



Director of
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CIA LATE ITEM

LIBERIA: Apparent Coup

President Tolbert may have been killed last night in an apparently successful coup mounted by junior elements of his presidential guard led by a Sergeant Samuel Doe. In a radio broadcast, Doe justified his coup in terms of the previous regime's "rampant corruption."

Forces loyal to Tolbert for the most part appear to be in disarray.

Doe--apparently a tribal Liberian--has not clarified whether he intends to form a military government or hand over power to civilian opponents of Tolbert. He has announced, however, that he will stay in charge "until corruption is eliminated."

Several political prisoners reportedly have been released, including Gabriel Mathews, leader of the moderately leftist Progressive People's Party, who was arrested last month on charges of treason. He helped precipitate rice riots last April which nearly brought down the Tolbert regime.

Top military commanders and old guard politicians, such as Minister of Justice Chesson, who control police and paramilitary elements, reportedly are in hiding.

Liberian-US relations traditionally have been characterized by a "special relationship." We have no reports that US citizens or important US civil and military communications facilities in Liberia have been attacked. If leftist civilian opposition elements come to power or gain influential positions, however, Liberia may well end its close relationship with the US or at the least impose a monetary price tag on US facilities there.

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SITUATION REPORTS

IRAN

Since late March there reportedly have been several scuffles in the US Embassy compound between the hostages and their guards.

Iran-Iraq

Bani-Sadr's tough rhetoric on Iraq yesterday probably does not indicate that Iran is ready for a full-scale military conflict. He claimed that the Iranian military is ready for war, but he is well aware of the deficiencies of the Iranian armed forces. Tehran does not believe war with Iraq is necessary. Khomein and other Iranians believe the Iraqi regime will collapse from within and that Iran can help spur such a collapse best with propaganda and limited support to Shia dissidents.

The Soviets appear increasingly concerned about the deteriorating relations between Iran and Iraq. Moscow has cast Iraq in the role as the aggressor, citing Iranian reports that armed groups from Iraq had intruded

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into Iranian territory with the aim of overthrowing the government in Tehran. The Soviets, however, also have said that Iraq is reacting to Iranian attempts to export its revolution "into neighboring countries."

Soviet media have also voiced concern that the US is intent on setting Iran and Iraq against each other and suggested that Washington might use such a conflict as a pretext for military intervention in the Persian Gulf area.

Oil Imports

The reluctance of Japan and some West European nations to commit themselves on sanctions against Iran reflects in part their dependence on Iranian oil. Japan's oil purchases from Iran have been running well ahead of the 620,000 barrels per day limit set by Tokyo late last year. In January, Japan imported 17 percent of its crude from Iran.

While most West European countries have reduced their dependence on Iranian oil, West Germany is now importing 15 percent of its oil from Iran, compared with 11 percent in 1979. French dependence has been running at around 5 percent since the Iranian revolution, while Italy imported only about 2 percent of its oil from Iran last year.

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AFGHANISTAN-USSR

Moscow is apparently making no headway in its efforts to get government officials from the opposing Parchamist and Khalqi factions in Babrak's regime to work together on behalf of the "revolution." The split between the Parchamists and Khalqi officials is reportedly widening and impeding the government's ability to function. The Parchamist Minister of Planning, for example, will not return to Kabul from Moscow until a Khalqi rival is removed, and the Khalqi Minister of Interior refuses to work because he cannot get along with his Parchamist chief of police.

