



Director of
Central
Intelligence

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National Intelligence Daily

Thursday
19 May 1988

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19 May 1988

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LEBANON:

Signals Mixed on Syrian Military Intentions

Syria continues to delay moving into Beirut's southern suburbs, ostensibly to allow Iran time to coax Hizballah into accepting a cease-fire. [REDACTED] b3

Damascus is sending mixed signals on its military intentions. Syrian Defense Minister Talas visited Beirut yesterday and said Syrian troops will enter the city's southern suburbs sooner or later. Damascus also orchestrated a call by its Lebanese allies for Syrian intervention into the suburbs and over the weekend built up its military presence on the fringes of the suburbs. [REDACTED] b3

On the other hand, no additional troops have arrived this week, repeated public Syrian deadlines have passed, and President Assad has postponed intervention at Tehran's request at least once. Syria is not harassing Hizballah elements in the Syrian-occupied Bekaa Valley nor interdicting arms supplies to the suburbs, both of which would probably precede a military assault on the suburbs. [REDACTED] b1 b3
Assad has not made a final decision, and his advisers are split between military hardliners and those who prefer negotiation. [REDACTED] b3

Comment: Despite its show of force, Damascus seems to be looking for a compromise solution that permits a token deployment of Syrian peacekeeping forces into the radical Shia stronghold. Syria probably will intervene in force only as a last resort if, for example, Hizballah tries to expand outside the suburbs. [REDACTED] b3

Assad wants to avoid a costly military showdown with Hizballah. He still views the radical Shia as a useful tool against Israel, and he does not want to alienate a group that he sees as potentially threatening his goals in Lebanon. Moreover, he wants to preserve Syria's "strategic alliance" with Iran. [REDACTED] b3

The hostages are a lesser consideration for Assad than the military cost of intervention and the Iranian factor. The Syrians almost certainly do not have good intelligence on the hostages' locations, and they apparently have not trained their forces to carry out a hostage rescue mission in a densely crowded urban environment. [REDACTED] b3

