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219

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Wednesday 18 January 1978

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State Dept. review completed

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Wednesday, 18 January 1978.

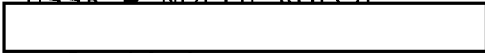
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PHILIPPINES: Elections Scheduled

[Redacted] Philippine President Marcos expects that the election of an interim legislative assembly, which he has scheduled for 2 April, will provide his regime with a capstone of political legitimacy.

25X1 [] The move is another cautious step toward "normalizing" the political process--a politically astute effort to appear responsive to the public's concern for a return to representative government. Marcos also hopes that by setting a political campaign in motion now, he will be able to mitigate pressures on human rights questions.

25X1 [] His most pressing problem will be the need to devise campaign rules and an election format that will allow opposition political groups to participate, while at the same time ensuring that his supporters retain control over the newly elected national assembly. Marcos in any event will retain the power to issue presidential decrees overriding the assembly.

25X1 [] the President may require all cabinet members to run for a legislative seat, even those who have never run for office before. Some reports suggest that he will publicly support them in their campaign but at the last minute will quietly pull the rug out from under several of them. This would enable Marcos both to reorganize his cabinet and to demonstrate the "freedom" with which the election was conducted.//

25X1 [] Marcos may also decide to hold the election on a regional basis rather than in smaller electoral districts, where opponents from pre-martial law days still retain pockets of considerable strength. He might allow some relatively weak antiregime spokesmen to be elected. The political opposition remains fragmented at the national level, however, and even leading figures like former President Macapagal have all but lost their following. []

PORTUGAL: Possible Troop Reductions

25X1 [] //Portugal may be considering disbanding its elite airborne unit because the Air Force lacks funds and modern equipment, []
The move would reflect increasing dissatisfaction in the armed forces with the level of military aid provided thus far by the NATO allies. It may also be part of an effort to press NATO members to act more quickly on Lisbon's request for military equipment.//

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] //Officially a part of the Air Force, the airborne unit has had uneven relations with other units in the service, which see the paratroop unit as an expensive problem-child competing for limited Air Force funds. During a recent joint exercise, some paratroop officers reportedly were disturbed by what they saw as discriminatory treatment by regular Air Force commanders.//

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[REDACTED] //In recent months, Air Force spokesmen have said that unless assistance is forthcoming they will have to take determined steps to keep their key forces operational, including seeking aid outside the alliance. The Portuguese may use a visit to Israel by an Air Force delegation, scheduled for later this month, as part of their campaign to put pressure on their allies. The delegation is ostensibly making the trip only to observe Israeli units and equipment and possibly to discuss aspects of the two countries' military relations. [REDACTED]

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TURKEY: Ecevit Government Approved

[REDACTED] //Prime Minister Ecevit won a vote of confidence yesterday in the Turkish National Assembly. His first priority appears to be resuming negotiations on Cyprus by offering new initiatives. He also hopes to meet with Greek Prime Minister Caramanlis, both to discuss bilateral issues and to press for more direct Greek involvement in the Cyprus negotiations.//

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[REDACTED] Ecevit's informal coalition held firm yesterday, polling 229 votes, three more than a majority. The opposition, led by ex-Prime Minister Demirel, mustered 218 ballots against the new government's program.

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[REDACTED]

25X1

25X1 [redacted]

25X1 [redacted] //Ecevit plans to be his own foreign minister and has apparently won support from his coalition for his foreign policy. His program calls for maintaining good relations with all countries and makes a point of the need for cooperation with Turkey's neighbors, particularly Greece and Cyprus. His initiatives on the Cyprus problem are likely to strike a responsive chord at home; Turkish politicians believe that some kind of movement on this issue is essential if Turkey is to solve other international difficulties.//

25X1 [redacted] //The new Prime Minister may have somewhat less flexibility in dealing with domestic policy. Although there is recognition within his coalition of the need to implement austerity measures and eliminate political violence, the methods for meeting these needs remain vague, and Ecevit is certain to hear many different opinions from his colleagues.// [redacted]

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25X1 [redacted] FRANCE: Alleged Electoral Fraud