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BRIEFS AND COMMENTS

CHINA-USSR-US: Relations

Deng Xiaoping yesterday denounced Soviet foreign policy and expressed satisfaction with US-China relations while taking note of "our differences." []

In an interview with a US newsman on the day the Sino-Soviet treaty expired, Deng's criticism focused on Afghanistan. His comments appear intended in part to turn aside the vague offer made on Monday by the Soviets to reopen political or border negotiations. Although Deng did not rule out resuming political negotiations "when it is necessary," he enumerated the same demands that stalled the round of talks last fall in Moscow. Chinese media have not yet commented directly on the Soviet offer. []

The chances of an early resumption of Sino-Soviet negotiations seem remote. Moscow's offer to reopen talks came in the context of a sharply negative assessment of Chinese policy trends. Moreover, the Soviets began a major military exercise in the Far East on the day they made their offer, further worsening the atmosphere already poisoned by the invasion of Afghanistan. []

Deng said he was satisfied with China's relations with the US, but he also said that the US military aid offering to Pakistan was too small, and he implicitly cautioned against US measures regarding Iran that could benefit the USSR and draw attention away from the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Echoing a line conveyed in the past by other senior Chinese spokesmen, Deng stressed that the relationship is based on strategic considerations, chiefly common anxiety over Soviet expansion. In an interview with Japanese journalists in late March, Deng had said that the failure of Western politicians to take a strategic viewpoint has led to divisiveness. He also said that it was responsible for the failure to recognize that Soviet efforts in Southwest Asia ultimately are aimed at undermining European security. []

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WEST GERMANY: Olympic Boycott Decision

[REDACTED]

The president of the West German Olympic committee, one of three International Olympic Committee vice presidents, has stated that West German Olympic officials probably would accept government direction on the matter. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A decision before 15 May would leave ample time for other countries to fall into line with US Olympic policy. Most West European countries have indicated that they will follow Bonn's lead on the issue. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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NIGERIA-LIBYA: Involvement in Chad

Nigeria's determination to reduce French influence in Chad could also facilitate Libyan involvement there.

Nigeria considers French influence in western and central Africa as a threat to its own aspirations for regional leadership. Lagos has opted out of the latest mediation efforts in Chad by the Organization of African Unity, partly because it sees them as French-inspired.

Lagos will resist substituting a Libyan role for French influence in Chad. The Shagari government is afraid that Qadhafi would use Chad as a base for cultivating Muslim radicals in predominantly Muslim northern Nigeria.

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CUBA - ANDEAN PACT: Deteriorating Relations

The refugee situation at the Peruvian Embassy in Havana remains stalemated and is complicating Cuban relations with key members of the Andean Pact. [REDACTED]

Havana has refused to permit international organizations to intercede on behalf of the refugees, maintaining that the problem is a bilateral one. The Pact did issue a declaration affirming its support of the right of political asylum and asserting Cuba's responsibility for resolving the crisis. Only Spain, Costa Rica, and Peru have offered to admit a combined total of 1,800 refugees. [REDACTED]

In a propaganda counteroffensive, Havana continues to blame Peru and Venezuela--both Pact members--for precipitating the crisis. Cuba has charged the two with distorting the right of asylum to protect criminals and of coordinating their actions with the US to provoke the situation. The Castro regime is trying to portray its actions in a humanitarian light while seeking international support--despite indications that the refugees are being harassed by thugs, apparently with official approval. [REDACTED]

Meanwhile, the asylum issue is hardening anti-Cuba sentiment in Venezuela. Government officials there are incensed at Cuba's handling of the issue and at Castro's sharp criticism of President Herrera's recent trip to Nicaragua. Venezuelan Ambassador Rondon will not be returning to Cuba, and Caracas will wait to assess Havana's intentions before making a decision on maintaining relations. [REDACTED]

These developments may strengthen pressure from hardline elements in the Venezuelan Government and the ruling party for stronger measures against Havana. Venezuela may consider canceling oil shipments to Cuba under a swap arrangement with the USSR and limiting commercial and cultural contacts. [REDACTED]

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USSR: Grain Rumors

The Soviets appear to be circulating rumors in trade circles to create pressure on the US Government to relax the grain embargo. [redacted]

[redacted]
[redacted] The US has continued to supply the 6-8 million tons permitted annually under the agreement; the embargo pertains to much larger additional shipments. [redacted] the Soviets would not need even the grain shipped under the long-term agreement because "the winter wheat grain crop looked excellent and the USSR had been so successful in obtaining grain from non-US sources." [redacted]

