

January 29, 1990

National Intelligence Daily for Monday, 29 January 1990

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Summary:

The CIA's National Intelligence Daily for Monday, 29 January 1990 describes the latest developments in USSR, Azerbaijan, Romania, India, Ethiopia and Namibia.

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Director of Central Intelligence

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY

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Monday, 29 January 1990

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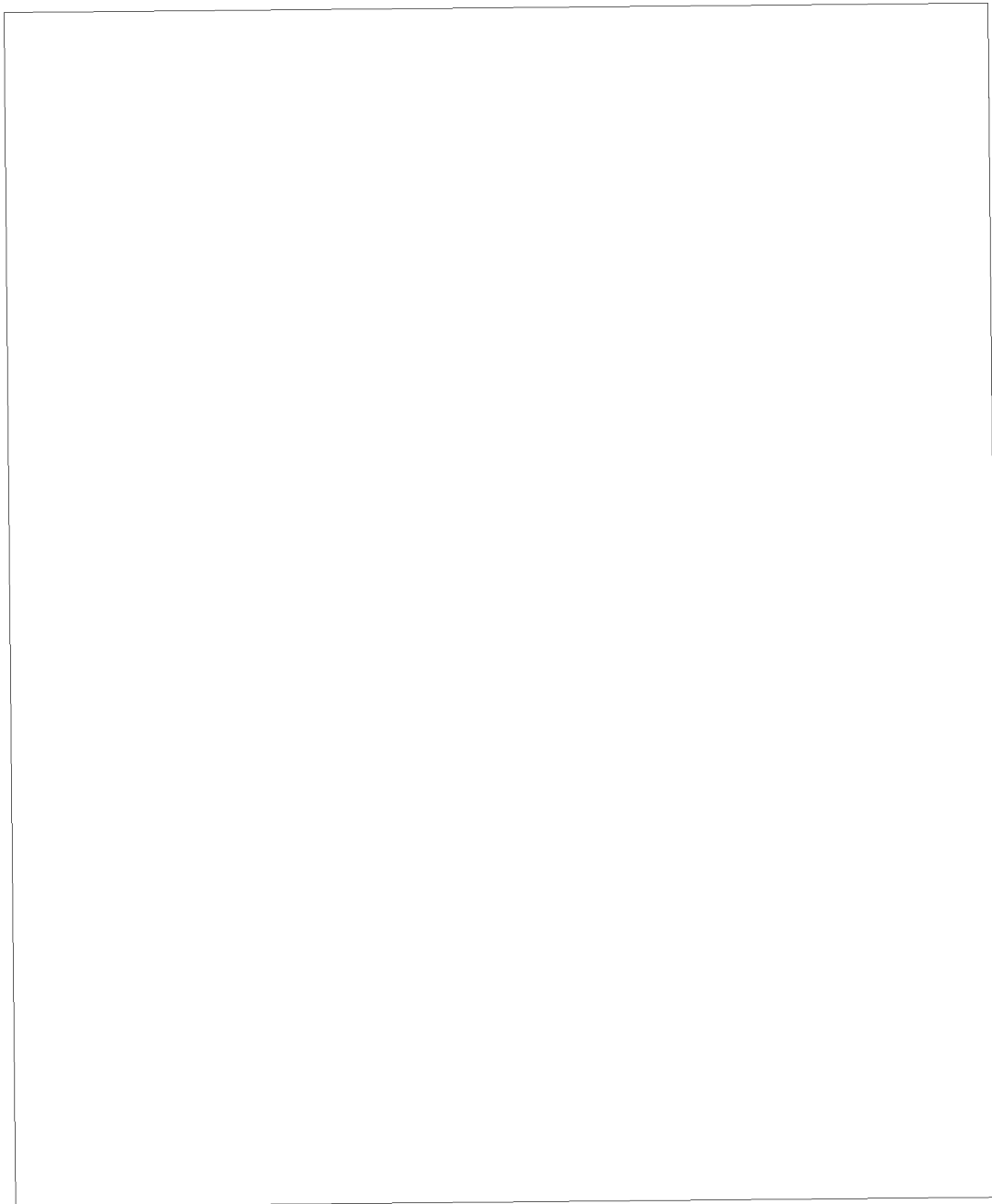
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USSR Supreme Soviet and the Caucasus Intervention

The liberal interregional group of the USSR Supreme Soviet has requested an extraordinary meeting of the Supreme Soviet to discuss Azerbaijan, according to press reports. [redacted]

[redacted] this meeting will not take place—instead, in the next few days, the Council of Nationalities and the Supreme Soviet Presidium will meet to discuss the situation. There are some concerns among Supreme Soviet deputies that the state of emergency in Azerbaijan is unlawful.

