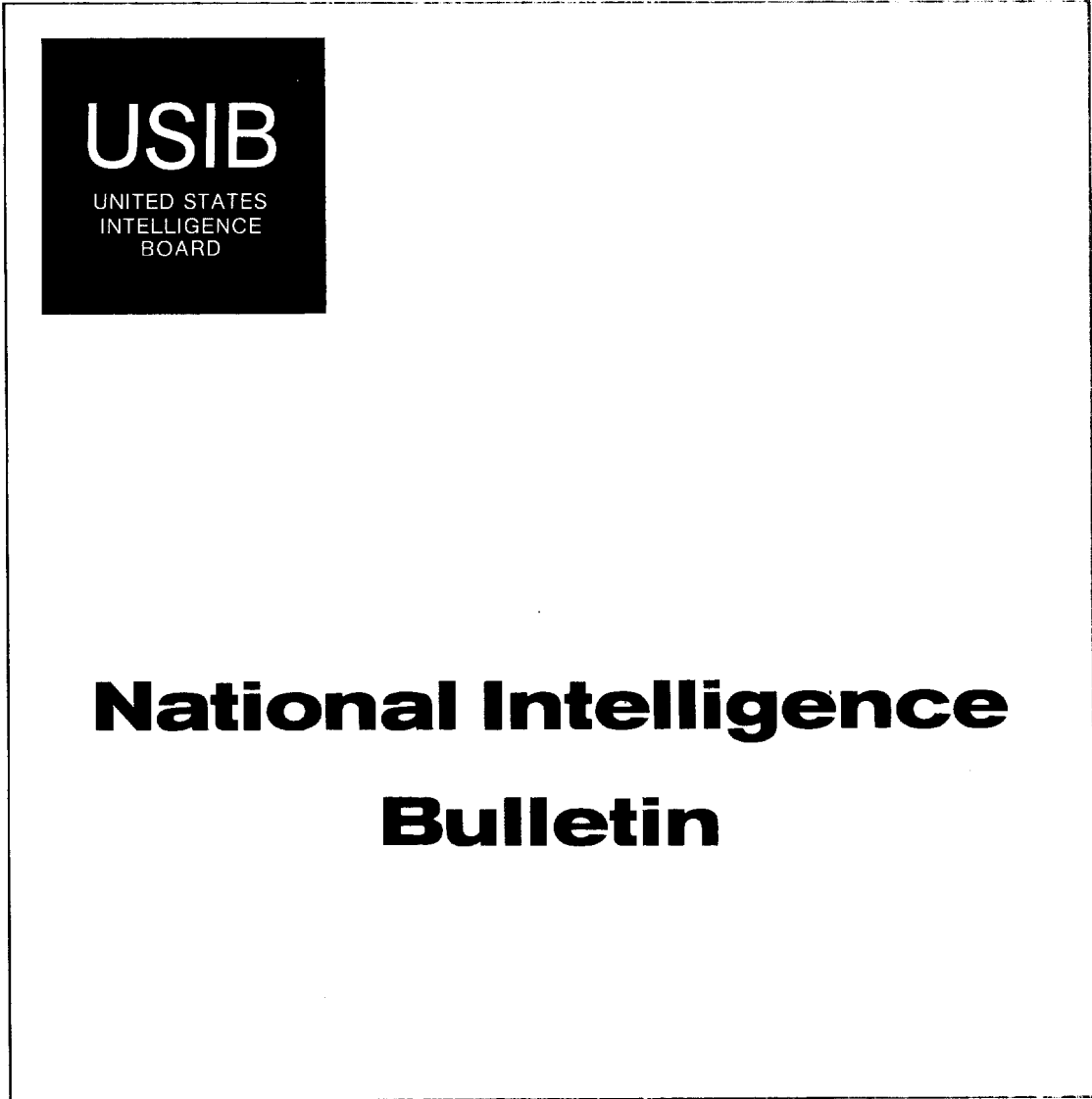


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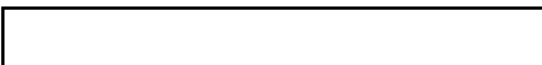


