

Top Secret 219
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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Wednesday 11 October 1978 CG NIDC 78/237



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NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION
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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Wednesday, 11 October 1978

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

CONTENTS

LEBANON: Situation Report Page 1

SAUDI ARABIA: Peace Process Page 2

NAMIBIA: Election Boycott Page 3

CHINA: Removal of Wu Te Page 4

BRIEFS Page 5

Panama
Ecuador

LEBANON: Situation Report

25X1 [redacted] //Lebanese President Sarkis is continuing his tour of states that provide troops and financing for the Arab Deterrent Force in Lebanon. Some efforts at high-level contacts between the Syrians and the Lebanese Christians are also under way. Scattered incidents of artillery and tank fire in East Beirut yesterday briefly interrupted the three-day old cease-fire. Christian Maronite leaders probably have not abandoned the belief that renewed fighting would enhance the chances of getting a UN force to replace the Syrian-dominated Deterrent Force.//

25X1 [redacted] Sarkis has visited Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar in preparation for the foreign ministers meeting that he and Syrian President Assad want to convene on Sunday in Beirut. Thus far, Sarkis' hosts have made only general statements of support for the Assad-Sarkis initiative. Sarkis is trying to get Saudi Arabia and other Arab states to increase their troop contributions to the Deterrent Force. Should the other Arabs do so, the Syrians could pull some units out of areas dominated by the Lebanese Christians.

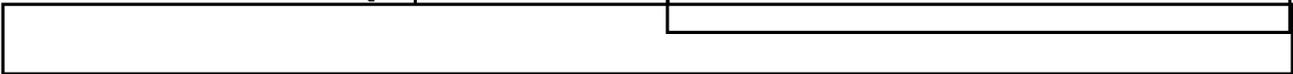
25X1 [redacted] The US Embassy believes that while the UN Security Council cease-fire resolution and appeals for international conferences on Lebanon might buy some time, they also encourage the Maronites in their belief that renewed fighting will lead to the placement of an international force in Lebanon. [redacted]

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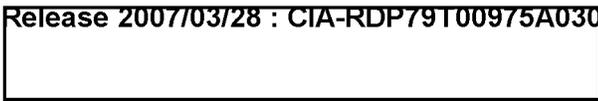
SAUDI ARABIA: Peace Process

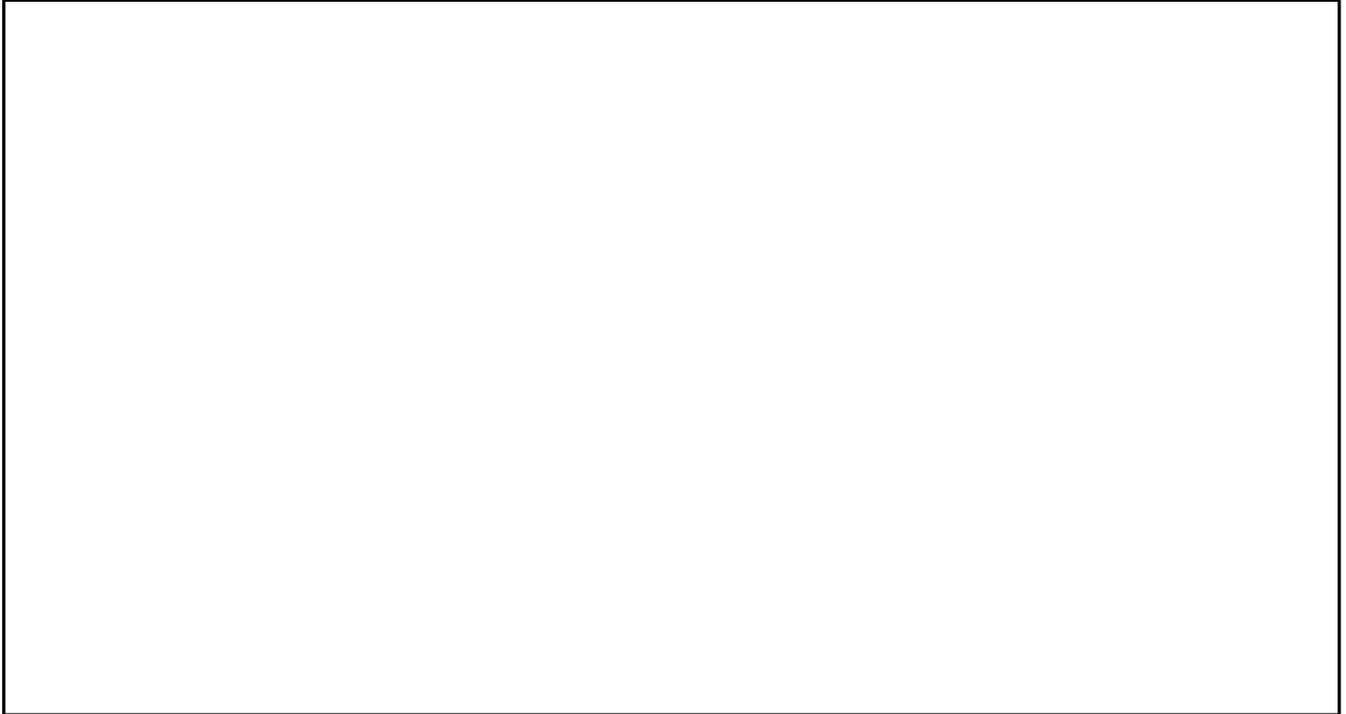
25X1 [redacted] //Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Prince Saud
has urged the US to find a way to open direct contact with the
Palestine Liberation Organization and to link an Egyptian-Israeli
25X1 peace treaty with progress on resolving the status of the West
25X1 Bank and Gaza Strip. [redacted]



25X1 [redacted] In reviewing the Middle East situation with US Amba-
sador West on Sunday, Prince Saud argued that peace efforts are
doomed to failure if the US attempts to open a dialogue with
West Bank Palestinians and bypass the PLO. He also commented
that it appeared that the only result of the summit at Camp
David was a separate Egyptian-Israeli peace that would leave
Egyptian President Sadat isolated in the Arab world, which was
neither in Saudi nor US interests. The Foreign Minister urged
that the US slow Sadat's rush toward a separate peace and speed
the talks concerning the West Bank and Gaza by linking the two.

