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CLASSIFICATION

[Redacted]

CIA | OCI | WH12WH 740725

MESSAGE HANDLING INDICATOR

DATE-TIME GROUP

CITE

MESSAGE REFERENCE NUMBER

CIA/WHSS

SOURCE REF:

ROUTING	1	4	7	10
	2	5	8	11
	3	6	9	12

[Redacted]

FLD
18055

ITEM NO : WH-1

DATE: 25 JULY 1974

SUBJECT: MOROCCAN CAMPAIGN TO REGAIN SPANISH SAHARA

[Redacted]

THE US EMBASSY IN RABAT BELIEVES KING HASSAN'S CURRENT INTENSE CAMPAIGN TO "RECOVER" SPANISH SAHARA IS THE FIRST PHASE OF A LONG-RANGE STRATEGY DESIGNED TO UTILIZE MOROCCAN NATIONALIST AND IRREDENTIST ASPIRATIONS IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE INTERNAL UNITY. WHILE HE CONSIDERS SPAIN AS THE ADVERSARY DURING THE FIRST PHASE OF ENDING COLONIAL RULE OF SPANISH SAHARA, THE EMBASSY PREDICTS KING HASSAN WOULD, IF AND WHEN MADRID DECIDES TO WITHDRAW, MAKE GENEROUS CONCESSIONS TO ACHIEVE SPANISH COOPERATION IN CONFRONTING RIVAL TERRITORIAL CLAIMS OF MAURITANIA, WHICH IS BACKED BY ALGERIA.

KING HASSAN IS CONVINCED THAT PORTUGAL WILL SOON RETIRE FROM AFRICA AND THAT SPAIN WILL NOT WISH TO REMAIN THERE AS THE ONLY

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	2	5	8	11
	3	6	9	12

SIGNIFICANT COLONIAL POWER. HIS OBJECTIVES ARE :

--TO REGAIN AN AREA THAT MOROCCO HAS HISTORICALLY CLAIMED, THEREBY STRENGTHENING HIS COUNTRY'S INTERNATIONAL AND INTER-ARAB PRESTIGE AND ACQUIRING ECONOMIC BENEFITS FROM THE SAHARA'S MINERAL RESOURCES;

--TO STRENGTHEN HIS DOMESTIC POSITION BY RALLYING POLITICAL INTEREST GROUPS INTO A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY UNDER HIS CONTROL;

--TO KEEP HIS MILITARY, WHOSE LOYALTY IS SUSPECT, OCCUPIED NOW THAT THE EXPEDITIONARY FORCES THAT SERVED IN EGYPT AND SYRIA HAVE RETURNED HOME.

WHILE KING HASSAN CORRECTLY ESTIMATES THAT ALL ARAB STATES WILL SUPPORT MOROCCO'S DEMAND THAT SPAIN VACATE THE SPANISH SAHARA, SUPPORT FROM OTHER ARAB STATES FOR MOROCCO'S CLAIMS TO THE AREA ARE MUCH WEAKER. MOST ARAB STATES ARE RELUCTANT TO TAKE SIDES IN ANY INTER-ARAB QUARREL, ESPECIALLY AT THIS TIME WHEN A QUARREL COULD WEAKEN ARAB UNITY REGARDING THE FAR MORE IMPORTANT ISSUE OF A MIDDLE EAST PEACE SETTLEMENT.

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PAGES 3

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3		6		9		12	

NEVERTHELESS, THE KING IS WILLING TO PURSUE A HIGH-RISK POLICY THAT COULD LEAD TO HIS USING LIMITED MILITARY OR PARAMILITARY ACTION AGAINST SPANISH FORCES IN THE SAHARA. HE WILL BE UNWILLING TO BACK DOWN UNLESS SPAIN PULLS BACK FROM ITS PLANS TO GRANT GREATER AUTONOMY TO ITS SAHARAN PROVINCE. AMBASSADOR NEUMANN BELIEVES SOME ACTION BY SPAIN TO DEFUSE THE SITUATION IS DESIRABLE, BUT HE NOTES THAT OTHER ARAB STATES ARE IN A BETTER POSITION TO PERSUADE MADRID THAN WASHINGTON.

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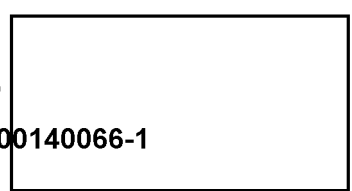
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