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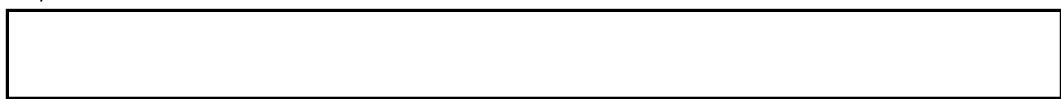
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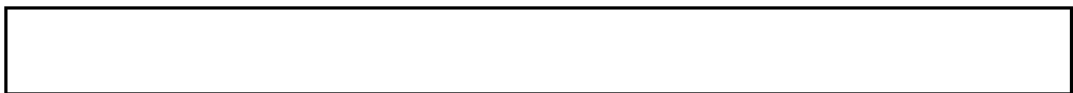
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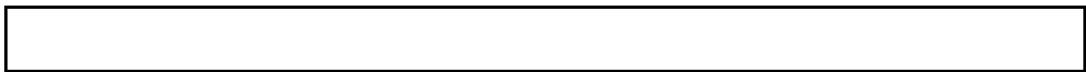
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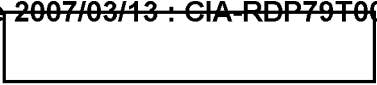


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ANGOLA

The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola and the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola are undertaking new diplomatic initiatives, in view of the almost certain postponement until after the first of the year of any Organization of African Unity summit on Angola.

National Union President Jonas Savimbi met with Zairian President Mobutu on Tuesday and is currently in Kampala. He will arrive in Dakar on December 19 for talks with Senegalese President Senghor. Senghor supports a neutral position regarding Angola and has called for an end to all foreign intervention there. Savimbi also reportedly intends to visit Cameroon and Ivory Coast, which agree with the Senegalese position.

Savimbi may also seek an appearance at the UN. His main objective will be to gain support against Soviet and Cuban involvement in Angola.

Popular Movement Prime Minister Nascimento left Luanda for Nigeria on Tuesday to cement the ties that have developed between the two regimes since Nigeria extended recognition late last month. The Nigerians apparently still believe that a government of national unity can be formed in Angola; Nascimento probably will try to convince them otherwise. The Popular Movement fully realizes that Nigeria is a major voice in African affairs and that its position will carry weight with uncommitted states.

The Nascimento delegation also is taking with it the four South African soldiers captured in recent fighting in central Angola. The white South Africans will be exhibited to the Nigerian government and the international press as support for the Popular Movement's case that it is the victim of foreign aggression. Nigeria's recognition was prompted by South African support for the National Union.

The Popular Movement will contend that the National Union and the National Front have sold out to the white minority regime in Pretoria and thus cannot be considered by Africans as true Angolan nationalist groups. [redacted]

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USSR-JORDAN

The Soviets are again trying to persuade Jordan to take part in a reconvened Geneva conference.

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Jordanian officials expect Moscow to press the matter with a Jordanian diplomatic delegation that is to go to Moscow on December 22. The principal mission of the Jordanian group, which will be headed by former prime minister Abd al-Munim Rifai, will be to prepare the ground for a visit by King Husayn to the USSR next spring.

Moscow may also attempt to persuade the Jordanians to agree to the inclusion of PLO representatives in Jordan's delegation to the Geneva conference. The Soviets have long viewed this approach as a possible means of overcoming Israel's refusal to participate in any conference at which the PLO is present.

