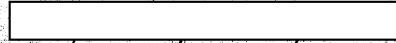


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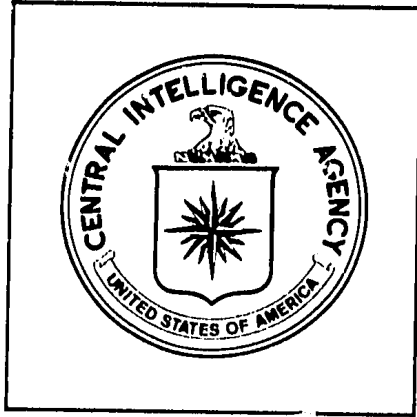
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STAFF NOTES:

Middle East Africa South Asia

DIA andDOS review(s) completed.

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MIDDLE EAST - AFRICA - SOUTH ASIA

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Middle East - Africa Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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Syria

Brotherly Split

25X1 President Asad and his brother Rifaat, who commands the elite units around Damascus, have allegedly had a falling out. [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] Asad dismissed his brother from his command in early December [redacted] Rifaat has recently been trying to interest some suspected anti-regime officers in coup plans. Rifaat is also said to have publicly criticized both Asad and Minister of Defense Talas, a long-time antagonist. 25X1

25X1 The rift [redacted] stems from a dispute over the sale of housing plots by some of Rifaat's subordinates. [redacted] 25X1

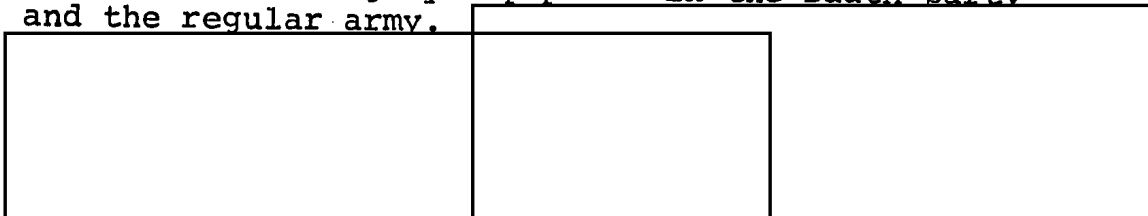
25X1 [redacted] the President reprimanded Rifaat in December for using his troops to drive some army units off land he coveted. Following the reprimand, Asad reportedly agreed to accept Rifaat's angry offer to resign.

This would not be the first time Asad has had to discipline Rifaat for high-handedness. A few years ago, Asad was forced to admonish Rifaat after he and some of his men tore up the office of the then prime minister, who had protested Rifaat's unauthorized commandeering of some Soviet military equipment.

In the latest instance, however, it would not be out of character for Asad and Rifaat to have staged a dispute in an attempt to smoke out opposition elements in the army. They have used this tactic before.

Even if there has been a split between the two brothers, it is doubtful that Rifaat could pull off a coup. He is highly unpopular in the Baath party and the regular army. [redacted] 25X1

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Morocco-Spain

*Rabat Continues Campaign Against
Spanish Territorial Holdings*

With interest in the Spanish Sahara issue diminishing now that it has been referred to the International Court of Justice, Morocco has made a new bid to keep world and domestic attention focused on Spain's African territories.

Late last month, Rabat made a formal demarche to the UN Committee on Decolonization requesting an examination of the status of the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. The Moroccans followed with a press campaign that played up the demarche. Prime Minister Laraki kept up the pace in a press conference last week by reiterating calls for the return of the two enclaves and two off-shore rocks in the Mediterranean, as well as Spanish Sahara.

The enclave issue will help the King continue to rally public opinion and to enhance his prestige. His success in forcing action on the decolonization of Spanish Sahara was one of the most popular actions of his reign, but it will be another month before the World Court even examines that problem.

Favorable articles by the opposition press indicate that the King's latest effort has succeeded in creating a new wave of anti-colonialist jingoism. This should continue to distract attention from middle-class and liberal grievances and provide an outlet for the energies of disaffected military officers.

The Moroccan action on the enclaves provoked surprise, alarm, and near unanimous indignation in Spanish news media and official circles. Spanish military contacts of the US attaches in Madrid immediately stressed that although Spain intends to withdraw from the Sahara, it will never withdraw from the enclaves.

