

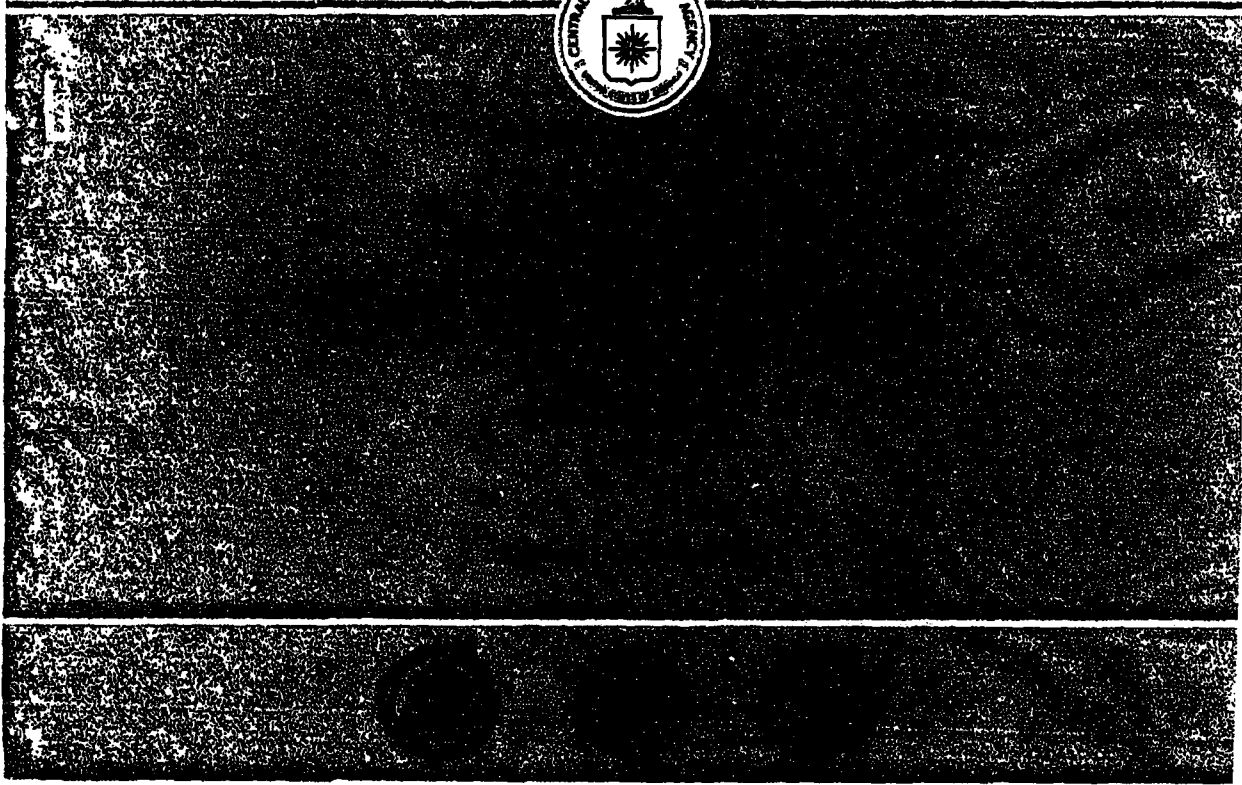
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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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LIBERIA:

Government Resolve Breaking Down

The rebels may be positioning themselves at the Firestone rubber estate to begin moving toward Monrovia and further weaken the army's morale should the cease-fire talks break down. [Redacted]

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Talks between government and rebel representatives in Sierra Leone will continue today, [Redacted] and are likely to be contentious as the group takes up the more difficult issues of President Doe's resignation and implementation of a cease-fire.

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[Redacted]

[Redacted]

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

Morale within the army has been particularly affected by mass desertions of senior officers, [Redacted] and there probably is less than a battalion of soldiers still willing to fight.

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

[Redacted]

Reinforcements from Buchanan and Kakata on Tuesday boosted the number of rebels at the estate to about 250, [Redacted]

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

That number rose even more dramatically yesterday, [Redacted] The rebels were unruly, having lost their unit commander, and looted some of the facilities looking for food.

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

[Redacted]

Although Doe has said he does not intend to resign, [Redacted] he may be ready to step down and return to his home in Grande Jide.

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(b)(3)

[Redacted]

Comment: Taylor probably is counting on using the talks to allow him time to consolidate his troops at the estate before moving toward Monrovia. The closer the rebels get to the capital, the more difficult it will be to control their urge to seek revenge for the slaughter of their fellow Gio and Mano tribesmen. Doe's SATU guards probably are aware of this and may become less inclined to wage a last-ditch battle on the mansion grounds. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]