The Supreme Soviet Presidium decree of 15 January on the emergency situation in Nagorno-Karabakh was made according to procedures specified in the Soviet Constitution. It is not certain that the emergency declared on 19 January on the situation in Baku followed all those procedures. The full Supreme Soviet does not have to be consulted in advance, but the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium must examine the issue with the republic Supreme Soviet Presidium. For the decree of 15 January, at least the Azerbaijan Supreme Soviet Presidium appealed to Moscow, and the republic president was present at the discussion.

The full USSR Supreme Soviet may repeal any decree of its Presidium, including a state of emergency. The Supreme Soviet will, at least, debate the decree at its next session, which is to begin on 14 February. The state of emergency decree calls on the full parliament to consider two draft laws related to the issue; one apparently specifies additional procedures governing states of emergency and is in committee. The other, soon to be introduced, would impose liability for violations of civil rights and for violent offenses against the territory of the USSR. The issue may speed up work on a war powers bill to govern the use of Soviet troops in combat; it reportedly is still in the drafting stage.

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USSR:

Caucasus Situation Report

Tensions Easing

On Saturday, the Azeri People's Front renewed offers to begin talks with Moscow in exchange for a Soviet troop withdrawal and for the lifting of the emergency situation. The Soviet press is reporting 125 deaths since the military intervention in Baku began on 19 January, including 27 soldiers. There are still instances of curfew breaking and of nationalists sniping at security personnel. Press reports also indicate a state of emergency has been imposed on the Azerbaijan railway network.

Elsewhere in the region, leaders of the Pan-Armenian Nationalist Movement and the Nakhichevan People's Front have agreed to withdraw armed groups from the Armenia-Nakhichevan border and to resume rail traffic between the two areas—a cease-fire has been in effect there since Thursday. Yerevan radio reports aircraft and helicopters have resumed regular relief flights into Nagorno-Karabakh, which is still blockaded by Azeris.

Moscow's military intervention into Baku has undermined the previously strong independence drive in Armenia; Armenians have resumed calls for increased autonomy and claim their first priority is to strengthen their economy.

Comment: With many radical Azeri Front members in jail, the more moderate Front leaders, who reportedly were pushed aside early this month, may be able to regain control of the movement and work with Moscow toward gaining order. It is unlikely, however, that Moscow will act quickly to remove troops, especially while the rail blockade on Armenia continues. The effect of the intervention on Armenian nationalists suggests Moscow, for now, can claim success in dampening the independence drive, at least in that republic. Conflicts between Armenians and Azeris will continue. Both sides must still work out the thorny question of Nagorno-Karabakh's sovereignty, and there is no sign of compromise.