25X1 [redacted] *In the first major scandal of the French election campaign, the Socialist and Communist Parties have charged that the governing coalition is manipulating the votes of newly enfranchised French citizens abroad to its own advantage in electoral districts where the races are close. The governing coalition has accused the opposition of doing the same thing but has offered no proof. Should the ruling parties win a narrow victory in March by virtue of such tactics--coming on top of a more general and longstanding gerrymandering of electoral districts--the Left's frustration and bitterness are likely to become acute.*

25X1 [redacted] A new law, passed last June by an indifferent and half-empty French National Assembly, provides that French voters living overseas can register to vote by proxy in any metropolitan district of more than 30,000 inhabitants, provided the number of such registrations is not more than 2 percent of the total in that district. Before passage of the law, voting requirements were so restrictive that scarcely 15 percent of the 700,000 to

850,000 eligible overseas voters were able to vote. The proxies are turned in to overseas consulates and embassies and sent by diplomatic pouch to the voting district.

25X1 [] Politicians were alerted when 1,200 expatriate French citizens living in the Ivory Coast registered to vote in the same constituency of the southern town of Montpellier, a district in which the race appears very close and in which the expatriate vote will be crucial. Suspicion increased when 35 French citizens living in Brazil opted to vote in an obscure Paris suburban constituency, French citizens in Austria chose the 11th district of Paris, and a satirical weekly published a telegram from the French Ambassador in Gabon announcing the dispatch to Paris of 1,650 blank proxies--presumably to be distributed wherever the governing coalition is most in need.

25X1 [] Inquiries have been launched in Gabon, Ivory Coast, Brazil, and Austria, and a court in Montpellier is looking into the case there. In some municipalities, leftist officials have rejected overseas registrations, leading to charges and countercharges. The government admits that there have been irregularities in the Gabon case, but otherwise has defended its position.

25X1 [] The opposition says it has considerable evidence of fraud that it will make available to the courts. It can be expected to make the most of this as a campaign issue and also to contest final election results in some districts in an effort to force a new ballot.

25X1 [] The overseas vote, if judiciously distributed in contests that are decided by a comparatively small number of votes, could be crucial to the defeat or victory of quite a few deputies and might even affect the overall outcome of the election. There are 27 electoral districts in which victory was won in 1973 by less than 500 votes.

25X1 [] The Socialist-leaning weekly *Le Nouvel Observateur* has asserted that a shortage of 30,000 votes in the wrong places cost the governing majority some 26 deputy seats in 1973 and that the majority is determined to rectify that situation by "dosing" certain districts. The Socialists maintain that seven out of 10 overseas voters would vote for the governing coalition, a percentage that explains the government's zeal--not

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illegal in itself--in trying to get out the expatriate vote.

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USSR: Meat Shortages Persist

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[redacted] A recent edition of *Pravda* published a letter from a chemical worker in Ryazan who complained of being able to buy only fatty pork in local stores. He offered several reasons for this situation--rising incomes, fixed state retail prices, and the poor 1975 grain harvest.

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[redacted] One of the letter-writer's proposed solutions was to encourage expanded output by private farms in suburban as well as rural areas. Because of restrictive official policies in recent years, meat output by private farms has leveled off, declining as a share of the total output from 35 percent in 1970 to 30 percent in 1976. The *Pravda* editors asked readers to offer their own ideas on this "very important problem."

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25X1 [] Soviet industrial meat output during the first 11 months of last year was about 10 percent greater than during the comparable period in 1976 but still below output in 1974 and 1975. Taking into consideration the rising population and incomes as well as the generally greater expectations of the Soviet people, the average consumer probably considers the meat situation to be no better now than at the beginning of the decade. The *Pravda* series probably is an attempt by the leadership to reassure the public that it recognizes the problem and to publicize the fact that it is not a local, easily correctable phenomenon. [] 25X1

NIGERIA: Executive Presidency

25X1 [] *Nigeria's civilian constituent assembly, which is reviewing a draft constitution in preparation for a return to civilian government next year, approved a key constitutional provision last week for a strong executive presidency. The speedy action clears the way for the assembly to tackle other controversial issues.*

25X1 [] Delegates from the Muslim north, which dominated Nigeria's first civilian government, were nearly evenly divided on the question of an executive presidency. Those opposed lobbied strongly for a return to the parliamentary system, under which the more populous north had important political advantages. The military government strongly backs the executive presidency as a way of dealing more effectively with Nigerian regional, tribal, and religious differences that contributed to the collapse of civilian rule in 1966.

