

Top Secret 219

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Monday 16 October 1978 CG NIDC 78/241



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NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION
Unauthorized Disclosure Subject to Criminal Sanctions

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Monday, 16 October 1978

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

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CONTENTS

25X1

[Redacted]

EGYPT: More Personnel Changes Page 2

AFGHANISTAN: Drift to the Left Page 3

NORTH YEMEN: Coup Attempt Page 4

CHILE-CHINA: Foreign Minister Visit Page 5

25X1

[Redacted]

PHILIPPINES: Muslim Problem Page 7

BRIEFS: Page 8

USSR
Algeria
USSR

25X1

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EGYPT: More Personnel Changes

25X1 [redacted] Egyptian President Sadat continues to make high-level personnel changes in both the civilian and military sectors. His reasons vary, but seem mostly based on his determination to dramatize the beginning of a "new era" in Egypt. Attitudes toward the Camp David accords did not appear to be a major factor in most cases.

25X1 [redacted] Sadat most recently fired two military service commanders and Ashraf Marwan, the head of the Arab Organization for Industrialization. This organization, which is to build an Arab arms industry, is financed by Saudi Arabia and several other Persian Gulf oil-producing countries.

25X1 [redacted] Marwan, once a close adviser to Sadat and his chief liaison to Saudi and Iranian leaders, had a reputation for efficiency but also corruption. The Saudis were comfortable using Marwan as their channel to the Egyptian presidency and will add his dismissal to their list of complaints against Sadat.

25X1 [redacted] //In the space of 10 days Sadat has changed the entire military high command except for air defense, where change is likely soon. Sadat reportedly planned to introduce new faces a year ago but delayed the move, probably because of the border war with Libya and his trip to Jerusalem. The recent changes follow an even larger army and division-level command shift in June. The new commanders are considered strongly pro-Sadat and back his Israeli policy.//

25X1 [redacted]

25X1 [redacted] [redacted] broad popular support in Egypt for the Camp David accords, despite some scattered opposition. As far as we can tell, the military appears to support

Sadat firmly, as do the business community and the urban workers and rural masses. That support--built on an Egypt-first attitude--appears to have greatly boosted Sadat's confidence and perhaps his willingness to carry out the wholesale personnel changes.

25X1 [redacted] Muslim fundamentalists and leftist intellectuals continue to oppose the agreements. Sadat, however, has denied the left a public forum, and the religious right has so far reacted less vigorously than many in the government expected. The government has postponed the opening of Cairo University--where the religious groups are active and well organized--to preclude demonstrations.

25X1 [redacted] //The Foreign Ministry also appears to contain several critics, though they do not publicly oppose the accords. Sadat is said to be aware of the private sniping, and he plans to reorganize the ministry.// [redacted]

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25X1 AFGHANISTAN: Drift to the Left

25X1 [redacted] *The pro-Soviet regime in Afghanistan continues to drift to the left almost six months after it came to power. So far, President Taraki appears to have dealt successfully with his opponents both inside and outside the ruling People's Democratic Party.*

25X1 [redacted] On the domestic front, Taraki has been primarily concerned with consolidating his position. Purges continue within the government, the party, and the military. Many officials associated with the former regime--a good portion of the talented and trained people available--are in jail or unemployed. Politicians too closely identified with Taraki's main rival for party leadership, ex-Prime Minister Babrak Karmal, are in exile or under arrest.

25X1 [redacted] //Former Defense Minister Abdul Qader--a principal leader in the coup on 27 April--has or will be tried for plotting against the regime. Since his arrest in mid-August,

over 200 military officers and civilian officials may have been arrested for involvement in his alleged coup attempt. The lack of reaction within the armed forces to Qader's arrest suggests that Taraki maintains control of the military.//

25X1 [] The regime has similarly moved against potential rightwing opposition. The Muslim Brotherhood was severely weakened this summer and fall by widespread arrests, and none of the other reported conservative opposition fronts appear to have the leadership and support within the military necessary to challenge the regime.

25X1 [] The elimination of former supporters and skilled government officials, the conservative Muslim nature of the Afghan population, and the troublesome rebellion in the eastern tribal provinces have all curtailed the government's implementation of socialist domestic programs. Foreign policy has not been constrained, however. The Taraki government has taken positions identical to the USSR's on many international issues.