Moscow's Next Challenge

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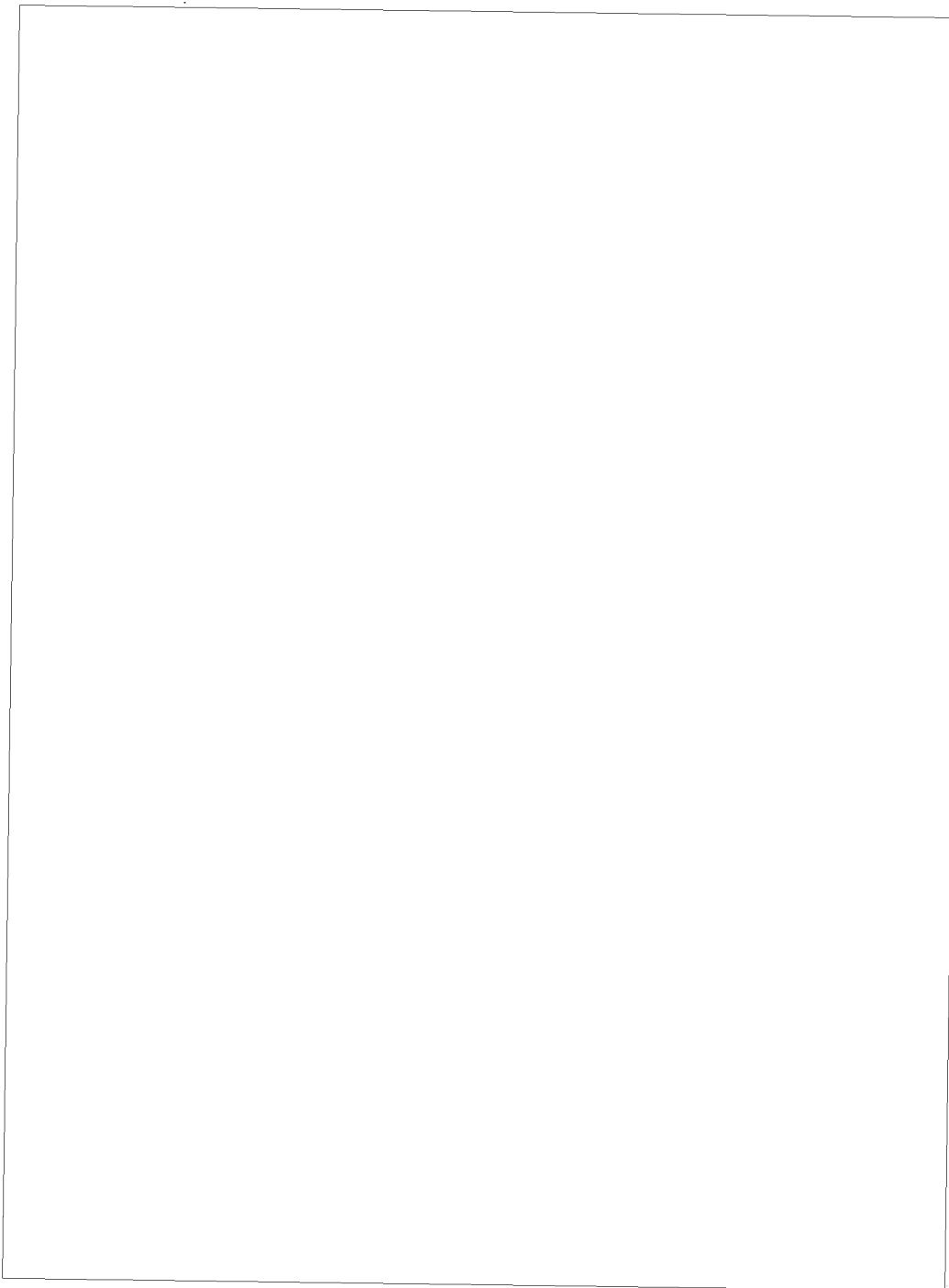
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[REDACTED]

Comment: Georgian nationalism has been growing for some time, and recent events in Azerbaijan could spur its momentum. If [REDACTED] armed groups and independent armies are true, which seems likely, Moscow will have to add Tbilisi to its watch list. It is unlikely that the majority of Georgians, however, would relish a fight with Soviet authorities, especially in the wake of the Baku intervention, which proved that Moscow is willing to use lethal force to contain violent unrest and to shore up local Communist Party rule. The majority of Georgians will be likely to continue their independence drive through constitutional means. [REDACTED]