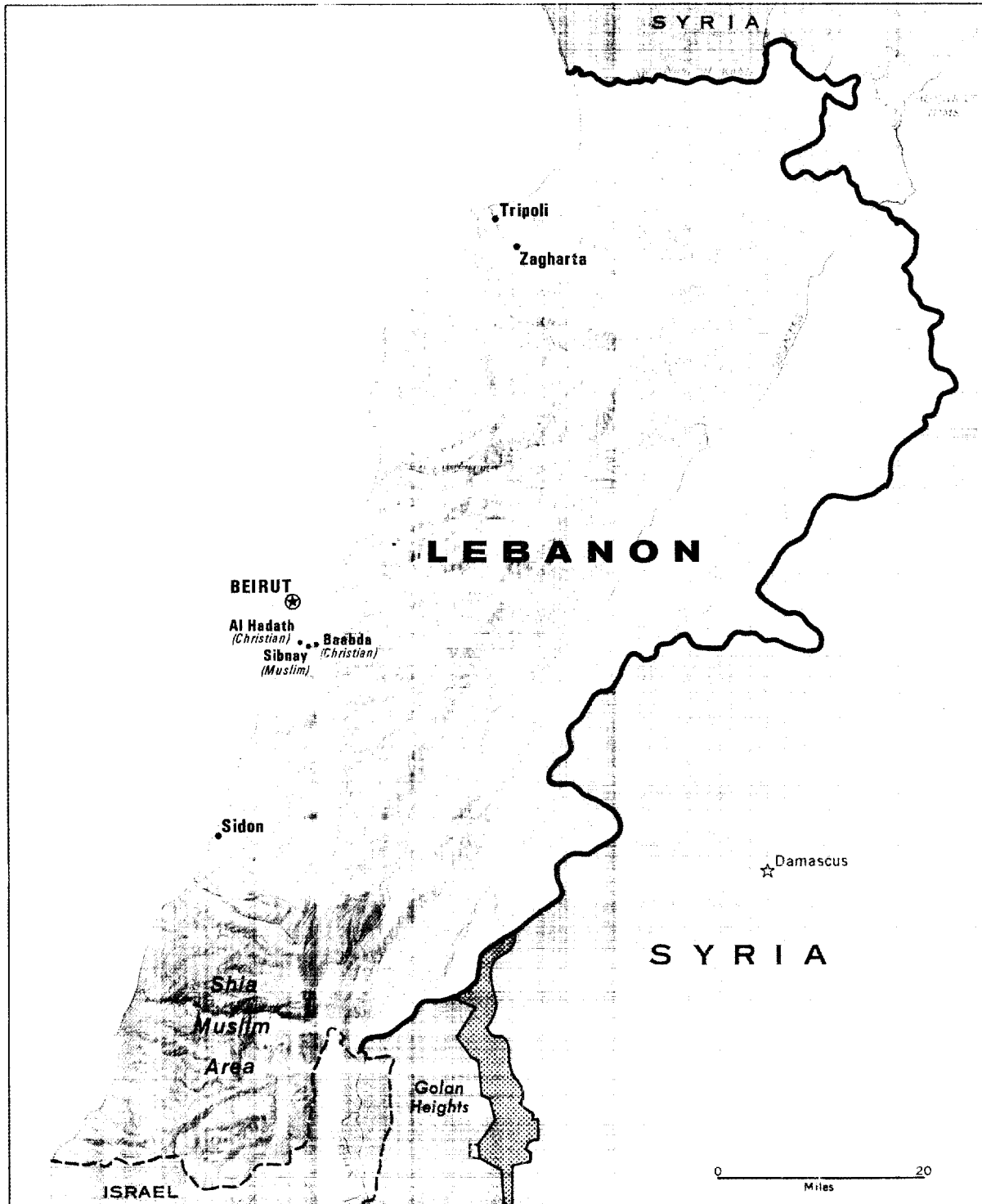
A Jordanian embassy officer in Moscow recently claimed to a US diplomat that the USSR, Syria, and the PLO have agreed on PLO participation in the Geneva conference as part of a Jordanian delegation. There has been no confirmation of his statement from other sources; reporting on Arafat's visit to Moscow last month has not indicated that the subject was raised.

In any event, the Jordanians almost certainly would reject a Soviet proposal for a combined Jordanian-PLO delegation. Amman has consistently rebuffed Arab efforts—most recently by Syrian President Asad when he visited Jordan last week—to bring about a reconciliation between Jordan and the PLO.

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LEBANON

The cease-fire has restored relative calm to central Beirut and the hotel district and has reduced shelling between Christian and Muslim strongholds in the suburbs. Heavy clashes continue in villages southeast of the capital and in the Tripoli-Zagharta area.

On Tuesday, the militia of Camille Shamun's National Liberal Party attacked the Muslim village of Sibnay to halt increased sniping directed at the nearby Christian villages of Baabda and Al Hadath. Lebanese security forces intervened to halt a firefight that left at least five dead.

The incident so far has not sparked widespread clashes in Beirut. Nevertheless, because the incident involved Muslims allied to Kamal Jumblatt's Progressive Socialist Party, it could still complicate political negotiations and lead indirectly to renewed fighting. The leftists have boycotted one session of Prime Minister Karami's higher coordination committee as a protest against the attack, and Jumblatt will try to exploit the incident while pushing his political demands.

In Tripoli, [redacted] President Franjyah's militiamen clashed yesterday with elements of Fatah and Lebanese leftist and communist groups. Representatives of five Christian families, led by Franjyah's son, had called on Karami on Tuesday to apologize for killing Lebanese army troops and to solicit additional military assistance in separating predominantly Muslim Tripoli from Christian Zagharta, the President's hometown.

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The prolonged fighting in Lebanon has led to widespread unemployment and to significant shifts of population. As many as 200,000 foreign workers, mostly Syrian and Egyptian, may have left the country altogether, and as many as 40,000 Shia Muslims may have left Beirut for their family homes in southern Lebanon. For the most part, Palestinians have taken over areas of Beirut vacated by these departing workers.