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Spanish Foreign Minister Cortina held an urgent high-level meeting on the Sahara question and North Africa, but there has been no indication of any decision.

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The Spanish legislature introduced an informal resolution affirming Spain's "adhesion" to Ceuta and Melilla. It linked this to an appeal for the restoration to Spain of the "Spanish city" of Gibraltar, a reminder that the British have not complied with UN resolutions to decolonize Gibraltar.

Some Spanish newspapers have characterized the Moroccan move as an effort by Hassan to improve a deteriorating domestic situation. One prominent Madrid newspaper, nonetheless, admitted that Morocco has raised the issue at a good psychological moment in view of the third world domination of the UN and its support for decolonization.

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Guinea - Arab States

Bauxite Consortium Being Formed

Guinea and a group of Arab states have taken steps toward establishing a \$2 billion bauxite mining consortium. According to reports published in Guinea, the Arab states involved are Kuwait, Egypt, Libya, and the United Arab Emirates. Other reports have included Saudi Arabia and possibly Algeria.

The consortium is to exploit reserves in northwest Guinea estimated at 500 million tons. Plans call for annual production of 9 million tons of bauxite, 5 million of which is to be exported as ore. The rest will be converted to alumina--an intermediate product in the manufacture of aluminum --at a planned refinery in Guinea designed for a 2-million ton capacity. The consortium plans to commission a feasibility study and to subcontract design work, possibly to a US firm.

The consortium scheme probably is an effort by the Arabs to line up a supply of bauxite for plants in their countries. Egypt has almost completed an alumina producing plant, and Saudi Arabia is known to have plans for an aluminum smelter.

Guinea is already a major bauxite producer with over one-fifth of the world's reserves. In 1973, Guinea's bauxite output was 2.7 million tons.

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Angola

Agostinho Neto and the MPLA

Agostinho Neto, leader of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, returned to Luanda on February 4 after 14 years of exile. Neto probably had mixed feelings about his return. In the late 1960s, when he was the unchallenged head of what was then the largest and most active of the three nationalist groups in Angola, Neto probably envisioned his return would be that of leader of an independent Angolan government. Now, however, he must share the political arena with his longtime rival--Jonas Savimbi and Holden Roberto--and his organization has had to settle for an equal share of the places in the new transitional government.

The Popular Movement began its insurgent activity in 1961 in northern Angola from bases in Congo (Brazzaville), but did not become a significant military threat until late in the decade after it had shifted its headquarters to Zambia and was able to make substantial advances into eastern Angola. A strong Portuguese reaction in the early 1970s, however, inflicted serious losses on the organization. The setback sparked a struggle for leadership between Neto, who was following a policy of emphasizing political organizing, and Daniel Chipenda, the Popular Movement's vice-president and leading military figure, who argued for greater emphasis on the military struggle. The conflict between the two leaders paralyzed the movement and finally culminated in Chipenda bolting the party in 1973, taking several thousand well-trained troops with him.

Neto's concentration on political organizing was not wasted, however. The Popular Movement currently enjoys strong support from labor unions and other urban elements, particularly in Luanda, the capital. As a poet and physician, Neto has also long enjoyed wide support among Angola's predominantly

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white class of intellectuals and professionals, who were careful to hide their sympathies during the Salazar and Caetano regimes. These sympathizers comprise an important part of the Angolan civil service and are apparently prepared to use their positions to boost Neto. Many journalists also support the Popular Movement, an important factor now that it holds the information portfolio in the transitional government.

Nevertheless, the Popular Movement has to exercise caution in exploiting such political assets. Holden Roberto's National Front for the Liberation of Angola already has accused it of censoring communiques put out by the Front. In reprisal, Front members entered the government-run radio station in late January and destroyed some equipment. Subsequently, they kidnapped the station's deputy director and beat him badly before releasing him. The Popular Movement's strength in the labor movement will be challenged by Savimbi's National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, which holds the labor portfolio in the transitional government.