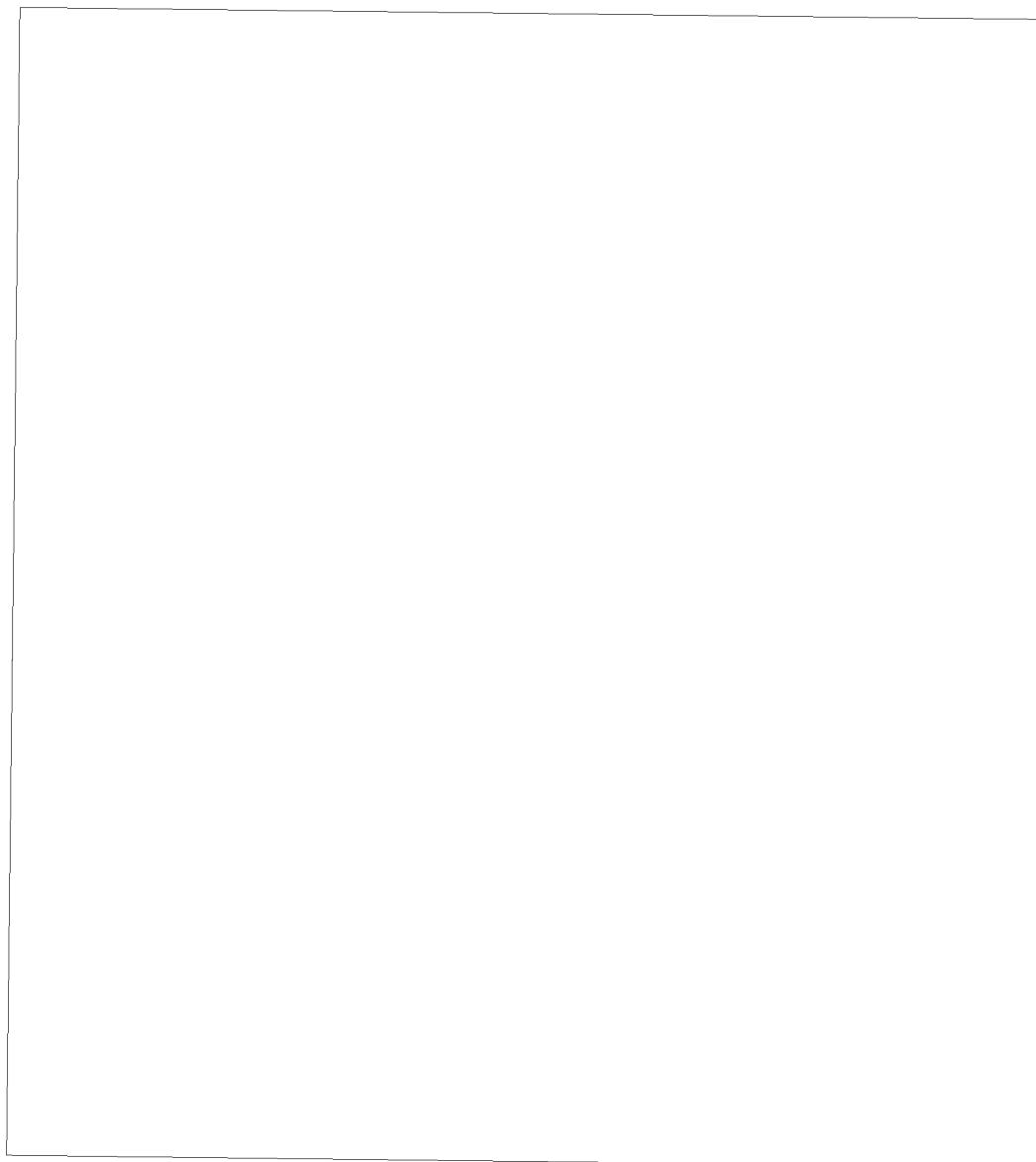
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ROMANIA:

Front Rebuffs Opposition Challenge

The ruling National Salvation Front (FSN) has used its organizational muscle to survive its first direct challenge by opposition parties, but it now must also contend with potentially violent ethnic tensions in Transylvania.

The Front faced another wave of unrest over the weekend despite its attempt to distract the public's attention by broadcasting the opening of the trial of Ceausescu's senior associates. More than 15,000 anti-FSN protesters yesterday defied a government ban on demonstrations, broke through a military cordon around the Front's headquarters in Bucharest, and demanded a new coalition government. The protesters apparently retreated after the Front brought in truckloads of progovernment demonstrators.

Acting President Iliescu is trying to calm the situation by inviting the 21 newly registered opposition parties to an "open dialogue" to begin Thursday. Nonetheless, at least one of the major parties—the National Peasants' Party—has threatened daily demonstrations until another, more broadly based interim government is formed to rule the country pending the election on 20 May.

Meanwhile, the FSN's authority is being further undermined by mounting ethnic tensions in Transylvania, homeland of Romania's approximately 2 million ethnic Hungarians. The deputy education minister, an ethnic Hungarian, was fired Saturday for making unauthorized decisions on Hungarian-language instruction. His ouster follows public criticism of Iliescu—by the Hungarian Democratic Forum, the minority's largest organization—for having raised the specter of Hungarian separatism.

Comment: The Front managed to turn back protesters over the weekend, but its use of orchestrated counterdemonstrations—reminiscent of the Ceausescu era—to intimidate the opposition is likely to fuel growing suspicions that the Front is dominated by crypto-Communists. More political unrest is likely as the opposition parties and radical students regroup. The Front may exploit ethnic tensions to give itself some breathing room, even at the cost of undermining its ethnic Hungarian support.