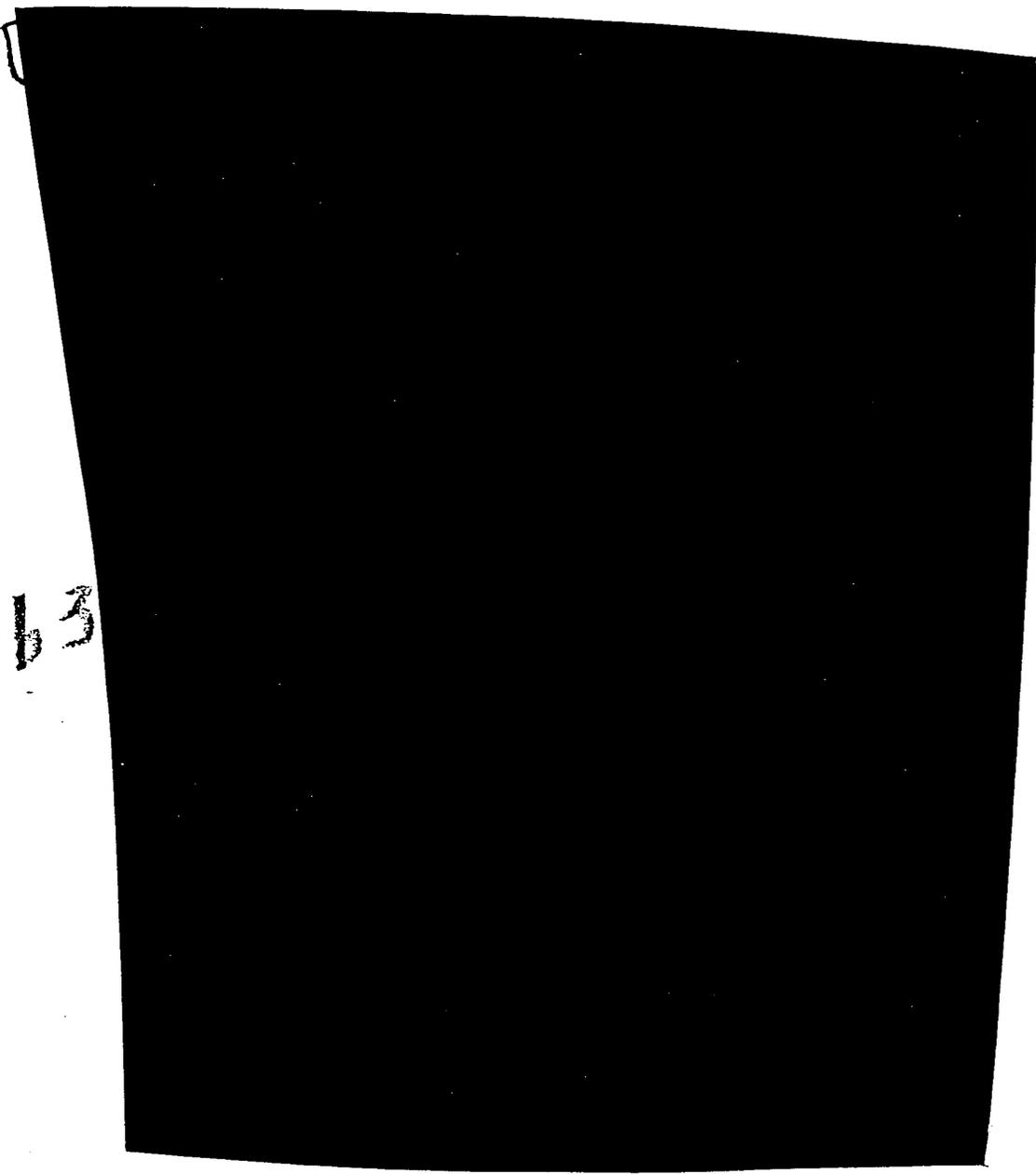
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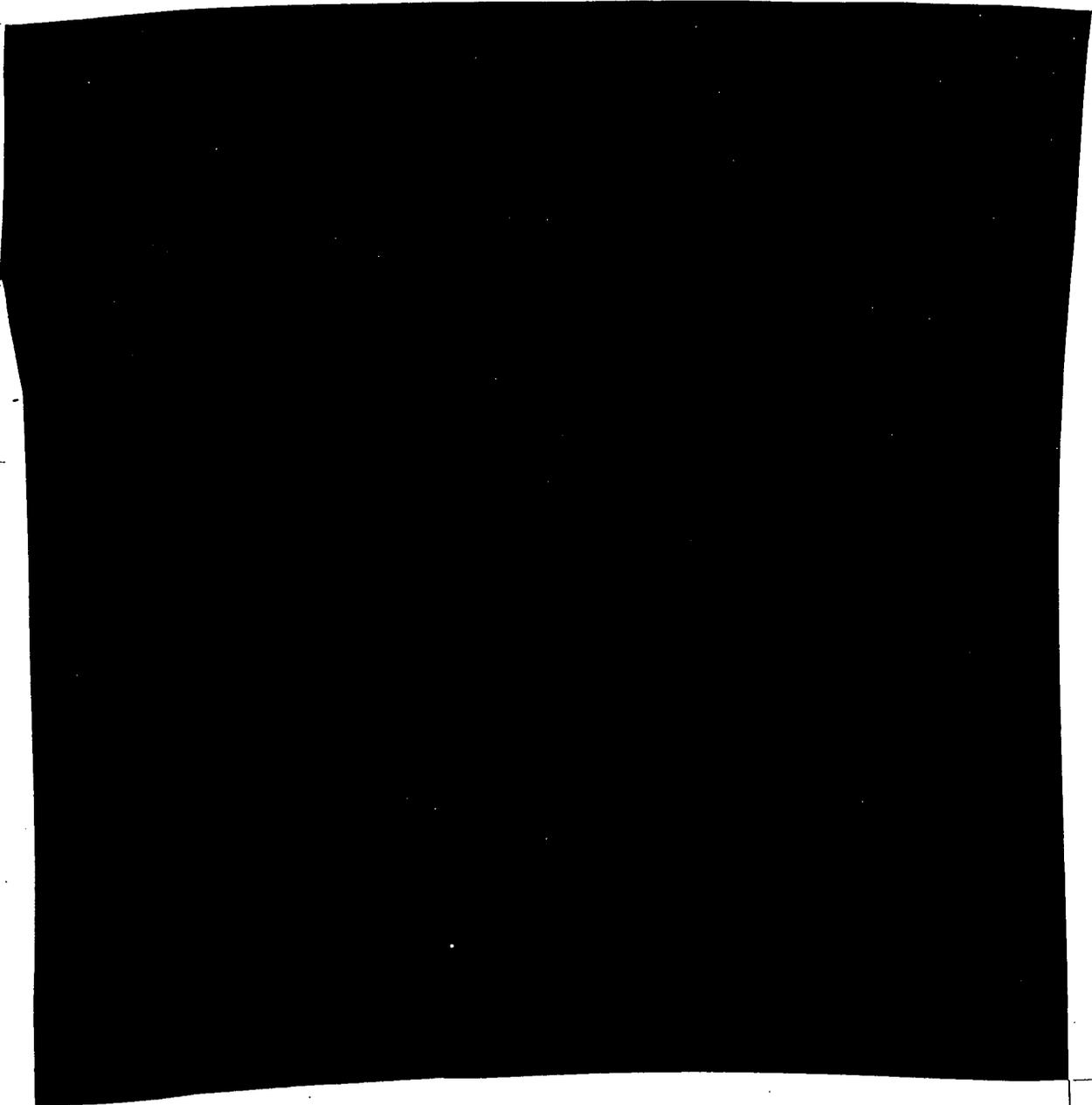
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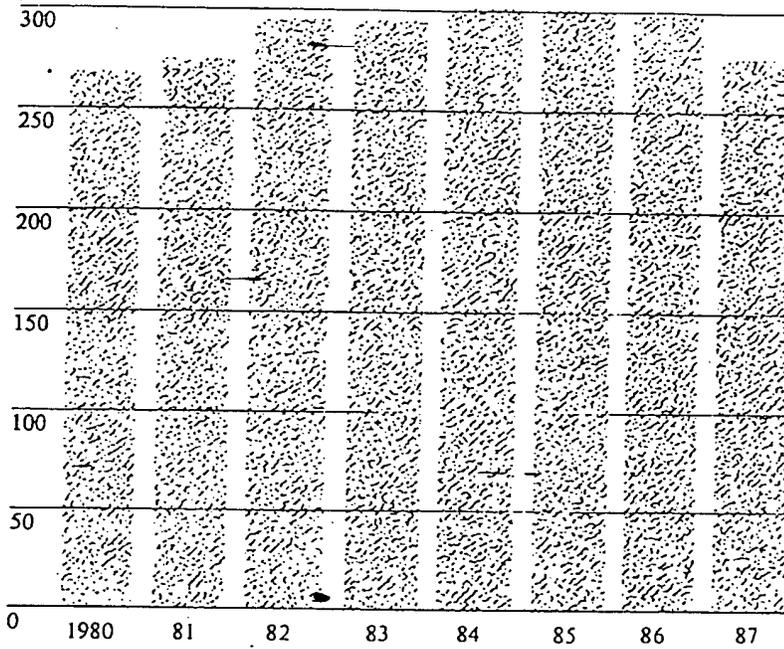
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Vietnam: Per Capita Grain Consumption, 1980-87