25X1 [] Some Muslim delegates are also grumbling over procedural aspects of the assembly debate that they say favor the south and put them at a disadvantage. As the assembly proceeds, there may well be additional public complaints by delegates that could ultimately mar the acceptability of a new constitution.

25X1 [] The assembly also lowered the age limit for presidential candidates to 35, which could pave the way for young members of the military regime--such as Brigadier Yar' Adua, the number-two man and a northern--to run for the office. Head of

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State Obasanjo, a southerner with no professed civilian political ambitions, has publicly said that no members of the regime will play a part in a future civilian government, but he may be unable to enforce the restriction.

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[redacted] Muslim unhappiness with the constitution could become a serious problem. The next test for Muslim interests is the emotional issue of the draft's provision for a federal Islamic court of appeals. Non-Muslim southerners and minority tribesmen in the north say this proposal will give undue privileges to Muslims. Other major issues to be addressed have no clear-cut regional connotations; they include calls for stronger guarantees of press freedom and for socialist political and economic guidelines.

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[redacted] Formal political activity, now banned by the government, is to be resumed this October, when the assembly is scheduled to complete its review of the constitution. The assembly, which includes numerous aspiring politicians, appears to be rushing its work in the hope that the government will lift the ban ahead of time to permit political parties to be organized in preparation for the series of elections that are supposed to lead to the installation of a civilian government in October 1979.

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NAMIBIA: Position on Elections

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[redacted] //A senior official in South Africa's Foreign Ministry told Ambassador Bowdler this week that Prime Minister Vorster probably will unilaterally announce the date for a pre-independence election for a constituent assembly in Namibia at the end of the month if the five-power Western contact group fails to work out a settlement by then.//

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[redacted] //The contact group had hoped to bring representatives of South Africa and the South-West Africa Peoples Organization to New York this month for another round of talks on a pre-independence program for Namibia, but so far it has not been able to find a date acceptable to both sides.//

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[redacted] //According to the Ambassador, Vorster may have promised white Namibian political leaders or his cabinet that

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he would announce the election date during a no-confidence debate scheduled to begin in parliament on 30 January. He will probably postpone a final decision on an announcement until he meets with his cabinet next Tuesday.//

25X1 [redacted] //The decision will be influenced by a number of factors:

- Whether South Africa and SWAPO can agree on dates for further talks.
- The intensity of proposed Western demarches to persuade South Africa not to announce an election date.
- How the two parties react if the contact group makes public its own proposals for a peaceful settlement in Namibia.//

25X1 [redacted] //If Vorster carries out his threat to announce an election date, SWAPO will probably refuse any further participation in the negotiating effort. [redacted] 25X1

NICARAGUA: Effects of Chamorro's Death

25X1 [redacted] //Order has returned to Managua, but the long-term effects of the assassination of Nicaraguan newspaper editor Pedro Joaquín Chamorro will depend on who is finally charged with hiring the killers and how much of the charge the public believes. President Somoza probably has been weakened, but he remains in full control of the government.//

25X1 [redacted] //Perhaps reacting to skepticism about the government's willingness to investigate thoroughly, Somoza said in a news conference on Monday that he would hire international investigators to help solve the crime if necessary.//

25X1 [redacted] //Although Chamorro's own political following was quite small, his murder appears to have prompted larger opposition groups to pull back from plans for a "dialogue" with the government. The assassination, however, has caused businessmen--until now largely on the political sidelines--and others to renew their call for talks on the causes of violence and the

means of democratizing the political system. With this additional support, the opposition is not likely to pass up its best opportunity yet to press Somoza for concessions.//

25X1 [redacted] //Leftist guerrillas, who have gained notoriety in recent months by staging a series of attacks within Nicaragua, may well keep up their pressure in hopes of further weakening the Somoza government. We believe that Somoza, facing a somewhat greater potential for political strife, will be receptive to renewed efforts to get the dialogue back on track. [redacted] 25X1

25X1 [redacted]

BRIEFS

France

25X1 [redacted] Excerpts from a public opinion poll published yesterday show the French left holding fairly steady at 51 percent and the governing coalition dropping 3 points to 44 percent, the lowest score it has polled in about a year.