25X1 NORTH YEMEN: Coup Attempt

25X1 [] //The North Yemeni Government put down a coup attempt by dissident Army and police units yesterday morning after some fighting around the capital city of Sana. The motives for the attempted government overthrow are not yet known.//

25X1 [] //North Yemeni President Ali Abdallah Salih, who was out of the city, appears to be firmly in control thanks to quick action by loyal military forces. The principal leaders of the coup attempt reportedly have been captured. They are said to include a leftist Baath Party sympathizer who apparently was involved in a similar effort in 1973, the commander of an infantry brigade, and the commander of the military police.//

25X1 [] //Many members of North Yemen's substantial leftist movement are opposed to Salih's conservative politics, as well as to his close ties to Saudi Arabia. A general crackdown

[redacted]

on these leftists could well ensue. We have no evidence of South Yemeni involvement in the coup attempt, although Aden does provide support to a variety of North Yemeni dissidents.

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CHILE-CHINA: Foreign Minister Visit

[redacted] Chilean Foreign Minister Cubillos leaves today for China on a two-week official visit intended to foster closer economic and political ties. He will carry an invitation to Chairman Hua Kuo-feng to visit Chile and a hope that President Pinochet will be invited to China; the Chinese will handle these issues very cautiously.

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[redacted] Relations between the two ideologically disparate governments have been correct and modestly improving for some time. The Chinese Ambassador in Santiago recently obtained Cubillos' partial endorsement of his denunciation of Soviet "hegemonic ambitions."

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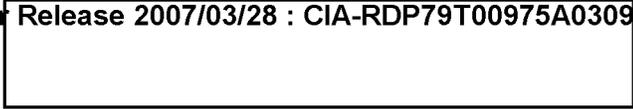
[redacted] For Chile, improving ties with a leading Communist power gives substance to its announced pragmatic, nonideological foreign policy. The Chileans are also working to improve relations with other Third World nations to reduce US leverage and to end Chile's international isolation.

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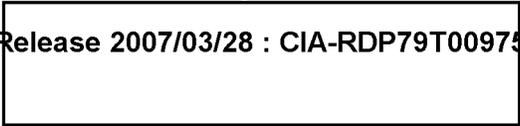
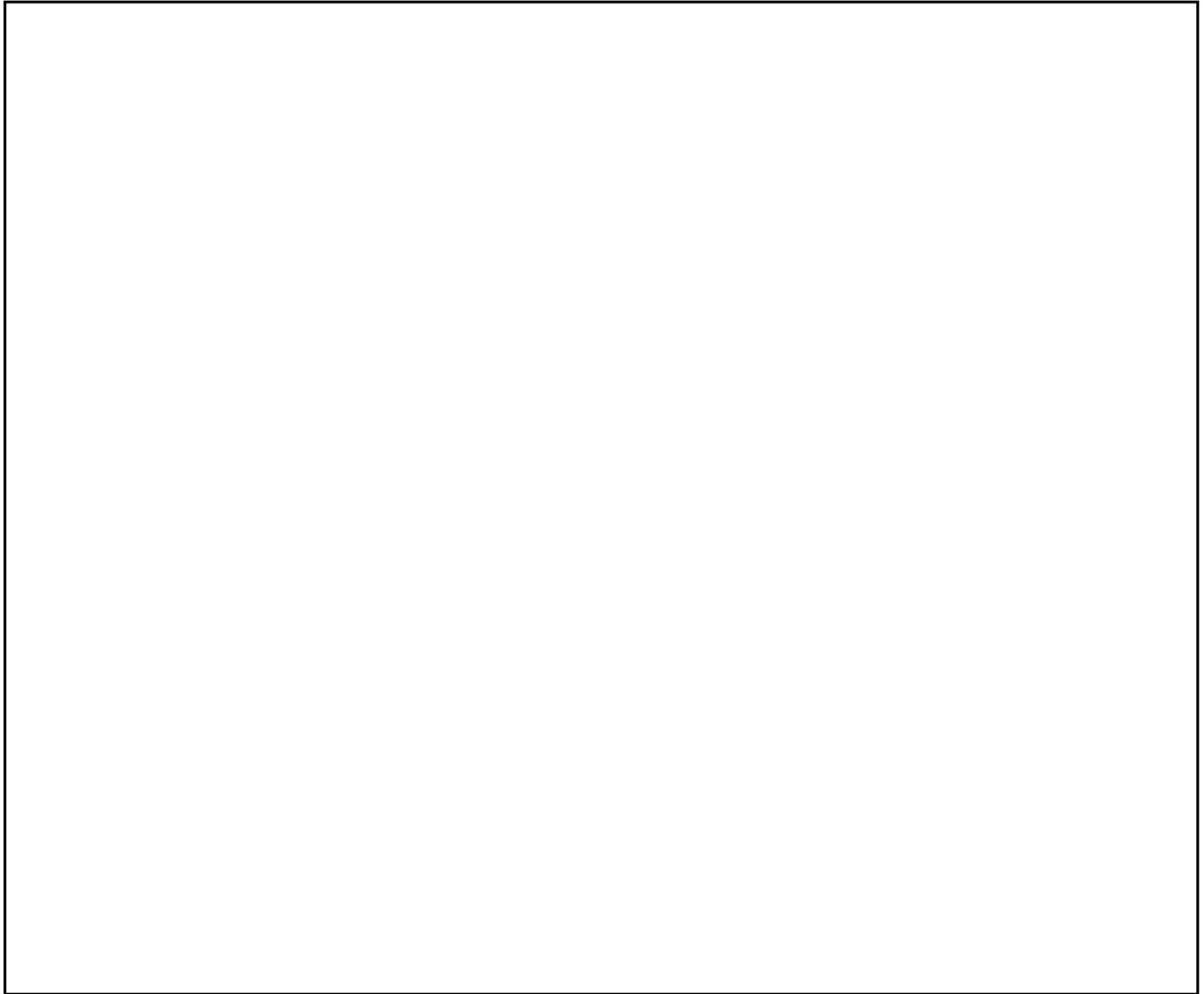
[redacted] Aside from the political overtones of Cubillos' trip, Chilean officials point out that economic and trade issues will be high on the agenda. They believe that Peking's search for more copper, iron, steel, and fertilizer will lead to further