The Soviets probably expect such information to be passed on to US officials and grain producers. The USSR hopes to change US policy by persuading producers that continuation of the embargo would mean the additional loss of the Soviet market for long-term agreement grain.
[redacted]

We believe that the Soviets will continue to need US grain and will not renounce the agreement. It is too early to predict the outcome of the Soviet 1980 grain harvest. Even if it is above-average, Moscow would still need to import large quantities of Western grain--especially corn of which the US is a major supplier--to maintain its livestock program. [redacted]

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CANADA: Energy Pricing

A confrontation is developing between Alberta and Ottawa over oil and gas prices. []

With domestic oil prices currently at 45 percent of world levels and reserves declining, officials in the oil-producing province of Alberta are demanding rapid increases in Canadian energy prices. They argue that present prices result in a \$10 billion annual subsidy from the province to the rest of Canada. []

Prime Minister Trudeau is concerned, however, over the impact that higher oil prices would have in the eastern provinces that elected him to office. In Ontario, both consumers and the province's industrial economy would be hard hit. For Quebec, cheap energy from western Canada is the most visible benefit of confederation. []

In a show of determination, Alberta has taken over distribution of 80 percent of the province's crude production and threatens to delay construction on two proposed synthetic oil plants. It has also terminated sales of 100,000 barrels per day to an Ontario refinery. []

Federal Energy Minister LaLonde has responded by threatening to distribute all domestically produced oil, and has revoked an agreement granting world prices for output from Alberta's two existing synthetic crude facilities. []

Ottawa might be willing to meet Alberta halfway if Alberta were to agree to hold down natural gas prices and encourage the substitution of gas for imported oil--low gas prices would help industries in the east. Gas prices are linked to oil prices, but Alberta probably would be more flexible on gas pricing because reserves are plentiful and prospects are good that they will increase. []

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INDIA-US: Gandhi's Criticism

Prime Minister Gandhi continues to criticize US policy on Afghanistan.

She has publicly criticized the US buildup in the Indian Ocean, but since returning to power in January has confined her sharpest attacks against the US to private conversations.

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ARAB STATES: Radicals Meet

The leaders of Libya, Syria, Algeria, South Yemen, and the Palestine Liberation Organization--the radical Arabs' "Steadfastness Front"--are scheduled to meet today in Tripoli, Libya. Foreign Ministers of the group convened yesterday to draft an agenda that probably will focus on renewed condemnation of Egypt, Israel, and the US. The radicals seek to marshal Arab opposition to the ongoing Egyptian-Israeli-US negotiations and to implement more effective sanctions against Egypt. They may also work privately to arrange a rapprochement between feuding Libyan leader Qadhafi and PLO chief Arafat.

EL SALVADOR: Archbishop Romero's Successor

The Vatican's appointment of a moderate liberal as provisional successor to the assassinated Archbishop Romero suggests that the Church may play a greater role as political mediator. Monsignor Arturo Rivera y Damas--an intellectual leader of the Church's progressive wing--is known for his objectivity and evenhanded manner. He could encourage a dialogue between the government and the left, particularly if his appointment is made permanent--as seems likely. Most Salvadorans, recalling that Romero shifted from cautious moderate to outspoken liberal after his appointment as Archbishop, likely will withhold judgment on Rivera. He will, however, be subject to considerable pressure from both the conservative and radical wings of the Church.

