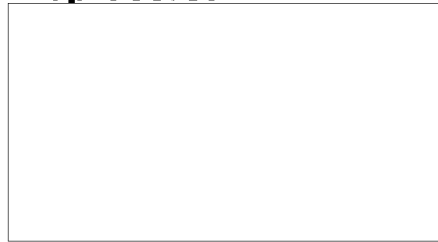




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OCPAS/CIG

CY# 285

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National Intelligence Daily

Monday
9 April 1984

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CPAS NID 84-083.IX

9 April 1984

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USSR-US:

Chernenko on Bilateral Relations

General Secretary Chernenko's interview in Pravda today is notably more critical of the US and more pessimistic on the prospects for US-Soviet relations than his speech on 2 March.



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The Soviet leader accuses the US of torpedoing the START and INF talks and states that contacts with Washington show no positive changes in the US position on these issues. He says "measures" by the US and its allies to restore the situation existing before the start of INF deployments by the US are the "real road" to resuming talks.



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Chernenko reviews the issues he had cited in his speech in March as offering the possibility of a breakthrough in US-Soviet relations. He claims that President Reagan recently stated that the US is beginning a broad program of arms deployment in space and has no intention of reaching an agreement with the USSR on this issue.



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The General Secretary notes that the US has not yet tabled a treaty to ban chemical weapons and is accelerating production and deployment of them. He also cites the lack of US movement on ratifying the Threshold Test Ban Treaty, the Peaceful Nuclear Explosions Treaty, and a comprehensive test ban treaty. He accuses the US of raising the issue of verification "whenever it does not want an agreement."



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Comment: The Soviet leader's interview today comes closer than his earlier speech to specifying that the US must withdraw its missiles for the Soviets to agree to resume the Geneva talks. In March his speech had implied he might be more flexible on this than Andropov.



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Chernenko may be genuinely disappointed that his earlier speech did not bring forth more concessions from the US. In addition, with the Central Committee plenum beginning this week, he may have found it expedient to use language more akin to that in statements by Foreign Minister Gromyko and Defense Minister Ustinov.



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USSR:

Meetings of Leadership

The Central Committee plenum and the Supreme Soviet session this week will provide indications of the extent of General Secretary Chernenko's success in consolidating his power, amid signs of the increased influence of Foreign Minister Gromyko and some others. [Redacted]

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The plenum, which is to begin today or tomorrow, and the Supreme Soviet session on Wednesday are to deal primarily with personnel matters rather than policy questions. Most Soviet officials say that the Supreme Soviet will approve Chernenko as president and that Tikhonov will remain as premier. [Redacted]

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Several Soviet sources have reported that party secretary Gorbachev will assume Chernenko's old post as chairman of one of the two Supreme Soviet foreign affairs commissions along with the ideological portfolio in the party Secretariat. Rumors are circulating that KGB chief Chebrikov may be made a full member of the Politburo. [Redacted]

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Comment: Chernenko's anticipated election as president, combined with his assumption of the chairmanship of the Defense Council, would add to his authority. Chernenko, however, probably will have to share power more than his predecessor did with Gromyko, Defense Minister Ustinov, and Gorbachev. [Redacted]

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Gromyko's increased influence has been acknowledged by several Soviet officials. He has participated in all of Chernenko's meetings with foreign heads of state since Andropov's funeral, and he apparently has become the main formulator of foreign policy. Gorbachev also has gained additional power since Andropov's death, and his position may be strengthened at the meetings. [Redacted]

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Chernenko probably has persuaded Tikhonov, his closest ally, not to retire. If Chebrikov is promoted, it would indicate the continued strength of the KGB and of Gorbachev and others who were allied with Andropov in the Politburo. [Redacted]

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KUWAIT-US:

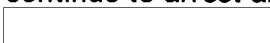
Defense Minister's Concerns

Defense Minister Salim—who arrives in Washington today—is pleased by the public support for the sentences of those responsible for the bombings in December, but he is worried about the increased likelihood of an Iranian military strike or terrorist attack. 