Kilograms
350



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VIETNAM:

Hanoi Claiming Severe Food Problems

Vietnam's ailing economy faces difficulty growing and distributing enough food, but Hanoi may be exaggerating its needs to help break down the ASEAN-US embargo on foreign aid.

Hanoi claims bad weather, insects, and even its own ill-conceived policies have left Vietnam unable to feed itself. In the past several years, population growth has outstripped food production. In 1987, for example, grain production fell 5 percent to 17.6 million tons, while the population grew by nearly 3 percent to 63.6 million.

Vietnam is appealing for emergency Western aid to cope with the shortages. Last month it requested donations of fertilizer and insecticides worth \$122 million.

Vietnamese officials have appeared more anxious recently, telling international agencies earlier this month that 3-8 million people in 12 northern Vietnamese provinces are "near starvation" and will need a total of 120,000 tons of rice to survive until the current crop is harvested in the next two or three months.

The shortages are probably not as widespread or as severe as Hanoi claims, and Vietnam probably is trying to persuade potential donors to increase the amounts of aid and speed deliveries. Some northern provinces may be facing unusually serious shortfalls that Hanoi is unable or unwilling to meet by purchasing and transporting food from the south. Vietnamese reports of deaths from starvation are extraordinarily high, unconfirmed, and suspect. Hanoi apparently has made no efforts at national mobilization to meet such a crisis.

The food shortage may strengthen reform advocates within the government. Hanoi recently dismissed three vice premiers in part because of poor performance on agricultural reforms. The lack of Soviet response will probably increase Hanoi's determination to seek ties to the West and to reduce its dependence on Moscow.

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CHAD:

Ethnic Discontent Brewing

Growing resentment in Chad of President Habre's dominant—and often overbearing—Toubou tribesmen suggests that ethnic frictions are reemerging as the national euphoria over last year's military victories against Libya subsides. b3

[redacted] ethnic tensions have increased over reports that Toubou soldiers—allegedly members of the elite Presidential Guard—terrorized merchants and killed several civilians in the capital earlier this month. In addition, many Chadians [redacted] believe Toubou security forces were responsible for the recent death of a non-Toubou who was formerly a military adviser to Habre. b3

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Tensions between the northern-based Toubous and other Chadian groups, particularly southerners, have long been the chief cause of domestic turmoil. Since 1985, the popularity of the war against Libya and Habre's efforts to build national unity have kept these antagonisms from boiling over into serious conflict. Public resentment of the Toubous' dominance of the military and security forces and of their frequent harassment of other groups, however, continues to spark small clashes. b3

b3 [redacted] Habre still enjoys widespread popularity as a result of last year's political and military successes, and the increase in ethnic tension in the capital—even if it leads to wider violence—poses little threat to his rule. Nevertheless, the reemergence of these antagonisms, together with intensifying Libyan efforts to reactivate Chadian rebel forces, could further weaken the shaky allegiance of former opponents who have rallied to the government and prompt defections of non-Toubous from the Army. To minimize those risks, Habre probably will try to rein in the Toubous and, as in the past, may punish the worst offenders. b3

