statute without further delay in order to reduce tension in the region.

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[redacted] As Madrid seeks to accommodate regional demands from every corner of Spain, it must also take into account military apprehensions about the breakdown of the strongly centrist state established under Generalissimo Franco. Coming on top of this military unease, the assassination of the commander of Pamplona's armed police--the first regular army officer killed by Basque terrorists--sent shock waves through the armed forces.

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[redacted] Hundreds of soldiers turned out in various parts of Spain for memorial services. Defense Minister Gutierrez Mellado and Army Chief of Staff Vega Rodriguez apparently attempted to play down the political overtones of the funeral services by not attending and, according to press reports, the military was finally ordered to cancel further services.

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[redacted] A regional commander of the paramilitary Civil Guard who spoke at one of the funeral services in support of his troops' right to use guns in self-defense was relieved of his command by the government last week. According to press reports, he had clearly implied that public order was breaking down. While the government's firm action underscores its determination to brook no interference by the military in political matters, it also betrays some edginess about grumbling in the armed forces.

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[redacted] There appears to be a broad consensus of Spanish political parties that some degree of autonomy for the regions is both necessary and desirable. There is less agreement on the details of implementation. Suarez will need all of his considerable political skill to reconcile the differing conceptions of devolution that will bring national and regional parties increasingly into conflict as the constitution is debated, and at the same time to avoid serious military disaffection. [redacted]

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INDONESIA: Concern over Unrest

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[redacted] //Indonesia's top military officers recently concluded several hastily called, closed meetings to discuss how to cope with increasing opposition to the Suharto government. The regime has been anticipating increased antigovernment activity before the Presidential election next March--in which Suharto's reelection is expected--but the intensity of the opposition, combined with food shortages and international criticism of Indonesia's human rights record, apparently has led

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to increased military concern about the country's stability. Suharto's position is probably secure, but harsh crackdowns by the military could be in the offing.//

25X1 [redacted] //The officers' meetings--although ending with a public display of unity and a warning that firm steps will be taken against illegal opposition--seem to indicate that the military is uncertain over what measures to take.//

25X1 [redacted] //Recent student demonstrations at major universities were highly critical of governmental corruption and incompetence. The students even attacked President Suharto over allegations that his family spent \$10 million to build an elaborate mausoleum. They have also challenged the role of the military in government.//

25X1 [redacted] //The government's reluctance to react harshly to such demonstrations--as it did during riots in 1974--probably reflects Suharto's concern over the growing domestic and international perception of his regime as authoritarian. This moderation has apparently emboldened the students. Under these conditions, they will undoubtedly continue to voice strident opposition.//

25X1 [redacted] The immediate target of the military's warning is student opposition, but the government may be more concerned about the alleged behind-the-scenes activity of prominent opponents, such as former Jakarta Governor Ali Sadikin and retired General Haris Nasution. Since leaving office last summer, Sadikin, who has large grassroots support in Jakarta, has repeatedly criticized the government for its ineffectiveness. Students have rallied to his side and demanded that he be nominated for election to president or vice president next March. Sadikin, however, does not enjoy any support within the military.

25X1 [redacted] Suharto endorsed the military's warning but cautioned officials to refrain from overreacting to the opposition. The

President probably hopes these moderate remarks, combined with planned pro-government demonstrations, will neutralize some opposition. Nonetheless, should security problems increase because of continued rice shortages in Java and the expected release of 10,000 political detainees, Suharto will not hesitate to order a crackdown.

25X1 [] Although these events have been highly publicized in Indonesia's press, there has been little suggestion that Suharto might fail to win a third five-year term. Only the military seems capable of leading successful opposition to Suharto, but up until now it has been loyal to the President. If Suharto is to complete another term, he must maintain harmony within the military and keep opponents off balance. His military support could be eroded, however, by any increasing likelihood of large-scale food shortages, or more organized opposition. []

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BRIEFS

Ethiopia

25X1 [] The level of violence between the Ethiopian military government and its domestic opponents has increased dramatically in recent days. The ruling military council has given the security forces and civilian "defense squads" a free hand to eliminate its opponents, in particular a leftist terrorist group that wants the council to turn power over to a Marxist civilian government. The opponents, in turn, have increased their assassinations of government officials.

25X1 [] The urban warfare, which has been going on for over a year, went through a similar period of intensification last spring. The violence does not seem to have seriously threatened the council's chances of survival or affected its management of the conflicts in Eritrea and the Ogaden. Government services have not been seriously disrupted, and the danger to foreigners has not increased appreciably. []

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Philippines

25X1 [] Philippine President Marcos' referendum victory on Saturday was apparently marred by some scattered opposition voting--particularly in those provinces where there has been insurgent activity in the past.

25X1 [redacted] Several Marcos loyalists had billed the referendum exercise as a "dry-run" for Marcos' vote-getting machine preparatory to interim legislative elections next spring. The Philippine President, however, has always linked his promise to hold legislative elections to continued stability under his martial-law rule.

25X1 [redacted] Marcos could further temporize in plans to implement his political "normalization" program if there are indications that local election officials encountered significant difficulties in turning out a pro-Marcos vote in provinces troubled by either Communist or Muslim armed activity. [redacted]

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