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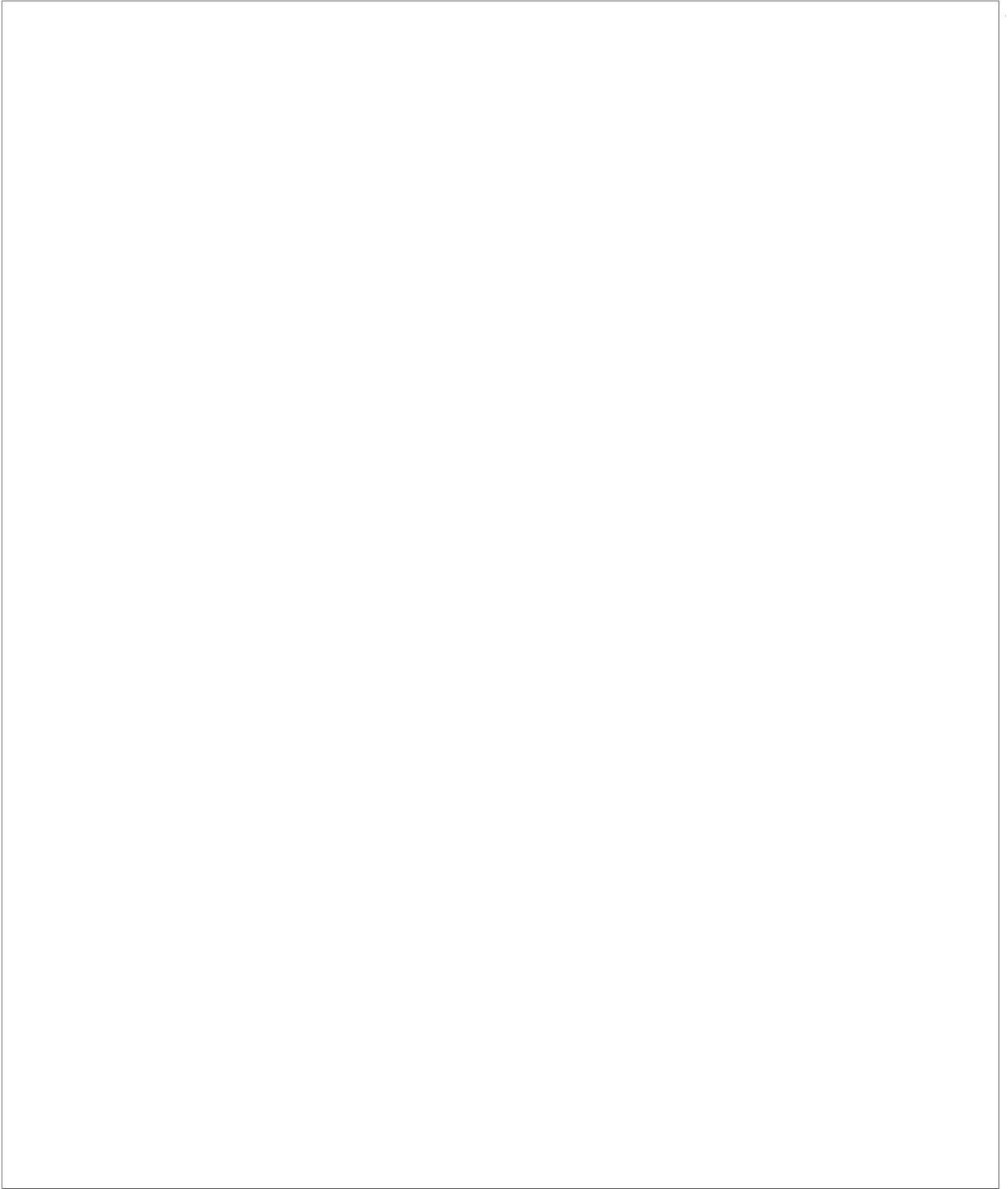
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MALI: Pressure on the President