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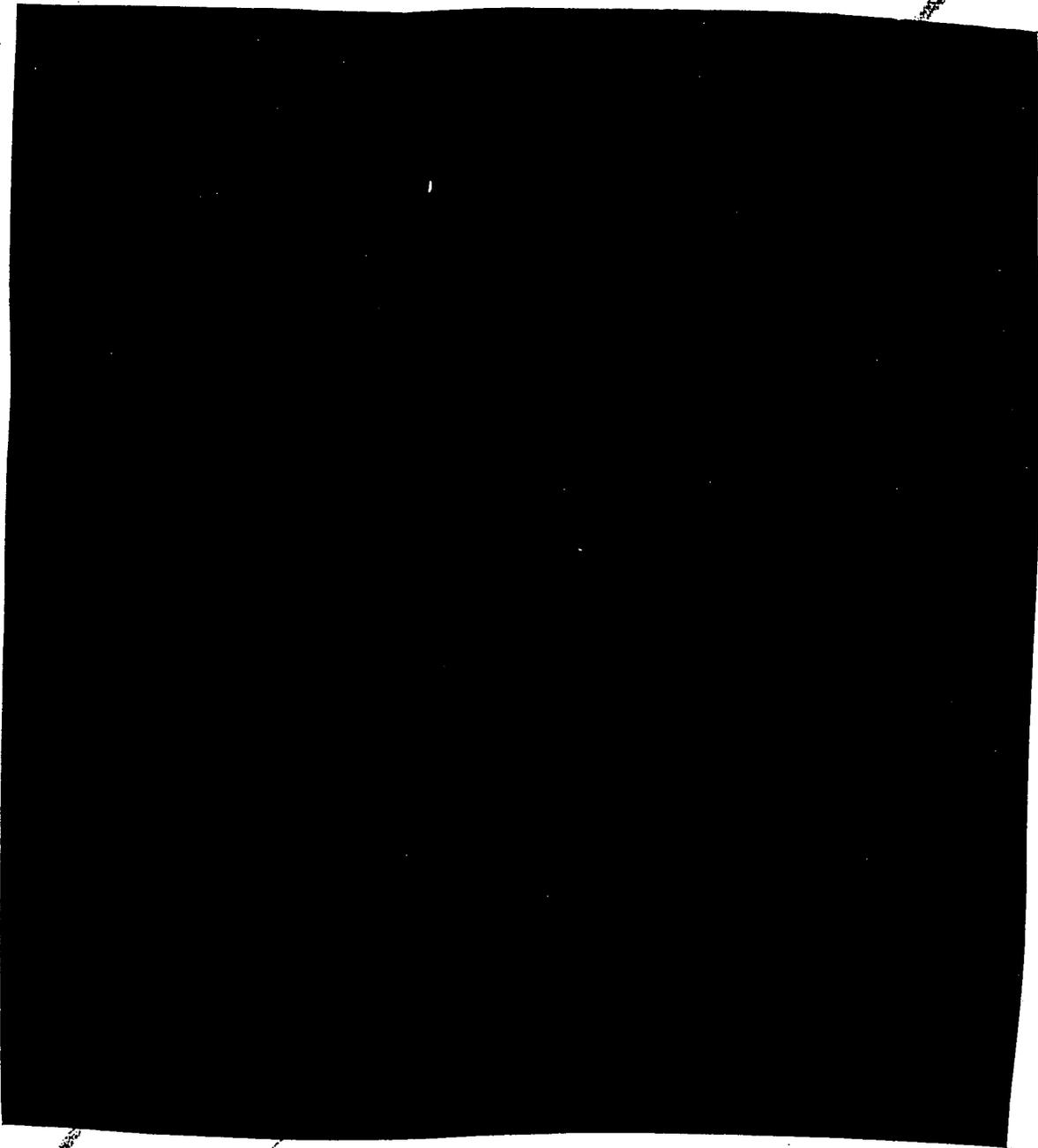
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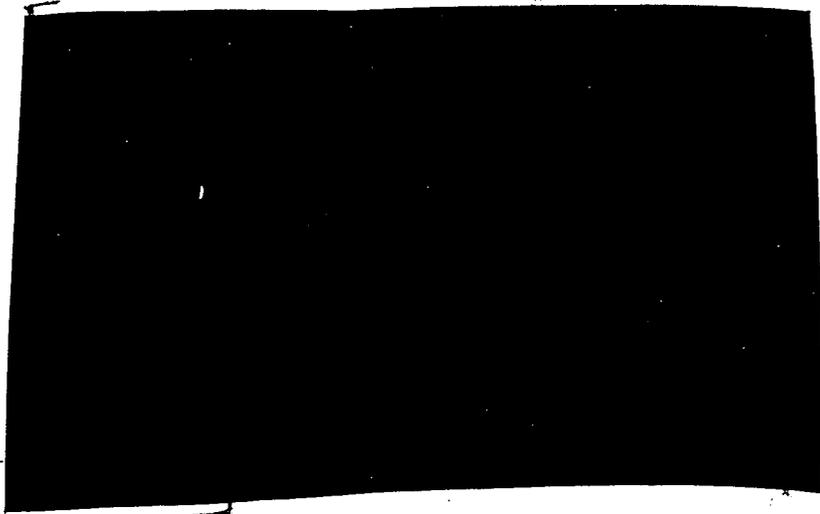
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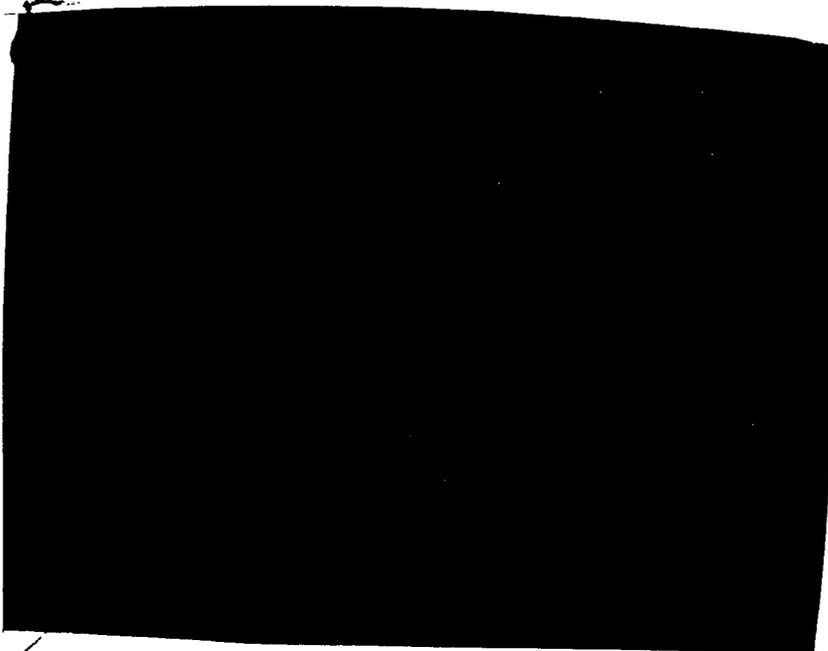
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Panama: The Strategic Military Council