Political activity in Beirut is continuing, but so far to no particular end. The cabinet, the higher coordination committee, and the parliamentary committee considering political reform have all resumed their regular meetings. [redacted]

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ISRAEL

Prime Minister Rabin is holding the line against any significant policy shifts, despite increasing criticism from centrist and left-wing factions of the ruling Labor Alignment of his handling of a number of critical issues.

Rabin has been attacked for his apparent readiness to bow to conservative pressures for new Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, his inflexible position against negotiations with the Palestinians, and his failure to consult Labor Party leadership forums when making governmental policy.

The stability of the fragile coalition depends on Rabin's ability to retain the support of both conservatives and centrists. The conservatives wield much more political clout than their cabinet colleagues, however, and Rabin looks to them for his majority in the Knesset. Labor's centrist Mapai faction is a less cohesive bloc and could not form a government, even if it had the support of various left-wing factions and parties.

The conservatives could conceivably form a government with the right-wing opposition Likud bloc and a handful of Knesset deputies from the Labor Party's less-than-united Mapai faction. Any alternative to Rabin, therefore, would be likely to come from the ranks of the conservatives and prove even less responsive to pressure from Labor's center and left-wing elements. For now, neither side appears prepared to allow its differences with the other to lead to an open break that could topple the government.

Nevertheless, the increased grousing in recent weeks by Laborites such as Foreign Minister Allon has placed new strains on the Rabin cabinet's precarious unity. The Prime Minister, heretofore preoccupied with securing his position against conservative attack, may now conclude that he cannot afford to ignore criticism from the other side indefinitely.

For the moment at least, Rabin still sees himself as having the upper hand; he gives no indication of being prepared to modify his policies—including his tough line on the Palestinian question—even for the tactical reasons suggested by Allon. The issues on which Rabin's critics are attacking him are ones on which he has strong opinions, quite apart from the powerful emotions they engender among conservatives.

Any changes Rabin might make in response to the recent criticism are likely to be nonsubstantive ones, such as toning down his uncompromising public remarks on

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the Palestinian issue. Rabin might allow delays in the implementation of the settlement program for the occupied territories. He may also be persuaded to make some gestures giving the appearance of Labor Party involvement in policy matters, but he is unlikely to change his habit of bypassing the traditional party forums when making substantive policy decisions [redacted]

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ISRAEL

Numerous aircraft losses in the past year demonstrate a growing problem facing the Israeli air force.

Thirteen aircraft, mostly combat types, are known to have been lost so far this year. The increase in the accident rate—about twice that of previous years—is believed caused by the loss of many qualified maintenance personnel to commercial aviation enterprises and an expanded pilot-training program.

Another contributory factor is the propensity of Israeli pilots to push their aircraft beyond performance limitations. For example, the F-4E is routinely subjected to excessive "G" forces. Furthermore, takeoff weight frequently exceeds technical order maximum gross weight. The Israeli air force inventory is old in many cases, and almost all pre-1973 war aircraft have sustained battle damage. [redacted]

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ICELAND-UK-UN

The special session of the UN Security Council, requested by Iceland to hear its complaint against British actions in the fisheries dispute, was devoid of polemics.

Prior to the Security Council meeting on December 16, both the UK and Iceland had agreed to limit their approach to a presentation of views. Iceland's UN representative told the Security Council that London's insistence on an excessive annual catch had prevented the resumption of negotiations. He recapitulated the incident at sea on December 11 in which an Icelandic patrol boat was rammed by a British support ship inside Iceland's territorial limits.

The UK representative countered with Britain's version of the ramming incident, highlighting the firing on Britain's unarmed vessel by the Icelandic boat. He said that the UK's right to fish inside Iceland's unilaterally declared 200-mile zone had been upheld by the International Court of Justice. He concluded by citing London's desire to resume negotiations at any time and at any place.

Iceland's decision not to seek a Security Council resolution condemning the ramming incident as a violation of Icelandic sovereignty was the result of some behind-the-scenes diplomacy by the UK. Britain successfully persuaded most of the Security Council members, as well as the Nordic countries, to urge Iceland merely to lay out before the Security Council its position in the fishing dispute.

Iceland's desire not to antagonize the US probably influenced the decision to make a low-key approach to the UN. Reykjavik is aware that US influence on London may be essential to an eventual settlement of the cod war. At the same time, the Icelandic government felt compelled to state its case at the UN or face an almost certain barrage of criticism at home. [redacted]

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WARSAW PACT

The foreign ministers of the Warsaw Pact countries issued a communique Tuesday to cap their first gathering since 1973.