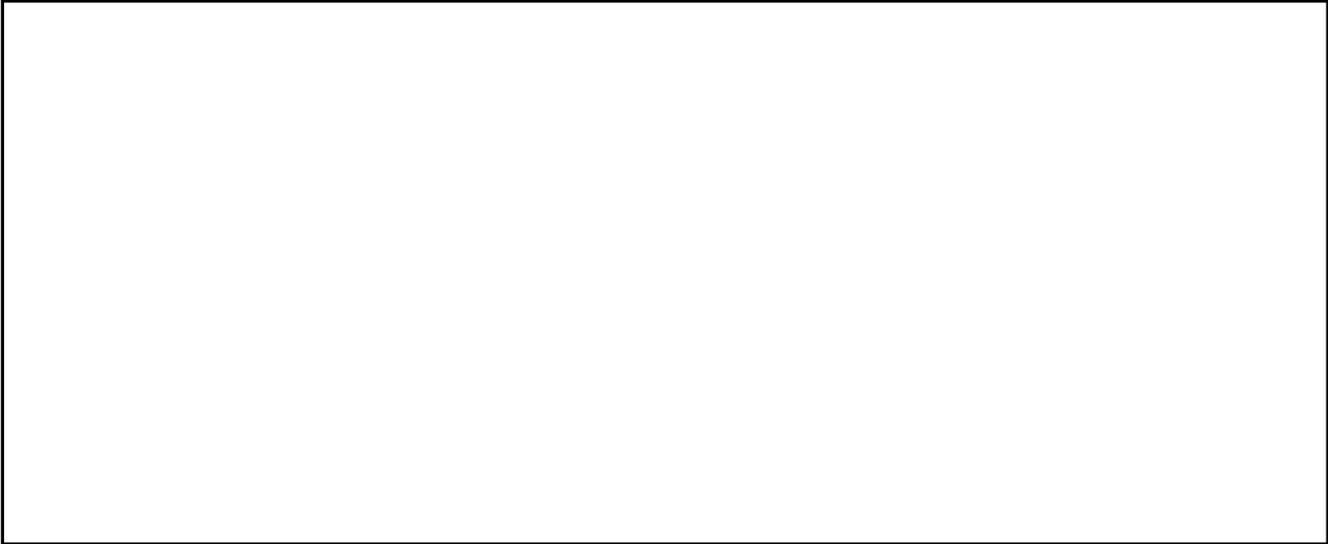
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trade agreements and improvement of the already favorable Chilean balance of trade; the Chileans may then buy Chinese crude oil, an arrangement already under negotiation.

