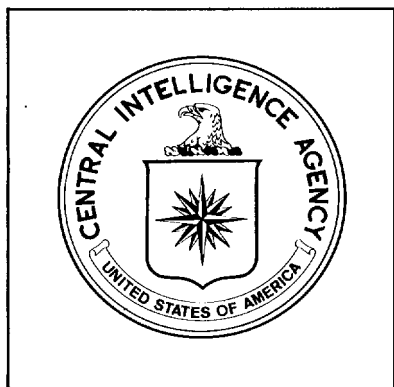


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MIDDLE EAST – AFRICA – SOUTH ASIA

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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Saudi Arabia

*Saudis to Give Substantial
Contribution to UNRWA*

Saudi Arabia has notified the UN that it will contribute \$10 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, which administers relief programs for the Palestinian refugees. Previously the Saudis have made only minimal contributions.

The agency has for months been on the verge of cutting back its services because of financial difficulties. The Saudi contribution will keep the agency in operation for the rest of the year and may spur other wealthy Arab states to increase their donations. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM)

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Comoro Islands

Aftermath of UDI

The Comoro Islands' unilateral declaration of independence on July 6 has left in doubt the status of one of the islands that wants to remain a part of France.

Independence has intensified the hostility between the central government in Moroni, the Comorian capital, and the Mahorais--the inhabitants of the island of Mayotte--who feel little sense of identity with the Muslim culture that predominates on the other three islands. French and Christian influences predominate on Mayotte. Ahmed Abdallah, the new chief of state, has reiterated his intention to keep Mayotte a part of the Comoros. Mayotte political leaders have denounced the independence declaration as illegal, and demanded that France maintain its authority on the island.

Paris is willing to accept the Comoros' independence, but it is keeping its options open regarding Mayotte. The government issued a communique this week saying it would "take into account" the wishes of the Mahorais, but it did not explicitly support Mayotte separatism. France has agreed to withdraw its troops and civil servants from all the islands except Mayotte. Paris will probably try to work out an accommodation between Moroni and Mayotte, but its chances of success appear slim.

Relations between the Comoros and France will be seriously strained if Paris finally agrees to retain Mayotte. The Comorians may refrain from an open break because of their reliance on French aid. A cooling of relations with France, however, would probably encourage the Comorians to seek assistance from Muslim countries.

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Libya has shown interest in the islands; several delegations have visited the Comoros, and Abdallah visited Tripoli in March. Saudi Arabia may provide some aid with a view to preventing the islands from falling under radical Arab influence. Iran has also shown interest in the Comoros and may provide limited aid. (CONFIDENTIAL)



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