The last item of the seven-point document seems to deal with the problem of the compatibility of detente with such ventures as Soviet support for the Popular Movement in Angola. The communique says only that the ministers exchanged views on certain aspects of the international situation. The text follows, however, with a statement that the participants "firmly support" the so-called Angolan People's Republic.

This juxtaposition suggests that the Soviets tried, and failed, to get Romanian Foreign Minister Macovescu to agree to a general proposition that detente and support for liberation movements are compatible, although he did accept the communique's formulation on support for the Popular Movement.

The lack of even an oblique reference to China can also be attributed to Macovescu's presence.

The citation of Angola in the communique is another sign of the importance that Moscow is attaching to the situation there. It is probably meant as a riposte to warnings from the US that Soviet involvement in Angola threatens detente.

The communique generally sticks to established Soviet positions on Middle East issues, including the current line that the Palestine Liberation Organization must participate in the Geneva peace conference on an equal basis "from the start." It breaks some new ground in stating that the UN "must" play a more active role in settling the Middle East conflict.

This wording may set the stage for the Security Council debate opening January 12, and may be Moscow's way of placing itself in line with the Syrians. The Soviets also have shown interest in using the Council debate to refocus attention on the Geneva talks.

The ramifications of the Helsinki accord appear to have been an important part of the foreign ministers' talks. The communique is less critical of the West than was General Secretary Brezhnev's speech at the Polish party congress last week. It notes that the ministers expect the other signatories to act in the spirit of the agreement, and may be alluding to Brezhnev's proposal for "European" energy and environmental conferences in its call for steps giving specific expression to the Helsinki agreement.

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The communique refers approvingly, but uncompromisingly, to the East-West force reductions negotiations in Vienna. It does not cite the strategic arms limitations talks at Geneva. [redacted]

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EAST - WEST GERMANY

The East and West German governments plan to announce today their agreement on a "package deal" to improve road and rail routes to Berlin. In conjunction with this agreement, Bonn indicated that its annual lump-sum payment for the use of the transit routes would be raised from \$95 million to \$152 million effective March 31.

The two governments bargained hard for nearly a year. The various construction projects, costing about \$170 million, provide for reconstruction of the Helmstedt-Berlin autobahn beginning in 1980, widening of the Berlin circumferential to six lanes, renovation and opening of three railroad stations in West Berlin, and reopening of the Staaken transit crossing point to rail passenger traffic.

The accord is the most important single step the two Germanys have taken to improve bilateral affairs since they established diplomatic relations in June 1974. Negotiations were stymied for a long time by sharp disagreements over Bonn's decision to establish a federal environmental office in West Berlin and by the Guillaume espionage case, which precipitated former chancellor Brandt's downfall.

Chancellor Schmidt evidently saw an opportunity to reap political benefits by concluding the highly visible accord with the East Germans. The improvement in transit routes should boost his stock with West Berliners who have considered him less attentive to their interests than Brandt.

East Berlin will gain some favorable publicity as well as hard currency from the construction projects. The government has assumed 40 percent of the cost of the circumferential and 35 percent of the cost of the reconstructed autobahn. [redacted] the East Germans will presumably use funds from the lump-sum payment to cover their share of the construction costs. As part of the deal, they agreed to conclude about \$33 million in construction contracts with West Berlin and West German firms.

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The East Germans are willing to follow up today's agreement with negotiations beginning in 1978 on construction of a new autobahn linking Hamburg and West Berlin. Given the great costs involved and the strain on the federal budget, Bonn may take its time before committing itself on this project. [redacted]

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ECUADOR

Several bombings in Quito on Tuesday and growing criticism by opposition politicians underscore the increasing disapproval of President Rodriguez and the insecurity of his government. These manifestations of discontent probably are attributable in part to Rodriguez' failure to announce steps for a return to constitutional government, which he was expected to have enunciated in a speech on December 6.

Civilian politicians appear to be collaborating more actively to generate a movement to overthrow Rodriguez.

[Redacted]

The military recognize that Rodriguez' ability to keep the government functioning effectively has been seriously eroded. Uncertainty within military circles regarding what course to follow or who should replace the President, however, suggests that no immediate solution is at hand. Under these circumstances, the government will come under increasing pressure, and President Rodriguez' actions in coming days will undergo further scrutiny and criticism.

Until an individual or a group emerges as a viable alternative to the President, however, his continuance in office, barring his resignation, seems assured—at least for the short term.

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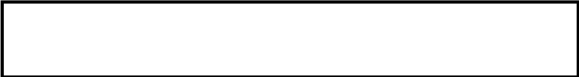
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