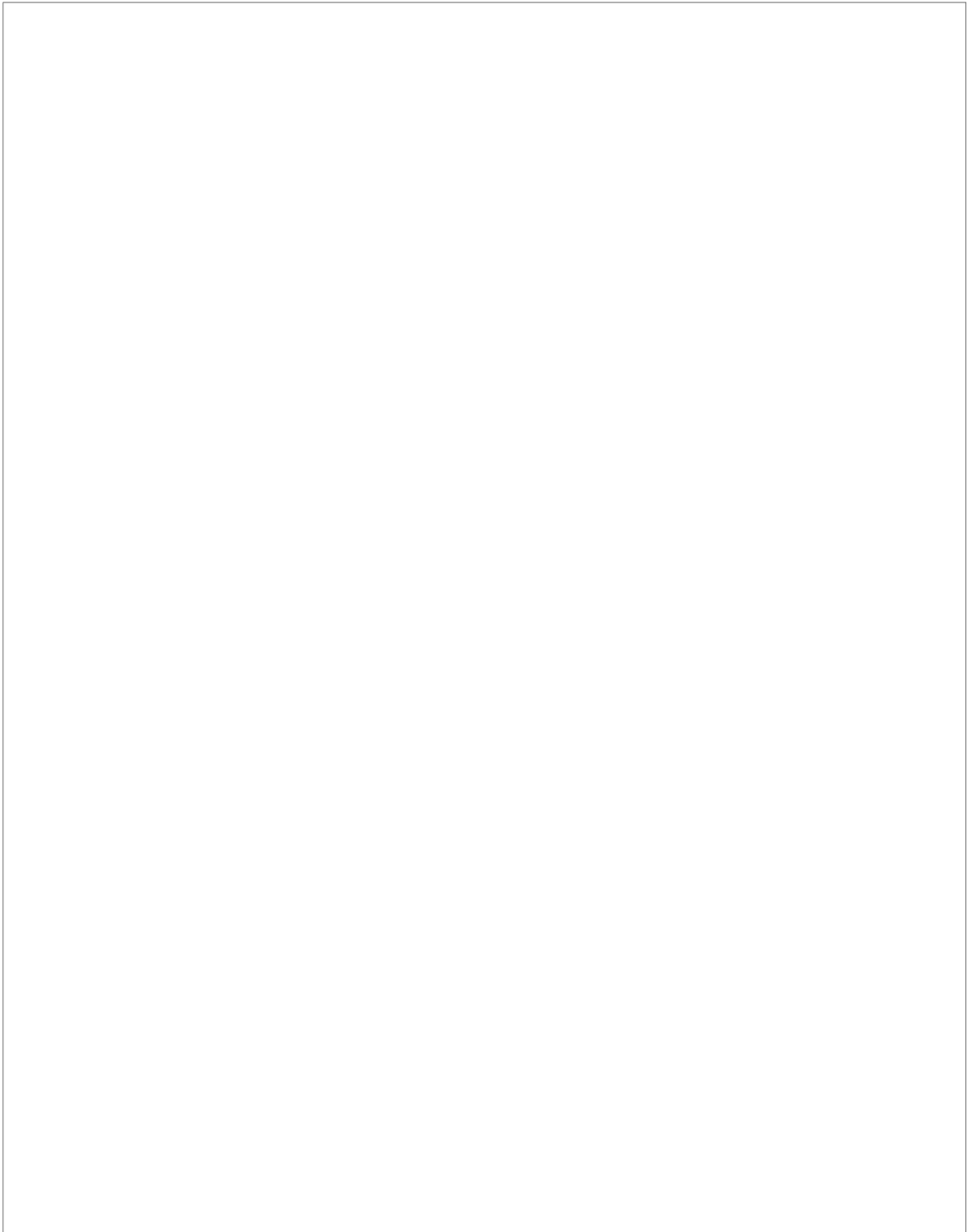
Government officials and senior military officers, who convened in Bamako last Tuesday, apparently are still discussing whether Malian President Traore should be removed for his inept handling of economic and student problems. Traore's shaky position probably will be undermined further by France's decision to reduce its budgetary support to its former colony; France is Mali's principal financial benefactor.