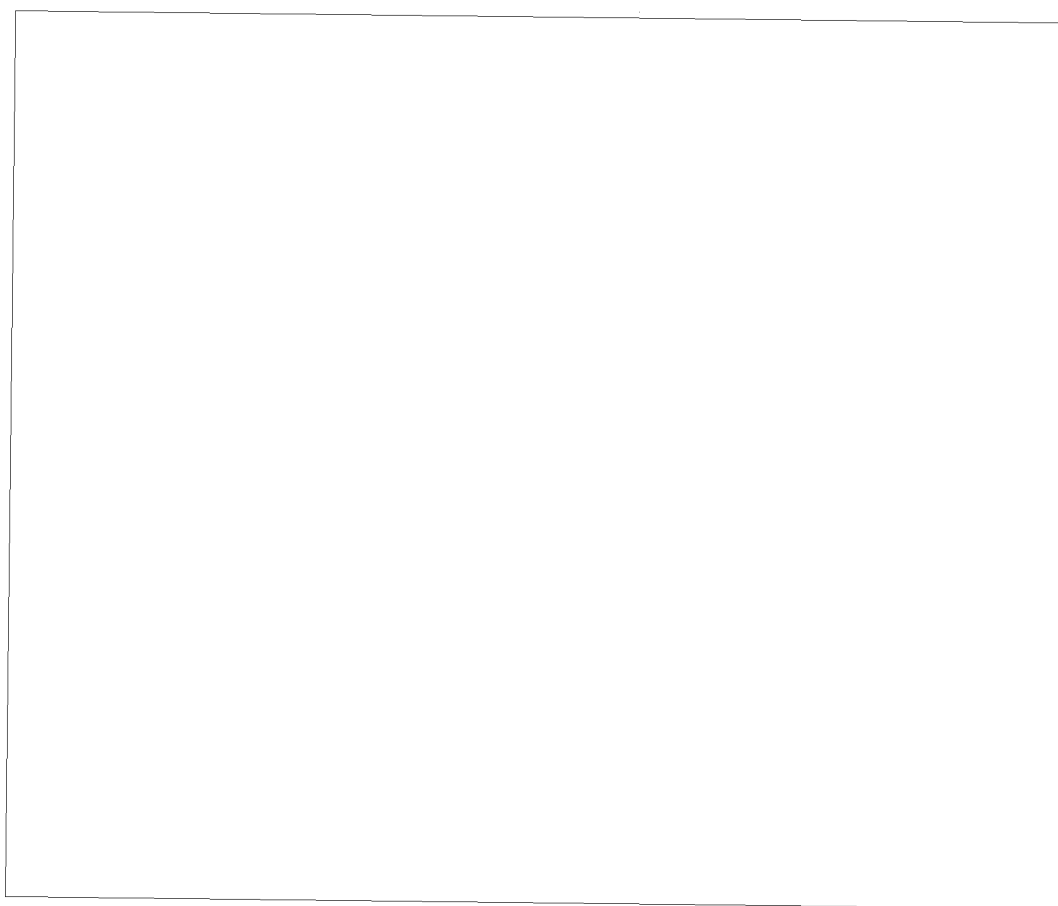
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