Neto will be working under several other handicaps. His avowed Marxism and close relations with the Soviet Union--the Popular Movement's principal supplier during the insurgency--is likely to limit his general appeal throughout Angola. He also must still reckon with Chipenda, who continues to campaign for Neto's ouster, particularly in eastern Angola. With 2,000-3,000 well-trained followers, Chipenda will undoubtedly try to hamper Neto's political efforts there. Moreover, Savimbi and Roberto believe that Chipenda eventually must be allowed to participate in the political process, although not as the leader of a separate nationalist organization. Under the independence accord signed with Portugal, political legitimacy is reserved to the three existing groups.

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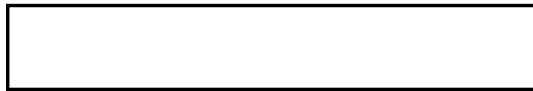
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More important, perhaps, is the fact that the Popular Movement has been unable to gain much political momentum at the grass roots level. Its two rivals began rallying their old supporters and campaigning for new ones within Angola even before the independence accord was negotiated. The Popular Movement was bogged down by a lack of logistical capability and poor internal organization. As a result, Neto has been placed on the defensive and may have some trouble catching up, particularly in organizing support outside Luanda.

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Afghanistan

Assessment of the Daoud Regime

President Daoud consolidated his power at home last year and strengthened Afghanistan's relations with all nearby countries except Pakistan, according to a recent assessment by the US embassy in Kabul.

The 65-year-old president now appears to have no serious opposition anywhere in the country. There has been little recent evidence of disaffection in the military; most officers admire Daoud for the improvements he wrought in the status and capabilities of the armed forces between the 1930s and 1960s, when he was a leading officer and later defense minister and prime minister. Military backing for Daoud is further enhanced by the influence wielded in the armed forces by officers belonging to his clan and tribal groups. Army officers played a central role in the coup that restored Daoud to power in mid-1973.

Daoud's formidable secret police organization and informer network also play an important part in helping maintain the regime in power. Additionally, Daoud appears to have succeeded in maneuvering the "central committee" into a minor role. This quasi-governmental body, which is dominated by young leftist military officers, was influential during the months immediately after the 1973 coup. In general, Daoud, a nationalist, has managed to weaken leftists in the regime and to intimidate Islamic conservatives who do not share his zeal for moving the extremely backward country down the road toward modernization. Some tribal groups and commercial interests may not be entirely happy with Daoud's rule, but none seem to pose any serious threat.

The embassy believes Daoud's political future will depend to a great extent on whether his regime can cope effectively with the pressures of world inflation and shortages, which are just beginning to affect Afghanistan. We believe the regime's

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readiness to use force and, if necessary, terror against its opponents could enable it to stay in power for some time even if the economic situation worsens.

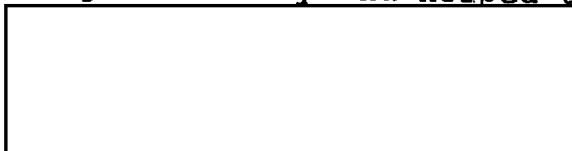
Daoud has promised but not yet delivered a new constitution. More importantly, he has made no arrangements for a transfer of power should he die or become incapacitated. Such a development might well lead to a full takeover by the Soviet-influenced army, perhaps preceded by a period of severe turmoil.

In foreign affairs, the Daoud government enjoyed a number of successes in 1974. It continued to receive extensive Soviet military and economic aid, but managed to avoid becoming totally Soviet-dominated, in part by strengthening economic and diplomatic ties elsewhere. In neighboring Iran, the Shah's initial distrust of the Daoud regime eased, and Tehran appears to have promised substantial economic aid. Daoud also obtained pledges of aid from Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and perhaps Kuwait. Egypt and India launched modest military training programs for Afghan military personnel. The Chinese promised some new economic aid. Friendly relations and aid ties were also maintained with the US.

Relations with neighboring Pakistan remained bad, with little letup in exchanges of vitriolic propaganda. After he took power in 1973, Daoud sharply stepped up agitation on Afghanistan's longstanding dispute with Pakistan over the status of Pakistan's two frontier provinces. The Pakistanis are also uncomfortable about the Daoud regime's ties with the Indians and Soviets.

Daoud has avoided a showdown with Islamabad, however. He knows Pakistan's army is much stronger than Afghanistan's. He well remembers that Pakistani-Afghan friction over the frontier issue in the early 1960s led to a border closing that disrupted the Afghan economy and helped topple his first government.

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