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FM THE SITUATION ROOM//TOSCO 101//

TO GENERAL SCOWCROFT

T O P S E C R E T SENSITIVE EYES ONLY CONTAINS CODEWORD WH52421

TOSCO 101

DECEMBER 6, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL SCOWCROFT

FROM: THE SITUATION ROOM
SUBJECT: INFORMATION ITEMS

SOVIET FIGHTER-BOMBERS MAY BE REINTRODUCED INTO NAVAL FORCES; THE UNPRECEDENTED SOVIET NAVAL AIRLIFT FROM KOMSOMOL'SK TO OSTROV GOROKHOVKA WHICH OCCURRED BETWEEN EARLY SEPTEMBER AND LATE NOVEMBER PROBABLY REPRESENTED THE DELIVERY OF SU-17 FIGHTER-BOMBER AIRCRAFT TO THE SOVIET NAVY. IF VALID, THESE REPRESENT THE FIRST FIGHTER-BOMBER AIRCRAFT IN THE SOVIET NAVAL INVENTORY SINCE 1960. OSTROV GOROKHOVKA IS STRICTLY A NAVAL AIRBASE AND THE NAVAL TRANSPORTS WERE THE ONLY AIRCRAFT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE AIRLIFT. IN 1960, DURING A LARGE-SCALE REORGANIZATION OF THE SOVIET ARMED FORCES, THE NAVAL AIR FORCE LOST ALL OF ITS FIGHTER AIRCRAFT AND ASSOCIATED PERSONNEL AND RELINQUISHED ITS COASTAL FIGHTER AIR DEFENSE MISSION TO THE SOVIET AIR DEFENSE ORGANIZATION. THE SU-17 FIGHTER-BOMBER COULD PROBABLY BE EASILY ADAPTED TO A MARITIME ROLE IN A RESTRICTED AREA SUCH AS THE BALTIC OR BLACK SEA FLEET AREAS.

MORI/CDF
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DIA review completed

PRC SEEKS PANAMANIAN COMMERCIAL OUTLET: KEY CHINESE OFFICIALS ARE REPORTEDLY URGING PEKING TO ESTABLISH A COMMERCIAL FIRM IN PANAMA'S FREE ZONE, AND THE PANAMANIAN WILL PROBABLY ALLOW OPERATIONS TO BEGIN EARLY NEXT YEAR. TOP PANAMANIAN OFFICIALS ARE SAID TO HAVE ASSURED A CHINESE TRADE DELEGATION IN OCTOBER THAT THEY WOULD TRY TO AID CHINA IN ESTABLISHING A FIRM IN THE GOVERNMENT-OPERATED COLON FREE ZONE. ACCORDING TO DIA, PANAMA HAS NO DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH PEKING AND MAY NOT BE WILLING TO RISK THEM AT THIS STAGE IN CANAL TREATY

NSA review completed

***** W H S R C O M M E N T *****

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

NYLAND, MCFARLANE, RODMAN, SECYLE

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NEGOTIATIONS. NEVERTHELESS, THE OBVIOUS POLITICAL BENEFITS
OF ALLOWING SOME CHINESE COMMERCIAL REPRESENTATION MAKE
GRANTING SUCH A REQUEST LIKELY. PANAMANTAN OFFICIALS,
CURRENTLY CONCERNED WITH A LAGGING ECONOMY AND DECLINING
GOVERNMENT INCOME, WOULD ALSO TEND TO FAVOR ADDITIONAL FOR-
EIGN INVESTMENT. FOR THEIR PART, CHINESE TRADE REPRESENTATIVES
REPORTEDLY BELIEVE THE VENTURE WOULD BECOME PROFITABLE QUICKLY
AND WOULD ALSO ALLOW FOR THE EVENTUAL EXPANSION OF CHINA'S
INFLUENCE IN LATIN AMERICA. IF PEKING APPROVES THE PROJECT,
WHICH APPEARS LIKELY, AN ADVANCE TEAM SHOULD ARRIVE IN PANAMA

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