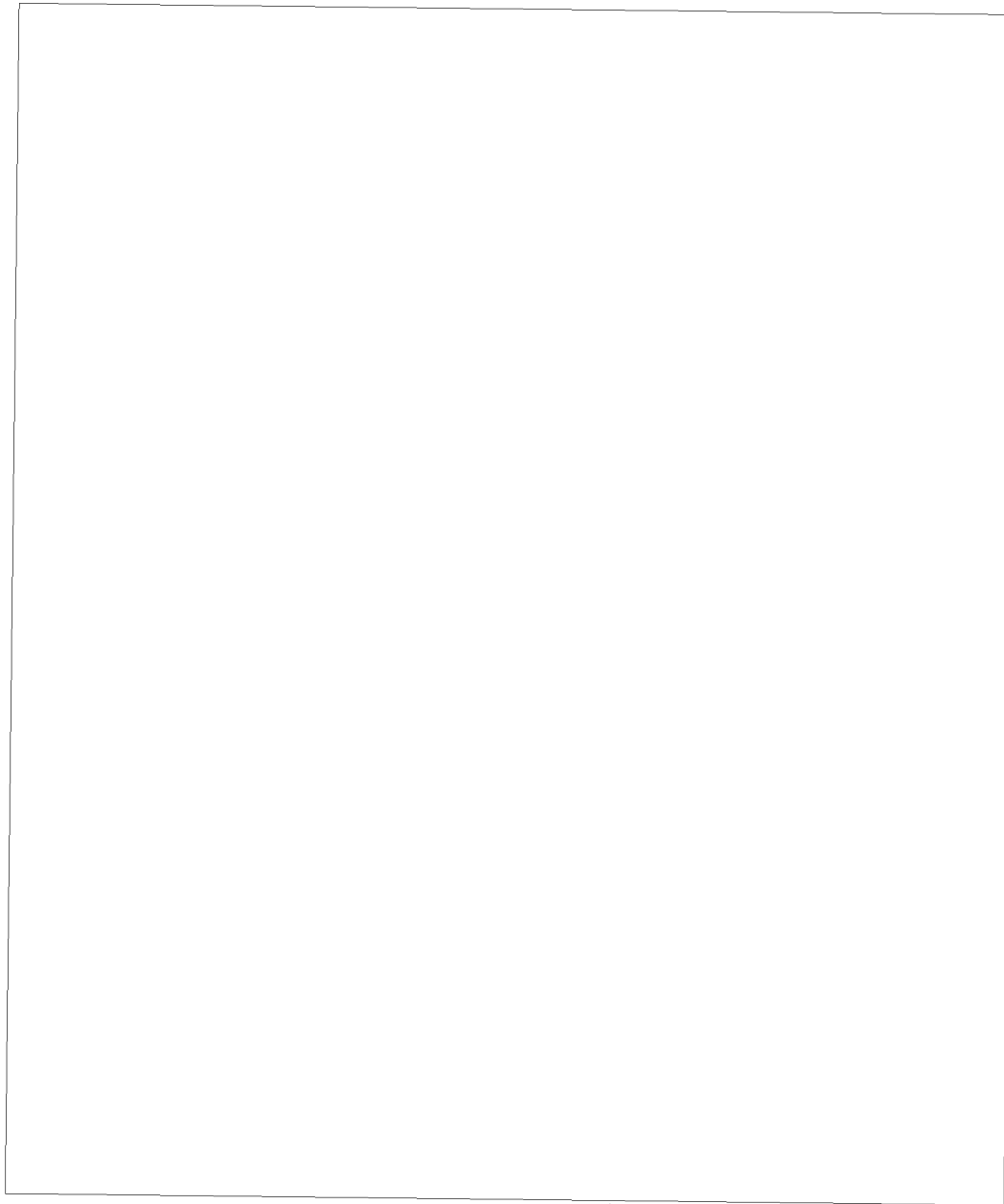
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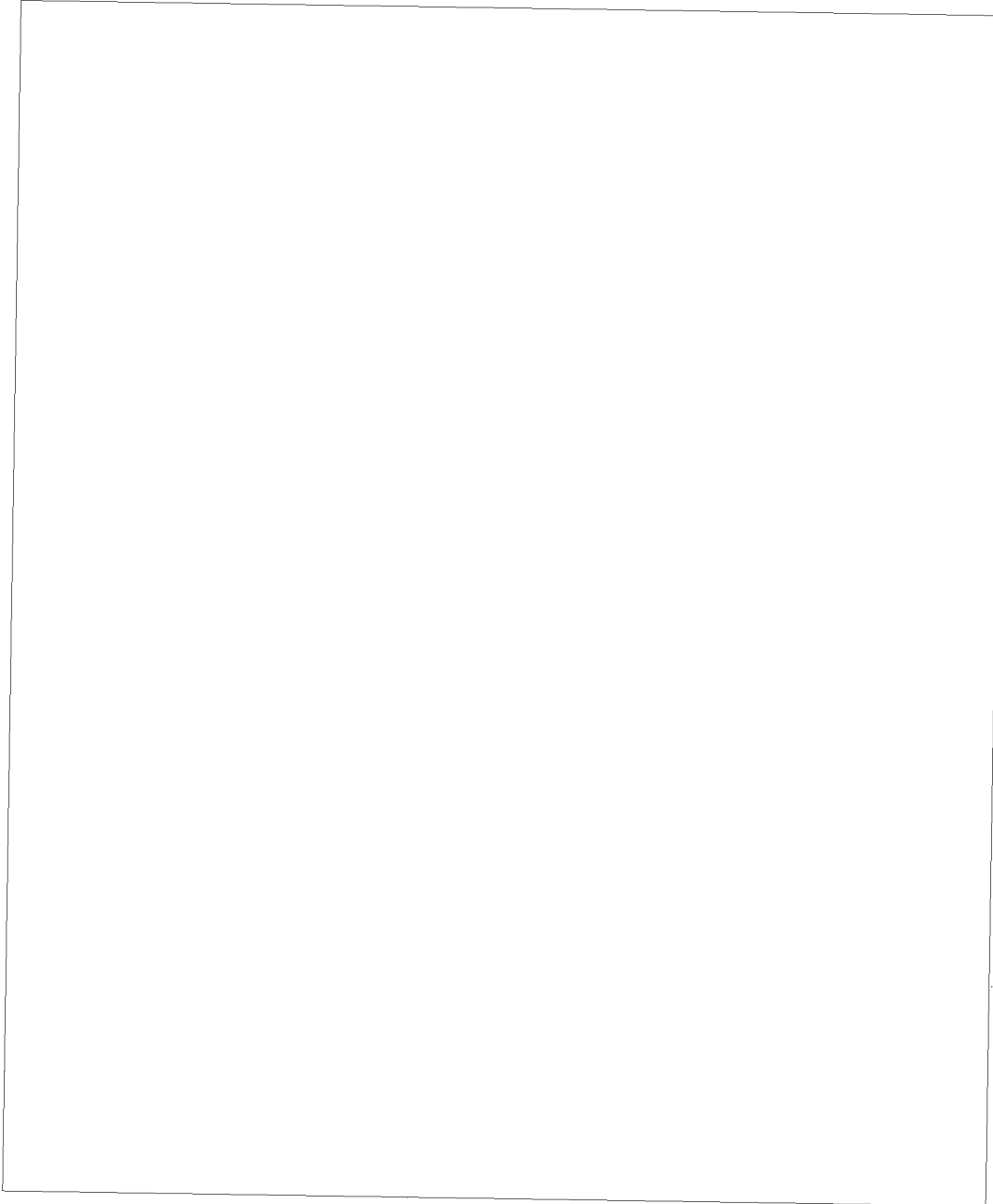