The Strategic Military Council (CEM) formed last week formalizes Noriega's shadow "general staff." It is composed of 20 Defense Forces officers, but includes only four members of the current 25-member General Staff. These four officers, moreover, would leave if a 25-year retirement rule were enforced.

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PANAMA: Noriega Moving To Preserve Influence

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[REDACTED] In moving last week to create a military council endowed with broad powers and dominated by his cronies, Noriega apparently is trying to ensure he will remain able to affect decisions from behind the scenes. Retention of the Solis government would allow him to seek continued political influence without fear of opposition retaliation. Once he steps down as Defense Chief, however, Noriega's ability to reward friends in key positions through patronage will be significantly diminished. [REDACTED]

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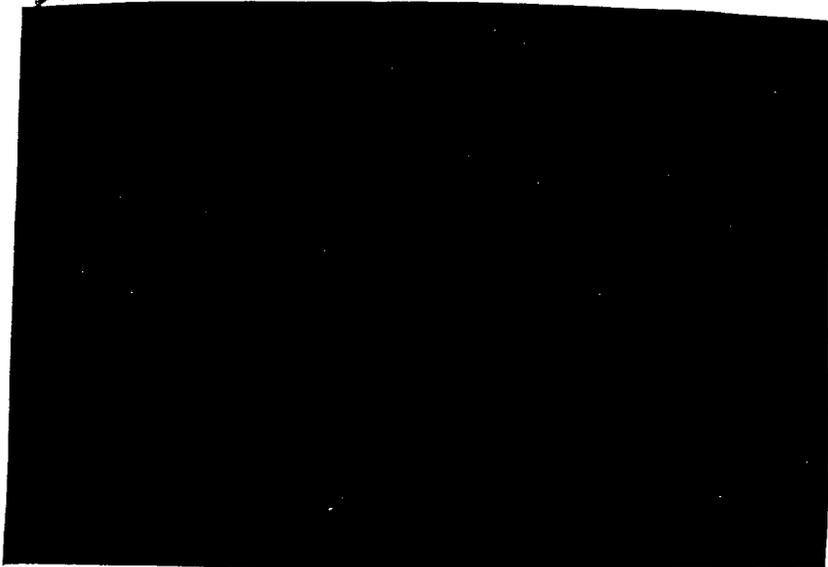
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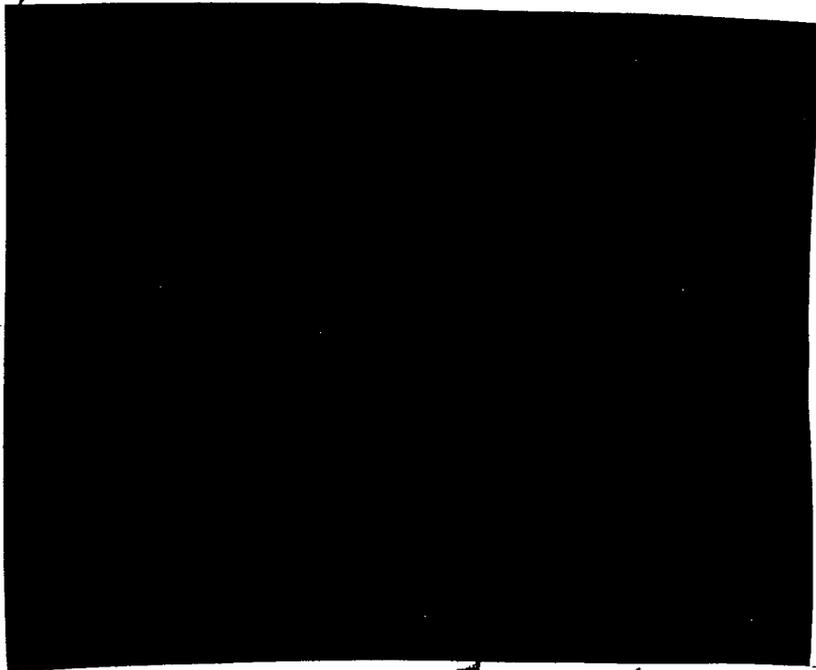
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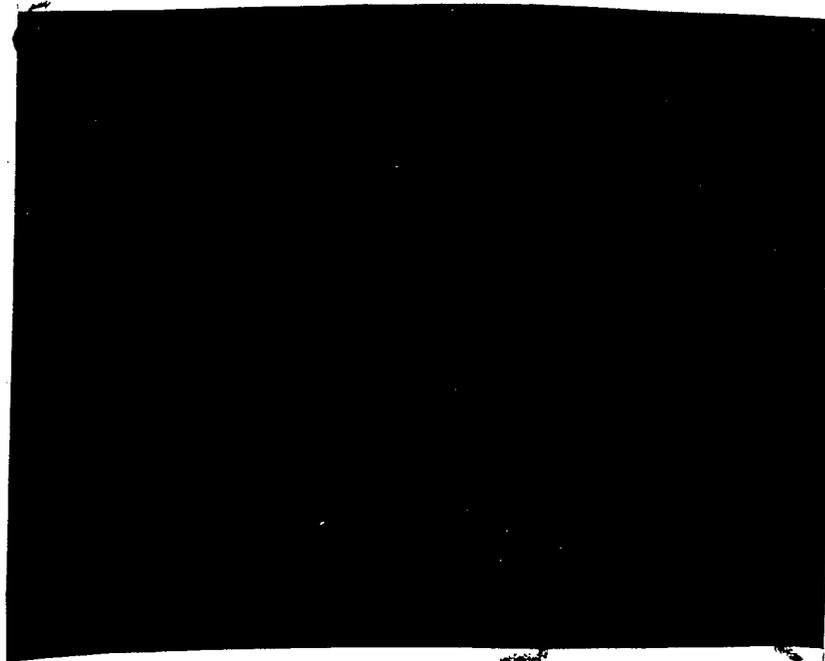
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INDIA: Sikh Militants Surrender