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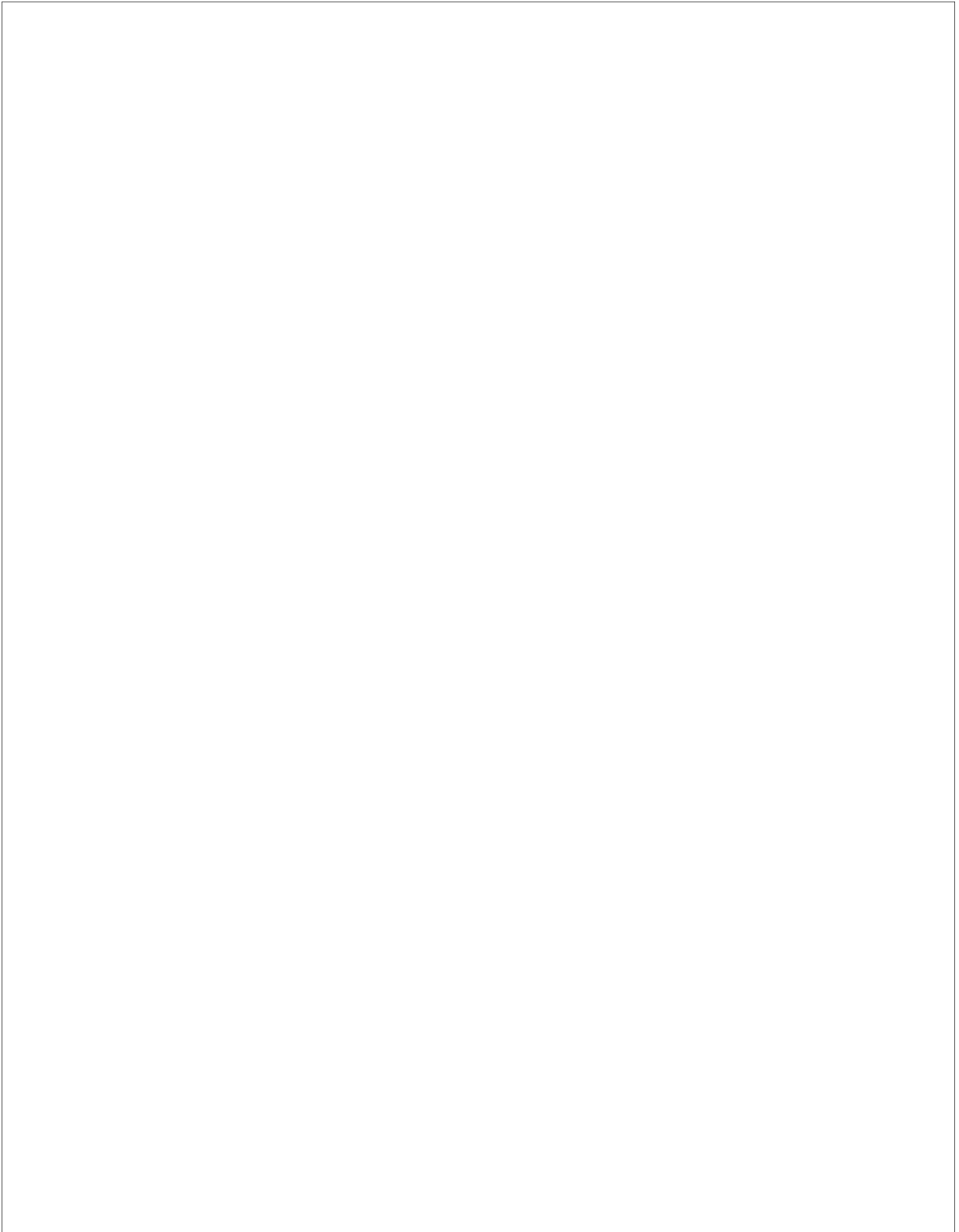
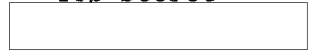


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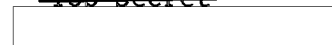


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