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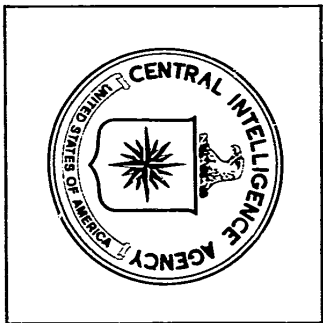
Middle East, Africa, South Asia

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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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South Yemen

*Unsuccessful Efforts to Establish Relations
in Persian Gulf*

South Yemen appears to have had little success in its efforts to gain diplomatic recognition from the Arab states of the Persian Gulf.

South Yemeni Foreign Minister Muhammad Muti's most recent visit to the area took him to Bahrain and Qatar in mid-February. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] the Bahrain government told Muti it would take the question of diplomatic recognition under consideration, but it has no intention of doing so, at least until such a move is approved by Saudi King Faysal. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Qatar's response was more negative. Qatari ruler Sheikh Khalifa reportedly told Muti bluntly that South Yemen must first settle its relations with Saudi Arabia before Qatar will consider the question of diplomatic ties.

The South Yemenis have claimed that Foreign Minister Muti was to have visited the United Arab Emirates (UAE) last month to establish relations, but the visit has been postponed, and there are no indications when such a trip will actually occur. According to the US embassy in Abu Dhabi, capital of the UAE, there presently is little chance that relations will be established between Aden and Abu Dhabi.

The South Yemenis have had their only diplomatic success with Kuwait. Although the conservative Kuwaitis disapprove of the leftist South Yemeni regime, they have dealt with Aden in the belief that the way to bring about a change in its policies is by offering economic assistance and then imposing political conditions for the continuation of the assistance. Nonetheless, the South Yemenis have still had some bad moments with the Kuwaitis. When Muti visited Kuwait late last year, he was sharply criticized by Emir al-Sabah and told that Kuwait will make no further diplomatic efforts on behalf of Aden in the Gulf until the South Yemenis have proved they are willing to change their Marxist policies.

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South Yemen's motivation in seeking ties with the Persian Gulf states is twofold. Aden, which is hard pressed economically, has combined its negotiations for diplomatic relations with requests for large amounts of financial assistance. The South Yemeni move reportedly is also in response to pressure from the Soviet Union, its major benefactor, which also hopes to establish diplomatic ties with the Gulf states.

Except for relatively independent-minded Kuwait, the Arab states in the Gulf will probably continue to look to Saudi Arabia for guidance on their policy toward South Yemen. The Saudis, who are conducting their own joint effort with Egypt to moderate South Yemen's Marxist regime, do not appear to be in a hurry to establish ties with Aden. Therefore, Aden will probably continue to be without diplomatic ties to the Gulf states for some time. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM/CONTROLLED DISSEM)

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Zaire-Angola

Mobutu May Cutback Assistance to FNLA

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[REDACTED] Zairian President Mobutu recently informed Holden Roberto, leader of the National Front for the Liberation of Angola, that Zaire may be unable to continue its support for the National Front beyond this month because of severe economic problems. The Zairian government has been the National Front's most important backer for the past decade.

Any curtailment of assistance at this time, particularly of funds for food and logistical support, could seriously undercut the National Front's political activities. The Front has been establishing itself as a major political force in northern Angola. It also has ambitious plans to resettle in Angola close to half a million Angolan refugees currently living in Zaire in time to vote for National Front candidates in the elections for a constituent assembly to be held sometime before independence next November.

Mobutu probably will continue some assistance to the Front, although it may be significantly less than in the past. The Zairian leader distrusts the leftist Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola--the Front's chief rival in Angola's transitional government. Mobutu's support for Roberto's group is motivated in part by his desire to ensure continued Zairian access to Angolan rail and port facilities.

Roberto may be able partially to offset a cutback by Mobutu with increased Chinese assistance, although not immediately. Roberto told Mobutu that he is planning to visit Peking in late March to discuss Chinese aid. Roberto obtained modest Chinese support--mainly small arms and training--as a result of a visit to Peking last year. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM/CONTROLLED DISSEM)

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Africa

Franco-African Summit Set for Next Week in Bangui

The Central African Republic plays host next week to a Franco-African summit conference that will discuss France's ties with its former colonies in black Africa. A French "dialogue" mission led by Minister of Cooperation Pierre Abelin recently visited French-speaking Africa in preparation for the meeting.

French President Giscard d'Estaing and eight to ten African chiefs of state are expected to attend. However, several African leaders who have had differences with Paris in recent years--including Presidents Ahidjo of Cameroon and Ould Daddah of Mauritania--do not plan to participate.

The last Franco-African summit was held in Paris in November 1973 by the late president Pompidou. During his last two years, Pompidou presided over major modifications in Franco-African relations, including the revision of the rules of the franc zone and the renegotiation of the basic cooperation accords signed at independence. In loosening the traditionally close ties that bound France to its former colonies, Pompidou was reacting to African pressures for greater national control.

In Bangui, leaders of the poorer Francophone countries will want assurances of France's continued interest. They are uneasy over the direction of French cooperation policy under Giscard. His pragmatic African policy gives emphasis to expanding French influence in non-French speaking Africa where scarce raw materials and lucrative commercial opportunities are available. Although Giscard also seeks to remain close to French-speaking African countries where French economic and cultural interests are most important, the poorer Francophone countries realize that French aid is being reoriented to countries of priority interest. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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South Asia

Afghans Join Indians in Criticizing US Arms Policy

Afghanistan has joined India in registering a relatively restrained protest against the recent US decision to lift the ban on arms sales to Pakistan. In a statement issued on February 25, the Afghan government said the US decision has caused "anxiety and uneasiness" in Afghanistan at a time when "the Pakistani military are acting against the Pushtun and Baluch peoples"--the inhabitants of Pakistan's frontier provinces near the Afghan border.

The Afghan statement comes as no surprise. Kabul has long been squabbling with Islamabad over the status of Pakistan's frontier provinces and, in the process, has drawn closer to New Delhi. The US embassy in Kabul describes the Afghan statement as "relatively tame" given the further deterioration this month in Afghanistan's relations with Pakistan, brought on by Pakistani Prime Minister Bhutto's new crackdown against his Afghan-supported opponents in the frontier region.

The Afghans seem unlikely to criticize the US very strongly for the decision on arms. Despite their dependence on Soviet military and economic assistance, they value good relations with the US. President Daoud is anxious to continue receiving US economic aid and to maintain his credentials as an Afghan nationalist not under total Soviet domination.

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In India, where most official statements on the US decision have been fairly moderate so far, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Prime Minister Gandhi is not inclined to support an anti-US campaign over the arms issue. [REDACTED] Mrs.

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Gandhi does not want to jeopardize India's chances for possible US investment and is even contemplating relaxing some of the restrictions that have discouraged Western investors in the past. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM/CONTROLLED DISSEM)

[REDACTED] (143-6062)

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