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PHILIPPINES: Muslim Problem

[Redacted] //President Marcos is concerned that increased hostilities against Muslim dissidents in the southern Philippines, including well-publicized accounts of civilian casualties, will help critics of his human rights policies and could complicate the current US-Philippine base negotiations. In an effort to head off this possibility, Marcos has stated his intention to hold elections for quasi-autonomous legislative councils in two regions that include Muslim strongholds. He did not set a date for the elections.//

[Redacted] //The upsurge in ambushes, firefights, and kidnappings over the past several weeks appears to be caused by intensified Muslim military activity. The Muslim forces are eager to draw international attention to their plight as a persecuted minority, while the Philippine armed forces, unable thus far to suppress the insurgency, continue to wage a war of attrition.//

[Redacted] //In recent conversations with Ambassador Murphy, Marcos attacked the visit to the US by two old-line Muslim spokesmen as an attempt to draw in the US as a mediator. He said they lack any genuine popular support and are little more than common criminals.//

25X1 [redacted] // Marcos intimated that he will continue his carrot-and-stick policies in the southern Philippines--a tough military line against the more radical insurgents coupled with vague promises of economic development programs--to deepen divisions within the Muslim leadership.//

25X1 [redacted] // The Philippine President clearly hopes that eventually he will be able to deal with a less militant faction of the Muslim minority willing to reach an accommodation with the government.//

25X1 [redacted] // Marcos also told the Ambassador that Libya is continuing to provide the insurgents with political support and money for arms. The inflexibility of insurgent demands has been reinforced by the Libyans, which the more moderate Arab states such as Saudi Arabia have been unable to temper.//

25X1 [redacted] // As if to underscore the importance Marcos attaches to the Muslim problem, Defense Secretary Enrile told the Ambassador that he would not attend the UN sessions this year in order to direct his full attention to the insurgency. [redacted]

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BRIEFS

USSR

25X1 [redacted] The Soviets fired an SS-18 Mod 4 ICBM from Tyuratam some 9,200 kilometers to an impact area in the Pacific Ocean some 650 kilometers north of Midway Island early yesterday. They had previously announced plans to flight-test missiles into the general area between 13 and 31 October but ended their closure of the impact area after this one launch.

25X1 [redacted] This was the first test into the Pacific for the new, improved version of the SS-18 and indicates that it is close to operational status. [redacted]

Algeria

25X1 [] Algerian President Boumediene is in Moscow. Official Algerian sources claim that he will hold high-level talks with Soviet leaders. Boumediene's absence from public view for the last three weeks, however, is fueling speculation that medical treatment is the real reason for the unheralded trip.

25X1 [] The authoritative Egyptian newspaper *Al-Ahram* is linking "events in Algeria" with Iraq's postponement of the Arab foreign ministers' meeting, which had been scheduled for next weekend in Baghdad. []

USSR

25X1 [] //The installation of blast doors at four recently completed subway stations in Moscow indicates continuing interest by the USSR in using subway facilities for civil defense purposes. An estimated 3 to 6 percent of Moscow's urban population could be sheltered in underground stations throughout the city's subway system, assuming either 1.0 or .5 square meters of shelter space per person. An additional 15 to 30 percent of Moscow's urban population could be accommodated if subway tunnels were used as shelters.//

25X1 [] //The new stations are part of an eight-kilometer subway extension to a northern suburb opened late last month. The extension is close to the surface throughout its route, and at places is just beneath the surface of the street; in the older parts of the system in the center of the city, tunnels and stations are more than 30 meters below ground.//

25X1 [] //The 178-kilometer Moscow subway system has 101 stations, 96 underground. By 1990, a total of 170 stations along a 350-kilometer system are planned. []

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