25X1 [redacted] Saud reiterated the three deficiencies the Saudis see
in the Camp David agreements--their failure to meet Arab condi-
tions on Jerusalem and their lack of provisions concerning Is-
raeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territory and self-
determination for all Palestinians.





NAMIBIA: Election Boycott

25X1 [redacted] *Nearly all Namibian political groups are likely to boycott the election in Namibia that South Africa is planning to hold in early December. Only the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance--supported by Pretoria--and a small group of hardline whites will participate. Leaders of the major Namibian churches, moreover, have petitioned South African Prime Minister Botha not to hold an election without UN participation, and some church leaders appear ready to support a boycott of the election.*

25X1 [redacted] Last weekend, leaders of the Namibian National Front-- a coalition of ethnic-based parties that oppose the Turnhalle Alliance--called for a boycott of any election that is held without UN participation. The decision apparently resolved a disagreement that had threatened to split the loose coalition. The exclusively white Federal Party had been especially reluctant to forgo a chance to win at least a few seats in a constituent assembly.

25X1 [redacted] Although the Front is not believed to have as many followers as the Turnhalle Alliance or the South-West Africa People's Organization--the first to call for an election boycott--its stand will influence the small parties that are not linked to any of the larger groupings. This is particularly true of the SWAPO Democrats, who are disaffected with SWAPO President Sam Nujoma and who have considered competing in the scheduled election even though they oppose Pretoria's unilateral action.

25X1 [redacted] The leaders of the six major churches in Namibia held a conference last week and issued an open letter to Prime Minister Botha reasserting their approval of UN Secretary General Waldheim's recommendations for implementing a transitional program for Namibia. The church leaders also alleged that extensive irregularities have occurred in the voter registration.

[redacted]

CHINA: Removal of Wu Te

25X1 [redacted] //The apparent removal of Peking party boss Wu Te from his municipal posts appears to be a victory for party vice chairman Teng Hsiao-ping. Wu's removal is something of a setback for Premier and party chairman Hua Kuo-feng, who has repeatedly supported Wu at times when he seemed to be faltering.//

25X1 [redacted] //Wu has long been extremely unpopular with Peking residents, who have attacked him in wall posters for his alleged opposition to Teng. Poster criticism of Wu, undoubtedly approved by top officials, intensified last month following criticism in the official media of the Peking municipal leadership.//

25X1 [redacted] //Teng's objections to Wu probably stem in part from Wu's apparent reluctance to see Teng return to political life after the fall of the "gang of four." Because Wu survived the ravages of the Cultural Revolution of the mid-1960s, Teng probably also regards him as someone who cooperated at least to some extent with the "gang of four" and might obstruct Teng's efforts to overturn their policies.//

[redacted]

25X1 [redacted] //Although Wu now appears out of active politics, Teng probably would prefer also to oust him from the Politburo. Teng very likely was opposed on this issue by a number of party officials who are eager to present an image--however transparent--of unity and stability at the upper reaches of the leadership and who may also have been looking for a face-saving device for Hua Kuo-feng. Hua and Wu have appeared together at times when criticism of Wu was most severe.//

25X1 [redacted] //Lin Hu-chia reportedly has replaced Wu in his Peking positions. Lin is a rehabilitated official overthrown during the Cultural Revolution and presumably has ties to Teng.

25X1 [redacted]

BRIEFS

Panama

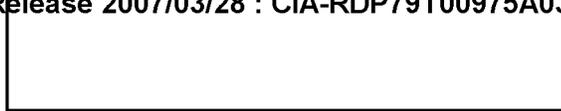
25X1 [redacted] Panama's 505-member legislative assembly today elects former Minister of Education Aristides Royo--General Torrijos' personal choice--as president for a six-year term. Torrijos will remain commandant of the National Guard but will relinquish his post as Chief of Government, a position that will be abolished. A still unanswered question is to what extent Torrijos will relax his grip on the levers of power and allow Royo--ambitious but to date of unquestioned loyalty to Torrijos--to be his own man.

25X1 [redacted] Royo, although a leftist nationalist, is primarily a pragmatist. He faces an economy just beginning to emerge from extended stagnation; in order to encourage recovery he will have to convince businessmen that he is a moderate. He will also preside over political reforms--the full extent of which are still not clear--that Torrijos has initiated to allow greater participation by the opposition. [redacted]

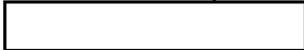
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Ecuador

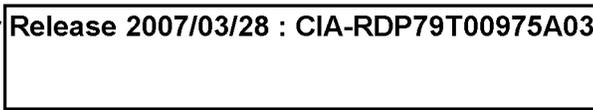
25X1 [redacted] Ecuador has announced that the second round of the presidential election, coupled with a legislative election, will be held on 8 April 1979. The transfer of power to a civilian government is scheduled for the following August.



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 A new electoral tribunal was named on Wednesday to complete a review of returns from the initial round of the presidential balloting held on 16 July and to supervise the runoff election. Some top military leaders were thwarted last month in their attempt to annul the first round election results. The long delay before the April elections, however, provides ample time for further plotting. 

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