

CONFIDENTIALMAB 084
4 November 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, FBIS

THROUGH : Chief, Operations Group

SUBJECT : Monthly Report--Abidjan Bureau--October 1981

I. GENERAL

FBIS Director [] visited Abidjan from 28-31 October. This^{25X1} was John's first visit to Abidjan, and he took the occasion to see as much of the city as possible, to get a feel for the culture and climate in which the bureau operates. On the 29th he paid an official call on Charge d'Affairs Friedman, who is an old acquaintance of John's. They discussed FBIS's role in Abidjan, particularly the service we provide the Ivorian Foreign Ministry. Ambassador Rawls returned from consultations in Washington on the 30th, and attended a dinner given that night by the Bureau Chief in John's honor. Also on the 30th Bureau Engineer [] and his wife escorted John ^{25X1} a tour of Abidjan, including the Treichville marche, a vast free enterprise market area that is an eye-opener for visitors who want to see something more "African" than the skyscrapers and freeways of downtown Abidjan. John also met with all of the bureau employees and their families at a cocktail party given by Deputy Chief [] and addressed the bureau employees^{25X1} at a staff meeting on the 29th. (U)

II. OPERATIONS

Monitorial/Editorial

1. The health of Ivory Coast's 76-year-old president, Felix Houphouet-Boigny, was the subject of considerable speculation in Abidjan during October, and the behavior of the state-controlled radio appeared to play a part. It had long been known that the president would attend the Cancun North-South summit as one of Africa's two principle spokesmen. However, on the 19th Ouagadougou Radio, citing "official sources in Mexico," reported that Houphouet-Boigny was not going to the meeting, with no reason given. The tightly controlled Ivorian media were notable in their silence concerning this development. Not until the 23rd did Abidjan Radio tacitly acknowledge the president's absence by reporting that Foreign Minister Ake, "on behalf of the president," had explained the Ivorian position in Cancun. Rumors swept the city concerning the president's health, and a meeting of Houphouet-Boigny's political party was announced for the 27th. AFP dampened some of the speculation by reporting that the president, who had not made the trip to Cancun for "health reasons", was doing better, and subsequently reported that he spoke for two hours at the political meeting after recovering from a cold which had sidelined him for three weeks. The local newspaper FRATERNITE MATIN finally reported on the 29th that Houphouet-Boigny had been in bed with malaria and fatigue. (U)

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

2. A delegation of the five-nation Western Contact Group on Namibia, led by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker, began a well-publicized trip around Africa late in the month. At the delegation's first stop in Lagos, Nigerian President Shagari, according to Lagos International Service, stressed the importance of independence for Namibia as a crucial factor for peace on the continent and asked delegation members not to relent in the search for a negotiated solution. Even before the delegation arrived in Luanda on the 27th, Angolan media had given attention to the visit. Abidjan bureau monitored a report from ANGOP, the Angolan News Agency, saying that the Angolan Government was not aware of what modifications to the UN plan the delegation was bringing and a commentary chastizing U.S. policy on the issue. Luanda Radio on the 27th reported an offer of a cease-fire by SWAPO leader Sam Nujoma if UN Resolution 435 were installed, and AFP provided details of the negotiations from its own correspondents. (U)

3. Moroccan charges that Polisario Front used SAM missiles to attack Moroccan positions in Guelta Zammur, Western Sahara, from "neighboring territories" produced a brief war of words between the two erstwhile allies. Abidjan Bureau monitored the first rebuttal from Nouakchott Radio on the 15th, a statement of the Permanent Committee of the Military Committee of National Salvation denying that Polisario soldiers were on Mauritanian territory or that the country was in any way involved in the attack. On the 20th, Mauritanian President Haydala issued a statement rebutting King Hassan's charges that the attack had been launched from the Mauritanian village of El-Aidiet by informing the king the village in question was located in Saharan territory and inviting him to consult a map. He also pledged to defend the country against any Moroccan intervention. On the 21st, Haydalah sent a message to the UN and OAU, carried by Nouakchott Radio, offering to accept observers on the border to verify that the Polisario was not using the country's territory. A flurry of propaganda statements, messages and comments then ensued. (U)

III. ADMINISTRATION

A. Personnel

1. Bureau teletypist [redacted] gave birth to a boy on 9 October. [redacted] will be on maternity leave until sometime in January. (U) 25X1 25X1
2. Monitor [redacted] was promoted to FSN 3/1 effective 1 November. (U) 25X1
3. Monitors [redacted] received PSI's, to FSN 3/2, on 4 and 18 October respectively. (U) 25X1

CONFIDENTIAL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

B. Audit

The bureau underwent its first audit on 2 and 3 November. The auditor, [redacted] was satisfied that the bureau's financial and 25X1 logistical controls are in accordance with appropriate accounting and reporting requirements. (C)

[redacted] 25X1

Chief, Abidjan Bureau

Attachments

1. Engineering Report
2. Monthly Production Report

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

ENGINEERING REPORT-OCTOBER 1981

During the month, various building problems occurred which required contacting the landlord and contractors.

The kitchen floor tiles came up because the concrete below began to crumble. We were without normal bureau lighting for three days due to shorted circuits in the building wiring. Both problems were eventually taken care of; however, the repairs of several air conditioners are still incomplete and very slow.

The auditor completed his inspection of petty cash and FBIS property records and seemed generally satisfied with our records.

[Redacted Signature]

25X1

Bureau Engineer

cc:

[Redacted Name]

London Bureau

25X1