Most Sikh militants holding out in the Golden Temple surrendered yesterday after Indian paramilitary forces took control of additional buildings at the compound. According to press reports, the remainder committed suicide or were shot trying to escape during the surrender.

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~~_____~~ The government's success in ending the 10-day siege without storming the holiest buildings may limit the additional alienation among Sikhs. New Delhi will emphasize its forces' painstaking efforts to lay siege to the temple complex rather than destroy the holy areas occupied by the militants. An operation in 1984 touched off widespread protests and rioting because tanks entered the compound and troops damaged holy buildings. Paramilitary forces probably will occupy the temple for several days searching for explosives and arms caches. ~~_____~~ b3

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SUDAN: Abu Nidal Organization Implicated in Attack

Two suspects arrested in connection with an attack against the British Sudan Club in Khartoum last Sunday claim to have carried out the operation on behalf of the Abu Nidal organization. A third suspect arrested in connection with an attack the same night against a hotel in Khartoum claims to be a member of an unidentified Fatah organization. In separate interrogations, all three individuals said they were recruited in Beirut and sent to Sudan to attack US and British targets. The two incidents occurred about an hour apart, killed seven, and injured more than 20. [REDACTED] b3

b3 [REDACTED] The ANO probably carried out both operations. The tactics and the choice of targets are similar to those the ANO has used before. This was the group's first operation in Sudan. It and previous operations in South Asia suggest the group may have shifted its focus from Western Europe, at least temporarily. Fatah's involvement in an attack at the same time and place as one by the ANO would be rare. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] A Libyan connection may exist because Tripoli is now the ANO's primary sponsor and clearly would endorse attacks on such targets. [REDACTED] b3

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In Brief

Middle East

— Iranian speedboats attacked tanker in Persian Gulf yesterday, [redacted] first retaliation for eight recent Iraqi attacks . . . more Iranian attacks likely [redacted]

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Europe

[redacted]

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[redacted]

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— Soviet Azerbaijan party leaders appealed for calm after new protests in Baku Tuesday, violent ethnic clashes in Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia last week . . . met protesters . . . public admission of tense situation shows grave concern. [redacted]

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Africa

— In broadcast Monday, Sudanese rebel leader John Garang denounced Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi's new Cabinet as sectarian, government of national disunity . . . pledged to keep fighting . . . Islamic law is key obstacle to settlement. [redacted]