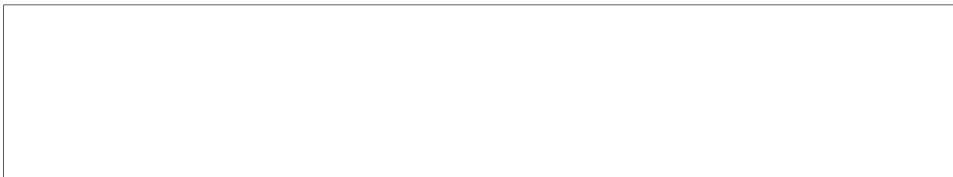
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Kuwait has received several threats since the sentences were announced two weeks ago. Iran's Ayatollah Montazeri—Ayatollah Khomeini's probable successor—expressed "regret and surprise" at Kuwait's siding with the "foreign infidel" against Islam. In addition, a Tehran-backed Islamic student group has threatened to bomb the Amir's palace, government buildings, and foreign embassies if all Muslim prisoners are not released. 


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US Embassy sources report that security around key installations remains tight at the port of Shuwaybah—a target of the bombings in December—and its associated petrochemical complex, and electric power and desalination plants. Restrictions on visas and travel imposed after the bombings remain in effect. Security authorities continue to arrest and deport foreigners on a wide range of charges. 


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Comment: During his visit, Salim will raise the subject of Western arms sales to Iran, and he will seek US support for ending the war. Like other Kuwaiti officials, Salim believes the US can influence both issues. 

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Salim prides himself on his diplomatic skills rather than his military expertise, and he will see his visit as an opportunity to ease bilateral tensions that were aggravated by Kuwait's rejection of the US Ambassador-designate last summer. Salim also will probe US willingness to sell Kuwait advanced fighter aircraft. He will be reluctant, however, to discuss military cooperation, contingency planning, or arrangements for the storage of military equipment. 

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POLAND:

Church-State Relations

The church and the government have temporarily resolved the dispute over crucifixes at the agricultural school south of Warsaw, but the decision by the regime not to proceed with legislation granting the church legal status is likely to complicate the resolution of other issues. [Redacted]

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A senior church official told US Embassy officers that the compromise on the crucifix issue might serve as a national model for resolving the problem. According to Western press reports, however, other church officials have said the return of the crosses would encourage students throughout Poland to display crucifixes in their schools. [Redacted]

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In addition to dropping its demand that students sign pledges to obey school authorities, the government will permit students to wear crosses on their clothing and allow crosses in the school library and dormitories. [Redacted]

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The parliament on Friday passed a general bill under which the church can create a private foundation to provide funds to Polish agriculture. Tough negotiations lie ahead on the specific regulations for the foundation, according to church spokesmen. Meanwhile, a senior church official told US Embassy officers that the government has indefinitely shelved the long-anticipated legislation on the church's legal status, because the regime lacks the will to overcome opposition in its ranks. [Redacted]

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Comment: Resolution of the crucifix controversy indicates that senior government and church officials are intent on resolving minor conflicts. They probably will try to exert greater control over zealous local officials. Nevertheless, numerous contentious issues remain, some of which are likely to cause public controversy. [Redacted]

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The regime's decision not to proceed with the legislation defining the church's rights and obligations probably reflects its concern about possible criticism from domestic and Soviet hardliners, who would view it as a major concession. The decision, however, probably will delay agreement on the exchange of diplomatic representatives and other issues between the Vatican and Poland. [Redacted]

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CHINA-US: Progress on Joint Venture

China and a US firm signed financial agreements last week that could lead to the largest Chinese joint venture with a foreign country to date. The Bank of China will guarantee loans obtained by Occidental Petroleum to develop the world's largest open-pit coal mine at Pingshuo in Shanxi Province. A final operating agreement reportedly will be signed in China at the same time as President Reagan's trip later this month. The mine, which could begin partial production in 1986, is expected to produce 15 million tons of coal per year, largely for export markets. [redacted]