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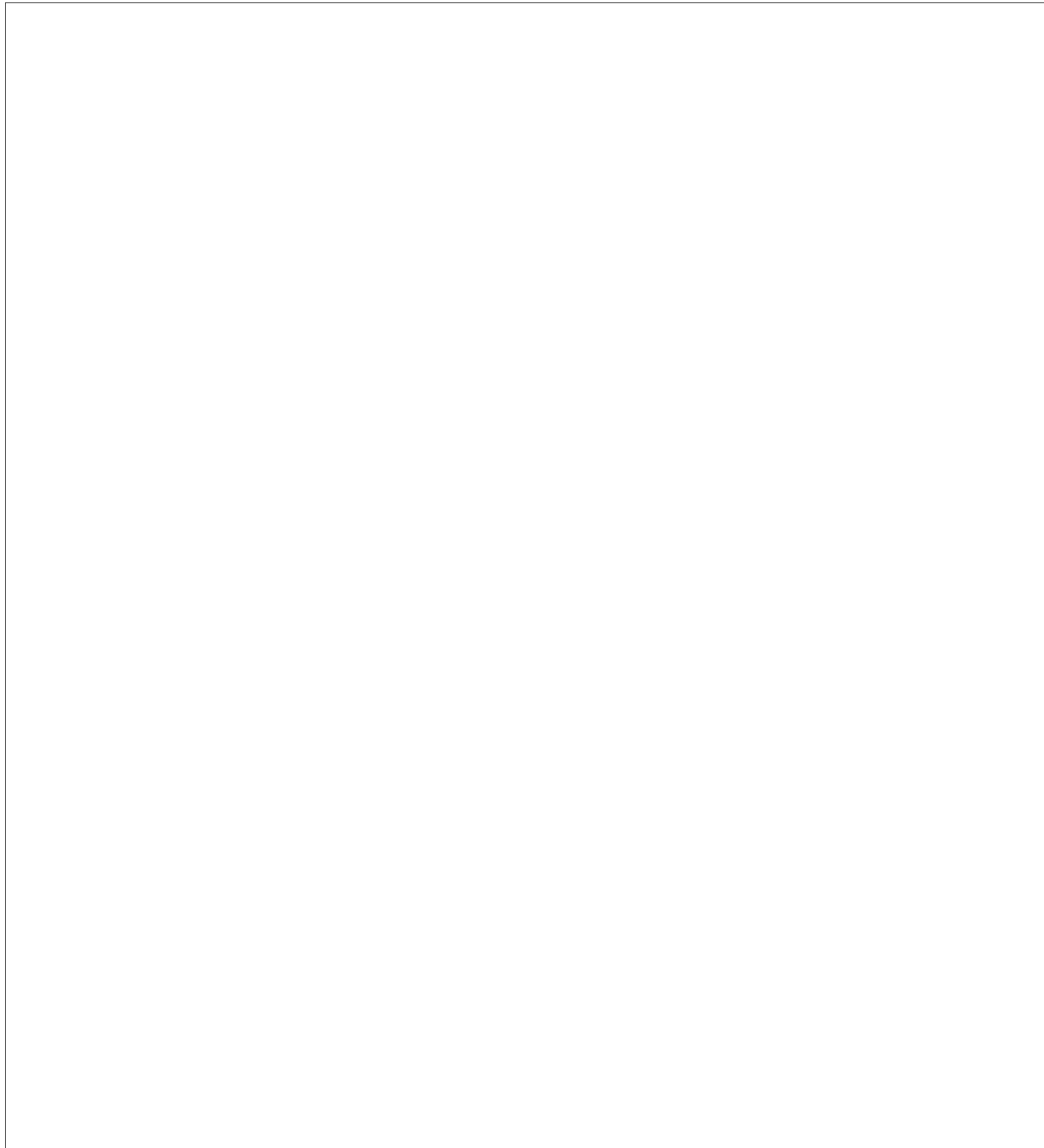