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East Asia

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Americas

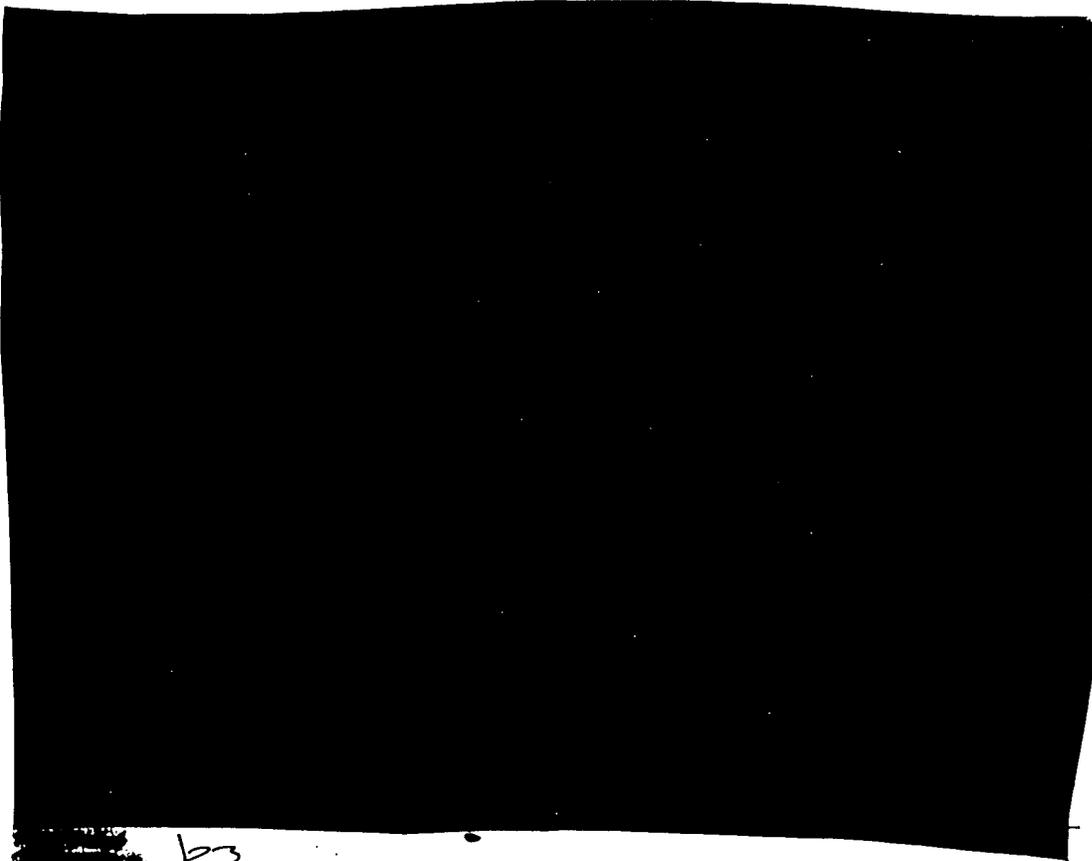
— Ecuadorian President-elect Borja discussing foreign minister post with UN Afghan mediator Diego Cordovez . . . presages more active foreign policy . . . Borja to reestablish ties to Nicaragua, seek admission to Latin Group of Eight. [redacted]

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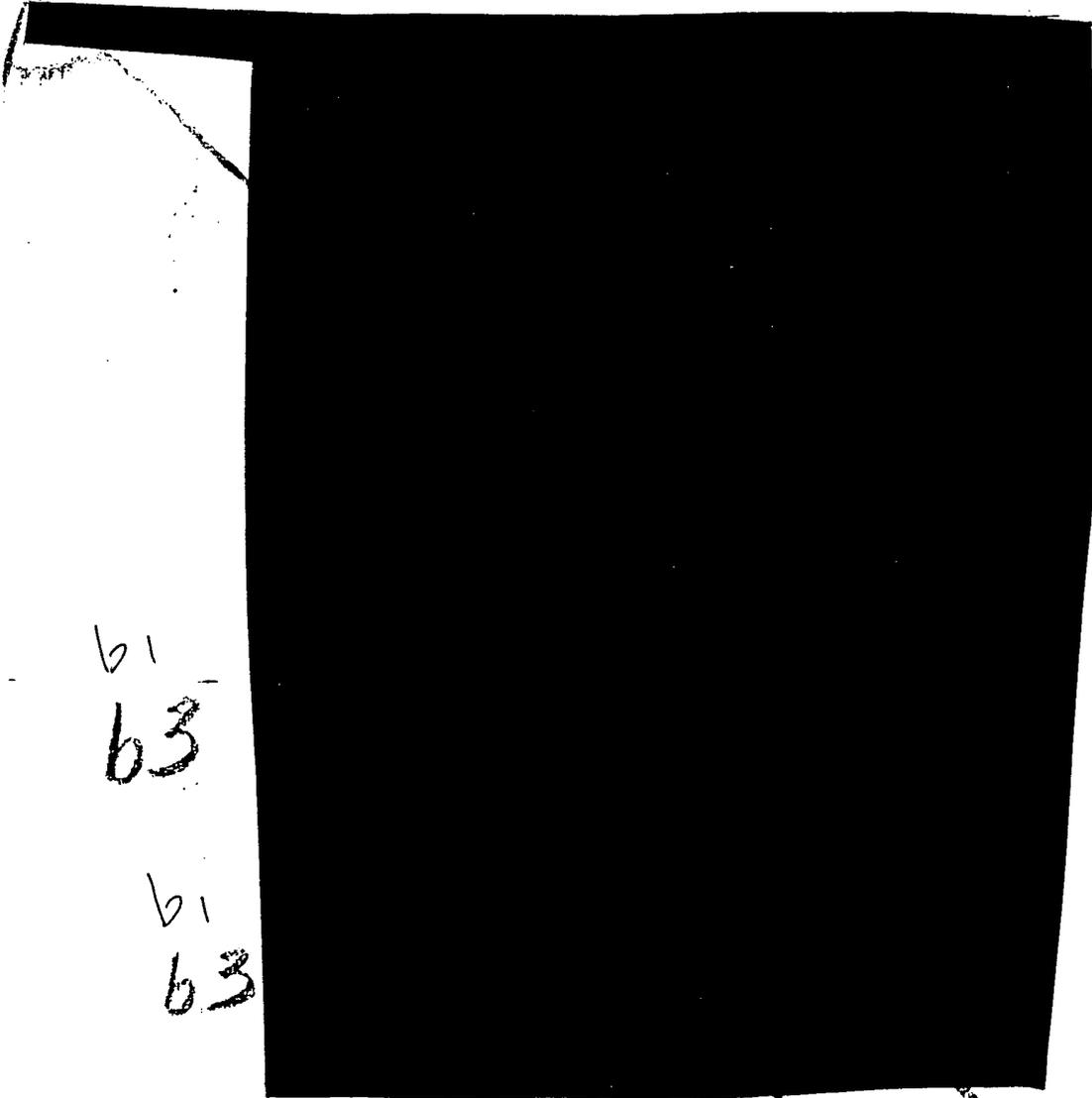
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Special Analysis



