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DATE 9/26/86 FILE

DOC NO GI M 86-20223

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23 September 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR: See Distribution List

FROM:

[Redacted]

Chief, Foreign Subversion and Instability Center
Office of Global Issues

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SUBJECT:

"The Significance of Foreign Involvement
in Third World Coups"

1. This memorandum provides an assessment of the role foreign governments have played in suppressing and supporting coup attempts in the Third World over the past 30 years.

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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Attachment:

"The Significance of Foreign
Involvement in Third World Coups" [Redacted]
GI M 86-20223

[Redacted]

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Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

23 September 1986

The Significance of Foreign Involvement in Third World Coups



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Summary

Of an estimated 317 successful and unsuccessful Third World coups since 1955, [redacted] foreign governments have played a significant role in 41--or 13 percent of the total. Foreign involvement in instigating or preventing Third World coups has been relatively limited, but it often has proved critical in determining their success or failure. The data show that foreign involvement--which has ranged from a government's providing advice and encouragement to interjecting its own personnel--has been more effective in suppressing coup attempts than in backing them. [redacted]

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In most of the successful cases, the foreign government already exerted a high degree of influence in the Third World country. Moreover, the data show that the direct use of foreign personnel has been highly effective, in both suppressing and supporting coup attempts. Foreign advice and encouragement or the

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This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] Office of Global Issues. [redacted]



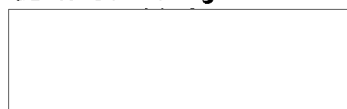
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[redacted] Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, Political Instability Branch, [redacted]

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provision of material aid, on the other hand, have had more mixed results. [redacted]

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[redacted] Eastern Bloc countries have been involved in six Third World coup attempts, five of which have occurred since 1975. [redacted] Western governments helped suppress nine conspiracies and supported nine others, although their efforts were limited primarily to the 1960s.

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The Overall Record of Foreign Intervention

Foreign governments have supported the conspirators in 24 coup attempts since 1955 and backed Third World governments in suppressing 17 coup attempts,

[redacted] Foreign efforts have been more effective in suppressing a coup attempt than in supporting one. They succeeded in suppressing 15 of 17 coup attempts--or 88 percent--whereas only 13 of 24 conspiracies that were supported by foreign governments succeeded--a success rate of 54 percent. Since the rate of success for coups without foreign involvement during this period was about 50 percent, we judge that foreign intervention in supporting coups made little difference but that the prospects for suppressing a successful conspiracy were significantly enhanced when the target government benefited from foreign assistance. [redacted]

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[redacted] in most of the successful cases, the foreign government extended a high degree of assistance to either the Third World government or the conspirators:

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- o Among the 15 cases of successfully suppressed coup attempts, foreign assistance to the government rated high in 11 of the countries; it rated medium in two other cases.
- o In the 13 countries where foreign governments aided the conspirators in overthrowing the government, their assistance rated high in seven cases.
- o Among the 11 instances where coup attempts with foreign support failed, only two conspiracies had a high level of assistance. [redacted]

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Moreover, the data indicate a complementary pattern for foreign influence. In most cases where the level of foreign assistance was not high, the foreign government exerted a high degree of influence. For example, in the six countries where conspiracies with a low degree of foreign assistance succeeded--such as two US-supported coups in South Vietnam in the 1960s as well as the coup backed by France in the Central African Republic in 1981--the level of the foreign influence rated high or medium. [redacted]

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Types of Foreign Assistance

Generally, governments have provided three types of foreign assistance: advice and encouragement, material aid--including money, weapons, and equipment--and, diplomatic or military personnel. Foreign governments have tended to use their own personnel to suppress coups, while they have used all three types of assistance about equally to support coups. [redacted]

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Even so, the record indicates that each type of assistance has proven more effective in suppressing coup attempts than in supporting them. Specifically:

- o Advice and encouragement resulted in success in three of four cases when used to help Third World governments suppress a coup attempt. When it was used to help conspirators overthrow the government, only four of seven attempts succeeded.
- o Material aid succeeded in both instances where it was provided to the target government but failed in six of the eight times where it was provided to the coup plotters.
- o The direct use of personnel had the best overall rate of success, both in suppressing conspiracies--almost 90 percent of the plots were thwarted--and in supporting them--75 percent of coups were successful.
- o In all three instances where the foreign government provided materiel and personnel, the side that received the aid succeeded. [redacted]

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[redacted] the intervention of foreign personnel is the only effective type of foreign involvement in supporting coup attempts. Indeed, the only instances of failure have resulted from mercenary operations in which no particular government organized or backed the conspiracy. [redacted]

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East Versus West: A Comparison