25X1 [redacted] Among the leftist parties, the Socialists and Left Radicals had 28 percent, the Communists 21, and the extreme left 2. On the center-right, the Gaullists won 21 points, the Giscardians 16, and the Radicals and Centrists 7. About 5 percent of the vote went to the ecologists and other splinter groups. As usual, undecided voters, about 20 percent of the electorate, were not considered in the poll.

25X1 [redacted] Further analysis of the poll must await more complete data, but the apparent slump in the governing coalition's fortunes may mean that the months of bickering, coupled with the electorate's strong desire for change, are taking their toll. Divisions within the left are even more profound, of course, but this has apparently not seriously discouraged voters who want new faces and see the left as the only means of obtaining social and economic change. [redacted] 25X1

USSR - North Korea

25X1 [redacted] Moscow radio announced on Monday that a party and government delegation headed by Dinmukhamed Kunayev had departed

Moscow for an "official, friendly" visit to North Korea. Kunayev is the party boss in Kazakhstan and is a member of the Supreme Soviet Presidium and the Politburo.

25X1 [redacted] Relations between Moscow and Pyongyang have been very cool in recent years. Kunayev will be the first Politburo member to visit the North Korean capital since Deputy Premier Mazurov traveled there in 1971. [redacted]

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Palestinians

25X1 [redacted] Palestinian West Bank leaders on Monday issued a statement that strongly reiterates their opposition to Israeli Prime Minister Begin's offer of limited self-rule for the occupied territories. The declaration affirms that the Palestine Liberation Organization is the only body authorized to represent the Palestinian people during the negotiating process. It also calls for self-determination, the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, and total Israeli withdrawal.

25X1 [redacted] The statement underscores the West Bank Palestinians' goal of ending Israel's military occupation and returning all the occupied territories to Arab control. The declaration was signed by the mayors of all major West Bank communities, including well-known moderates such as Ilyas Frayj of Bethlehem.

PLO officials will cite the statement as further evidence of the need for a clear PLO role in determining the future of the occupied territories. [redacted]

Ghana

25X1 [redacted] University students clashed with police in Accra last Friday on the sixth anniversary of the coup that brought General Acheampong to power. Students also demonstrated in two other cities. The students were protesting Acheampong's mismanagement of the economy and his campaign to become president of an elected, non-party "union" government he has promised by July 1979.

25X1 [redacted] Further student demonstrations are likely. The students have been angered by the forceful police action in Accra and by efforts of thugs belonging to a pro-Acheampong leftist group to hunt down protesters.

25X1 [redacted] Last spring, student unrest followed by strikes by professional groups led to Acheampong's promise to restore constitutional rule--a move that eased dissent and divided his opponents. The US Embassy in Accra does not believe the students are now strong enough to threaten the regime or Acheampong's prospects for obtaining popular endorsement of his concept of union government in a national referendum scheduled for March.

Argentina-Chile

25X1 [redacted] Argentine President Videla has agreed to meet with Chilean President Pinochet tomorrow in the western Argentine city of Mendoza to explore ways to end the impasse in efforts to resolve the Beagle Channel dispute. Both sides seem disposed to accept a cooling-off period, but there are formidable roadblocks to early resolution of the problem.

25X1 [redacted] The Argentines evidently are responding to a Chilean overture delivered by a special envoy of Pinochet's over the weekend. Despite effort to resume mediation, Argentina apparently intends to reject an arbitration award in Chile's favor by the International Court of Justice. Unless the two sides can find some room for accommodation, relations are likely to deteriorate further. [redacted]

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