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Comment: Occidental's \$360 million share of the \$600 million proposed project dwarfs the \$85 million US firms now hold in Chinese joint ventures. Pingshuo is the first joint venture to have foreign-partner loans underwritten by the Chinese. Delays in port expansions and a fall in world coal prices last year led Occidental to urge the Chinese to secure its loans and guarantee a reasonable profit. Negotiations had stalled until Premier Zhao, a longtime supporter of the project, intervened early this year. [redacted]

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CAMEROON: Attempted Coup Suppressed

President Biya will need to reconstruct a workable ethnic and regional balance in his government after having put down the attempted coup. He announced late Saturday that the 36-hour mutiny by his northern-dominated presidential guard had been crushed by paratroopers airlifted to the city. Biya was unharmed and troops loyal to him continued mopping-up operations in the capital yesterday. Reliable estimates of casualties and damage are not yet available, but no US citizens have been harmed and the capital is returning to normal. [redacted]

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Comment: Biya will have difficulty handling demands from fellow southerners that he deal harshly with northern mutineers without appearing to seek retribution against the Muslim north. Cameroonians throughout the country will profess support for Biya, but his position has been weakened. Loyalist southern officers now hold the balance of power, and at the least will be watching the President closely. They may demand greater participation in government decisions. [redacted]

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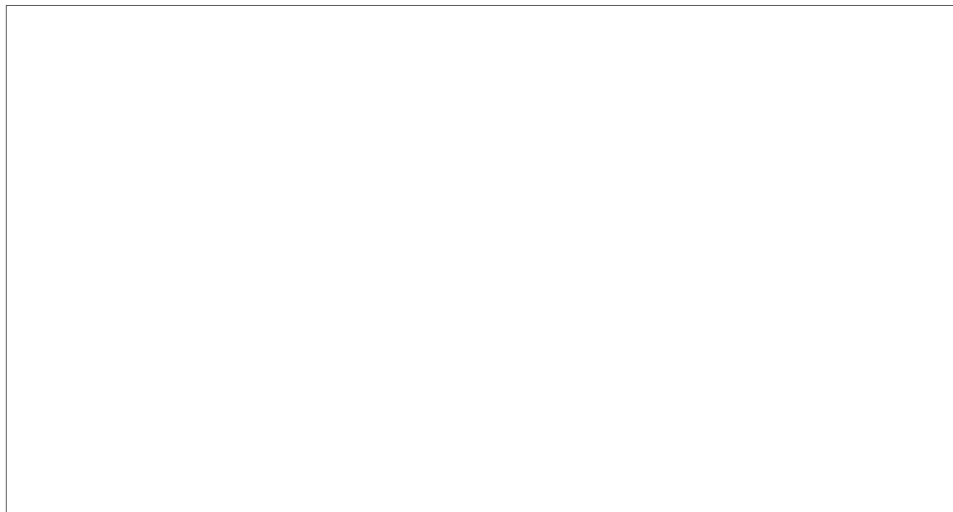
CHINA-VIETNAM: Clashes on Border

Hanoi claims that on Friday it repulsed an attack by several Chinese battalions after a three-hour fight. Beijing yesterday denied that Chinese troops had entered Vietnam but reported that artillery units continued shelling Vietnamese positions in retaliation for alleged violations of Chinese borders on Thursday and Friday. The US defense attache in Beijing reports that China's artillery attacks are intended mainly as retaliation for stepped-up Vietnamese military activity along the Thai-Kampuchean border. [Redacted]

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Comment: The Vietnamese claim of incursions by battalion-size Chinese units probably is an exaggeration, but sporadic small-unit skirmishes probably have occurred since the artillery exchanges increased last week. Chinese and Vietnamese units remain on alert, but there are no signs that either side is planning major hostilities. Although Vietnamese attacks along the Thai-Kampuchean border appear to have subsided, China probably will maintain pressure on Hanoi to demonstrate its support for Thailand and the resistance forces in Kampuchea. [Redacted]

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In Brief

Near East

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— **UN Security Council** to meet soon to consider six-month renewal of UN peacekeeping force in **Lebanon** . . . current mandate expires 19 April . . . Perez de Cuellar may suggest UN and Lebanese forces replace **Israeli** troops in Lebanon. [Redacted]