[redacted] Eastern Bloc countries have been involved in six coup attempts in Third World countries. Virtually all of their efforts have occurred since 1975; the study was able to identify only one instance of such involvement before the 1970s. [redacted] the Eastern Bloc's role solely on the available public record--these countries may have intervened in other instances that are not public knowledge. As for the West, the study indicates that Western governments have been engaged in suppressing nine conspiracies and supporting nine others. Nonetheless, the West was most active during the 1960s, and Western intervention over the past 15 years has been limited primarily to French efforts in Africa. [redacted]

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Suppressing Coups. The West has had a high degree of success in suppressing coup attempts in Third World countries, with eight successes and only one failure. Western governments have provided all three types of assistance:

- o Western personnel helped suppress a conspiracy in Gabon and three conspiracies in the Dominican Republic in the mid-1960s.
- o Advice and encouragement helped the governments of Laos and Bolivia thwart takeover attempts in the 1970s.
- o The Ethiopian and Dominican Republican governments successfully used material aid to in the early 1960s to defeat coup attempts. [redacted]

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Direct Eastern Bloc involvement in suppressing coup attempts has been noted in four cases. Cuba provided personnel to the Congo and Angola, and East Germany offered advice to Libya in 1980. The Soviet Union, along with several other Eastern Bloc countries, provided materiel and personnel to the government in South Yemen in 1978. We believe the Soviet policy of surrounding friendly Third World leaders with East German and Cuban security personnel has contributed to the Eastern Bloc's lower level of coup involvement by deterring conspiracies among opponents of the regime. [redacted]

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Supporting Coups. Western governments have backed nine coup attempts against Third World governments. Most frequently, they provided advice and encouragement to the conspirators. Seven of the coups succeeded--the only two failures involved French advice to conspirators in Libya and the Central African Republic in the early 1980s.

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As with suppressing coups, Eastern Bloc involvement in supporting coups has been more limited. In 1978, conspirators in South Yemen, backed by the Soviet Union, East Germany, Cuba, and Ethiopia, overthrew the government. The only other instance of support by the East was an effort in 1971 by the Soviets to back a coup attempt in Sudan that failed to unseat the government. [redacted]

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Other Involvement

Several Third World governments have been involved in coups in other Third World countries since 1955--most notably Egypt and Libya (before it pursued close ties with the Soviet Union). In most instances, these governments provided material aid to support a conspiracy against a neighboring government. Although Third World countries have accounted for almost half of the cases of foreign involvement to support coups, most of these efforts--six of nine--failed. [redacted]

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FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT TO SUPPRESS THIRD WORLD COUPS, 1955-85**SUCCESSSES**

<u>Type of Involvement</u>	<u>Foreign Government</u>	<u>Third World Country</u>	<u>Year</u>
Personnel	Cuba	Congo	1966
Personnel	Cuba	Angola	1977
Personnel	France	Gabon	1964
Personnel	Senegal	Gambia	1981
Personnel	Syria	Lebanon	1976
Personnel	United States	Dominican Republic	1965
Personnel	United States	Dominican Republic	1965
Personnel	United States	Dominican Republic	1966
Materiel	United States	Dominican Republic	1962
Materiel	United States	Ethiopia	1960
Advice/Encouragement	East Germany	Libya	1980
Advice/Encouragement	United States	Laos	1973
Advice/Encouragement	United States	Bolivia	1984
Personnel & Materiel	Egypt, Libya	Sudan	1971
Personnel & Materiel	Soviet Union, Cuba, East Germany, Ethiopia	South Yemen	1978

FAILURES

Personnel	Egypt	Syria	1961
Advice/Encouragement	United States	South Korea	1961

FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT TO SUPPORT THIRD WORLD COUPS, 1955-85**SUCCESSSES**

Personnel	Britain	Oman	1970
Personnel	Egypt	North Yemen	1962
Personnel	France	CAR	1979
Personnel	Greece	Cyprus	1974
Personnel	Mercenaries	Comoros Islands	1975
Personnel	Mercenaries	Comoros Islands	1978
Materiel	Saudi Arabia	North Yemen	1974
Materiel	United States	Brazil	1964
Advice/Encouragement	France	CAR	1981
Advice/Encouragement	United States	South Vietnam	1963
Advice/Encouragement	United States	South Vietnam	1965
Advice/Encouragement	United States	Cambodia	1970
Personnel & Materiel	Soviet Union, Cuba, East Germany, Ethiopia	South Yemen	1978

FAILURES

Personnel	Mercenaries	Benin	1977
Personnel	Mercenaries	Seychelles	1981
Materiel	Iran	Iraq	1970
Materiel	Libya	Niger	1976
Materiel	Libya	Sudan	1976
Materiel	Libya	North Yemen	1978
Materiel	Morocco	Mauritania	1981
Materiel	Saudi Arabia	North Yemen	1979
Advice/Encouragement	France	Libya	1980
Advice/Encouragement	France	CAR	1982
Advice/Encouragement	Soviet Union	Sudan	1971

DDI/OGI/FSIC/PI [redacted] (22 Sep 86)

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