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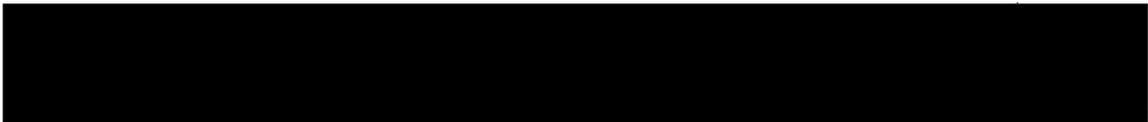
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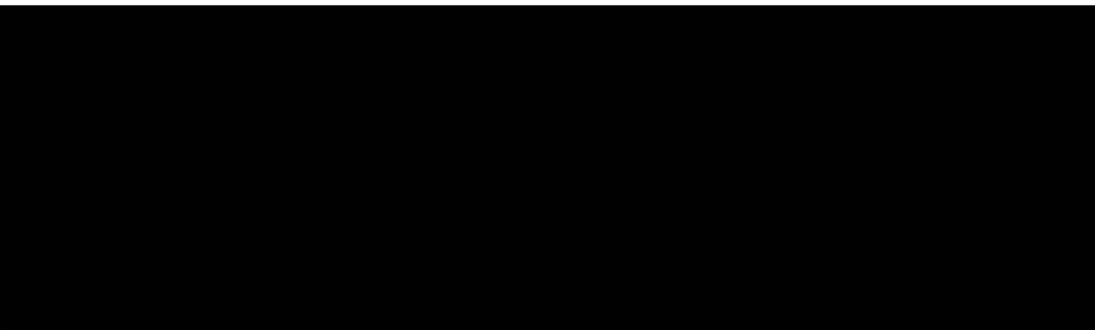


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ROUTINE MEA BRIEF.



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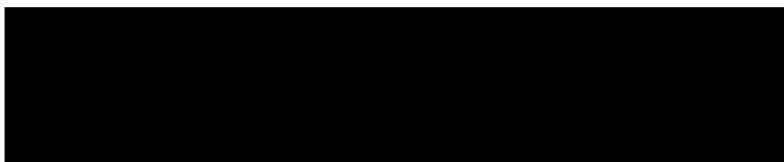
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MIDDLE EAST/AFRICA BRIEF OCPAS MEA 83-233 FOR 2 DECEMBER 1983.

FROM: DDI/D/CPAS

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1. NEPAL-US: KING'S VISIT



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1. NEPAL-US: KING'S VISIT

KING BIRENDRA IS VISITING WASHINGTON DURING THE WEEK OF 5 DECEMBER HOPING TO SECURE A CLEAR ENDORSEMENT FOR HIS PROPOSAL TO HAVE NEPAL DECLARED A ZONE OF PEACE AND TO OBTAIN SOME INCREASE IN ECONOMIC AND SECURITY ASSISTANCE.

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THE KING BELIEVES US SUPPORT FOR HIS PLAN WOULD HELP STRENGTHEN NEPAL'S NEUTRALITY AS A BUFFER BETWEEN INDIA AND CHINA. HE INTENDS TO REQUEST MORE ECONOMIC AID, INCLUDING SUPPORT FOR CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF NEPAL'S HYDROELECTRIC POWER. [REDACTED]

//BIRENDRA ALSO WILL SEEK APPROVAL FOR HIS EFFORTS TO LIBERALIZE SOME ASPECTS OF THE FEUDAL POLITICAL SYSTEM. [REDACTED]

//THE NEPALESE LEADER FEARS THAT INDIA--WHICH HE VIEWS AS A SOVIET SURROGATE--WILL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ANY POLITICAL UNREST TO OVERWHELM NEPAL AS IT PREVIOUSLY HAS DONE IN SIKKIM AND BHUTAN. [REDACTED]

COMMENT: THE KING REMAINS THE FINAL AUTHORITY IN NEPAL AND FACES ONLY WEAK AND DIVIDED OPPOSITION. THE POLITICAL REFORMS THAT HE HAS INTRODUCED IN RECENT YEARS HAVE BEEN LARGELY COSMETIC. HIS LIBERALIZING INSTINCTS ARE OFFSET BY A TENDENCY--REINFORCED BY CONSERVATIVE MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY AND PALACE STAFF--TO PRESERVE THE POWER OF THE MONARCHY. [REDACTED]

BIRENDRA'S INITIATIVE TO HAVE NEPAL DECLARED AN INTERNATIONAL ZONE OF PEACE IS LARGELY INTENDED AS A PSYCHOLOGICAL DEFENSE AGAINST INDIA. [REDACTED]

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