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— **Soviet** naval task group will begin five-day visit to **Libya** tomorrow . . . first visit by Soviet ships since July . . . public announcement and naming of commander unusual and underscore Moscow's willingness to show support for Qadhafi. [Redacted]

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Africa

— **Liberian** Head of State Doe has commuted death sentences of 10 of 13 coup plotters despite unanimous demand by ruling military council . . . Army commanders and public supported Doe's decision [Redacted]

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— **Nigeria's** military rulers deadlocked over issue of whether to punish former President Shagari . . . disagreement could provoke palace coup . . . also increasing potential for violence by southern Yoruba under northern-dominated regime. [Redacted]

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— **Zimbabwean** military will escort convoys of imported food through **Mozambique** . . . follows recent Mozambican insurgent attack on trucks transiting Mozambique . . . 800-1,000 Zimbabwean troops now in Mozambique to defend supply lines. [Redacted]

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Special Analysis

ROMANIA:

Ceausescu Under Pressure

President Ceausescu's domestic standing appears to have fallen to an alltime low as a result of deteriorating economic conditions. To counter his critics and protect his position, the President shuffled the party and state leadership late last month. The changes, however, are unlikely to lead to improvements in economic conditions. On the contrary, they could cause additional disaffection in the bureaucracy and dangerously erode Ceausescu's standing. [Redacted]

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Fuel shortages have been disrupting industry and transportation since January. Heavy winter snows and exceptionally cold weather severely affected economic activity, which already had been hit hard with import cuts, especially of energy. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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Following the second poor grain crop in three years, consumers apparently have less food. [Redacted] local governments are cutting rations of basic foodstuffs, and even bread is becoming scarce in some parts of the country. Officials visiting the West in recent months have said that workers have to wait in line for most foods, and they are spending much of the workday planning how to feed their families. [Redacted]

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These developments have eroded popular morale, although there has been little overt antigovernment activity. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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The President's Reaction

Ceausescu's decision to make changes in his leadership team suggests he may sense pressure building against him. The replacement of the Minister of Electric Power and the Minister of Agriculture and Food Industry appear intended to shift the blame for the increasing shortages of power and food and to show that remedial action is being taken. [Redacted]

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The new ministers, however, are undistinguished functionaries. They presumably were selected mainly for their loyalty to the President, and they probably will have little success in improving the performance of their ministries. [Redacted]

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At the party plenum late last month Ceausescu also made changes in the Secretariat, which implements policy. The changes apparently were designed to strengthen the grip of Ceausescu and his politically powerful wife. The plenum replaced the secretary in charge of foreign relations, added four new secretaries, and reportedly centralized the personnel selection process. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] Mrs. Ceausescu is believed to have engineered the selection of Secretary for Foreign Relations Stoian as a means of countering the authority and influence of Foreign Minister Andrei, whom she dislikes. The strong-willed Stoian reportedly has clashed frequently with the officials in the Foreign Ministry. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] party secretary Bobu, who is a close ally of Mrs. Ceausescu, has been given overall responsibility for cadre selection and party organization. This is first time in nearly a decade that a single individual has been allowed to control this powerful portfolio. Another crony of Mrs. Ceausescu reportedly has been put in charge of health, education, and social security. [Redacted]

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More Trouble Ahead

These changes have not been received well by the growing number of Ceausescu's critics. Some members of the Central Committee reportedly have said that the new party secretaries are the worst selections that could have been made. [Redacted]

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The concern and resentment of party members about the increasing influence of Ceausescu's family and his cronies were underscored by rumors that circulated at the plenum. Ceausescu's next move reportedly may be to name his son, Nicu, party secretary for military and security affairs. In addition, he may name one of Nicu's close friends as minister of interior. [Redacted]

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Despite his current problems, Ceausescu still wields considerable power through his control of the internal security apparatus. Nonetheless, continued economic decline—especially if combined with radical personnel moves that unsettle the party bureaucracy—could make him more vulnerable than at any previous point in his rule. [Redacted]

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