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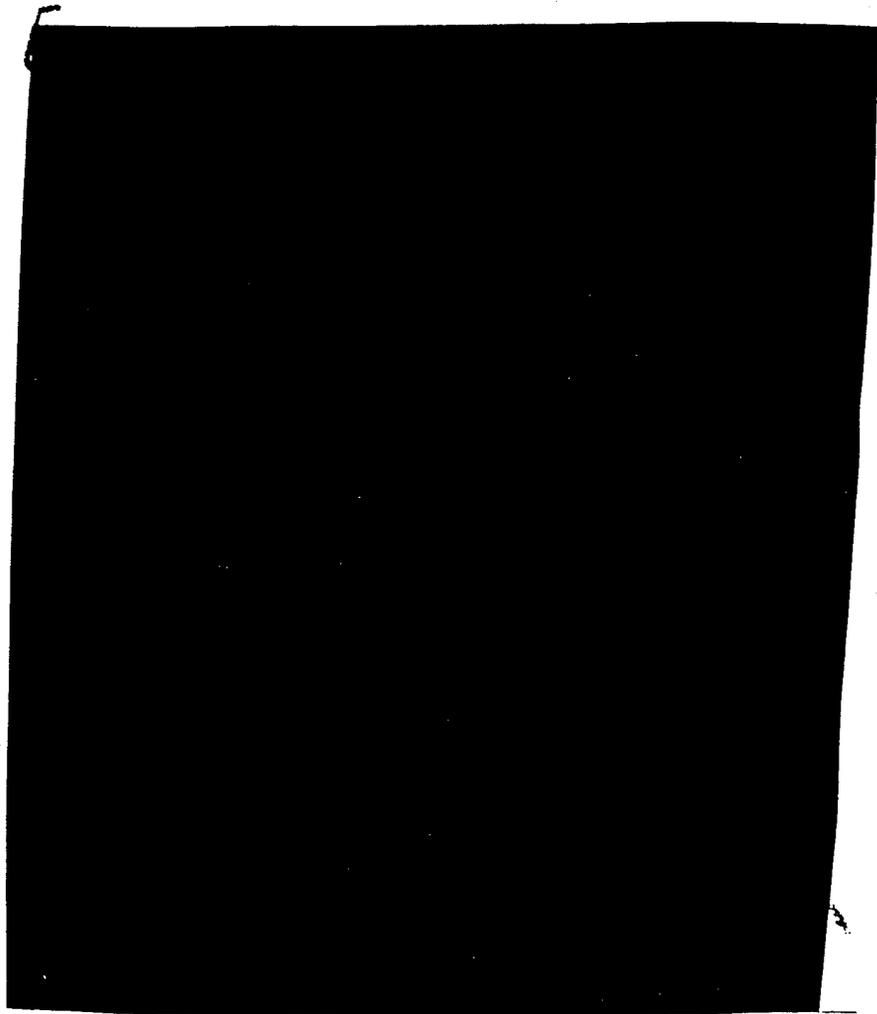
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Special Analysis

INTERNATIONAL: Terrorist Threats to Seoul Olympics

P'yongyang's public threats against the Seoul Olympics and its sabotage of a South Korean airliner last November indicate that North Korea is probably the greatest challenge to the security of the games. Several non-Korean groups might also stage terrorist incidents in Seoul. b3

North Korea's decadeslong record of intermittent violence against the South and its ineffective opposition to the venue of the games suggest the danger it poses is high. The North Koreans have repeatedly denounced Seoul's hosting of the games as a symbol of permanent division of the Korean peninsula and may hope to spoil the South's moment of glory. The surviving terrorist involved in the bombing of KA 858 last year claimed that action was aimed against the Olympics, which suggests it may have been the first of a series of incidents planned to frighten tourists and athletes away from Seoul. b3

The North has several options for disrupting the games, including further sabotage against civilian airliners and attacking aircraft in South Korean airspace. P'yongyang also could infiltrate agents into South Korea by sea, use its existing agent network in the South to carry out terrorist incidents, or it may provoke military clashes at the DMZ. b3

Threat From Third-Country Groups

The most worrisome of international terrorist groups is the Japanese Red Army, which has become increasingly active. b3

Another suspected Japanese terrorist, who was thought to have been in North Korea since 1970, was arrested last week in Tokyo. b3

Of the Palestinian groups, the Abu Nidal organization is probably the most effective and has the strongest motivation to target the Seoul Olympics. In addition, groups supported by Iran might use the games to conduct a bombing or hostage-taking operation against US, Iraqi, Saudi, or other Arab targets. b3

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Seoul's Security Response

South Korea is taking extensive precautions. Military and police units will be positioned at Olympic sites, and security will be tight at all hotels and the airport. Seoul will augment military forces along the DMZ or South Korea's coastlines. Airlines with regular flights to Seoul and commercial charter flights—particularly those originating in or transiting Third World airports that lack sophisticated weapons-detection equipment—pose the weakest security link. ~~██████████~~ b3

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