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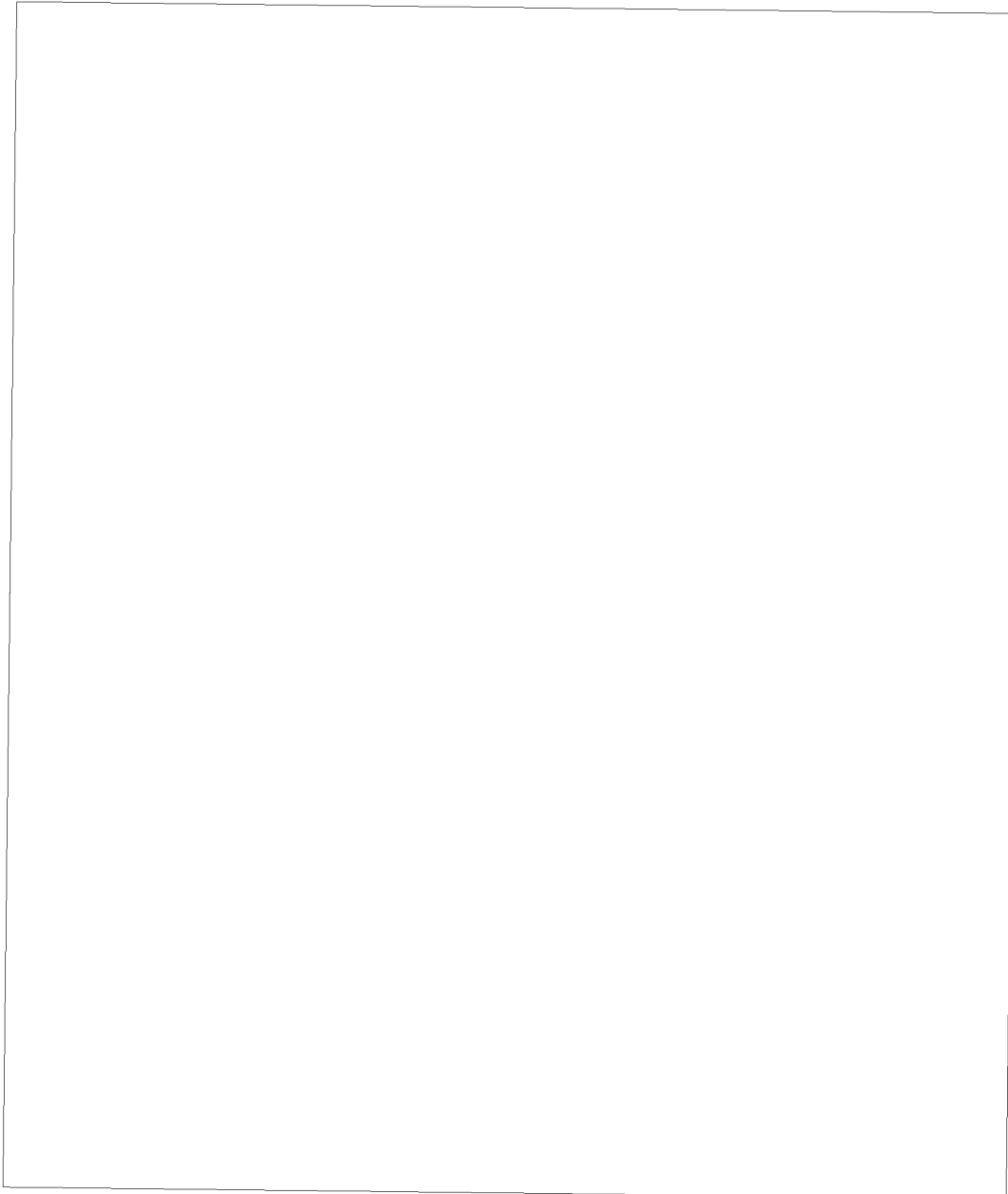
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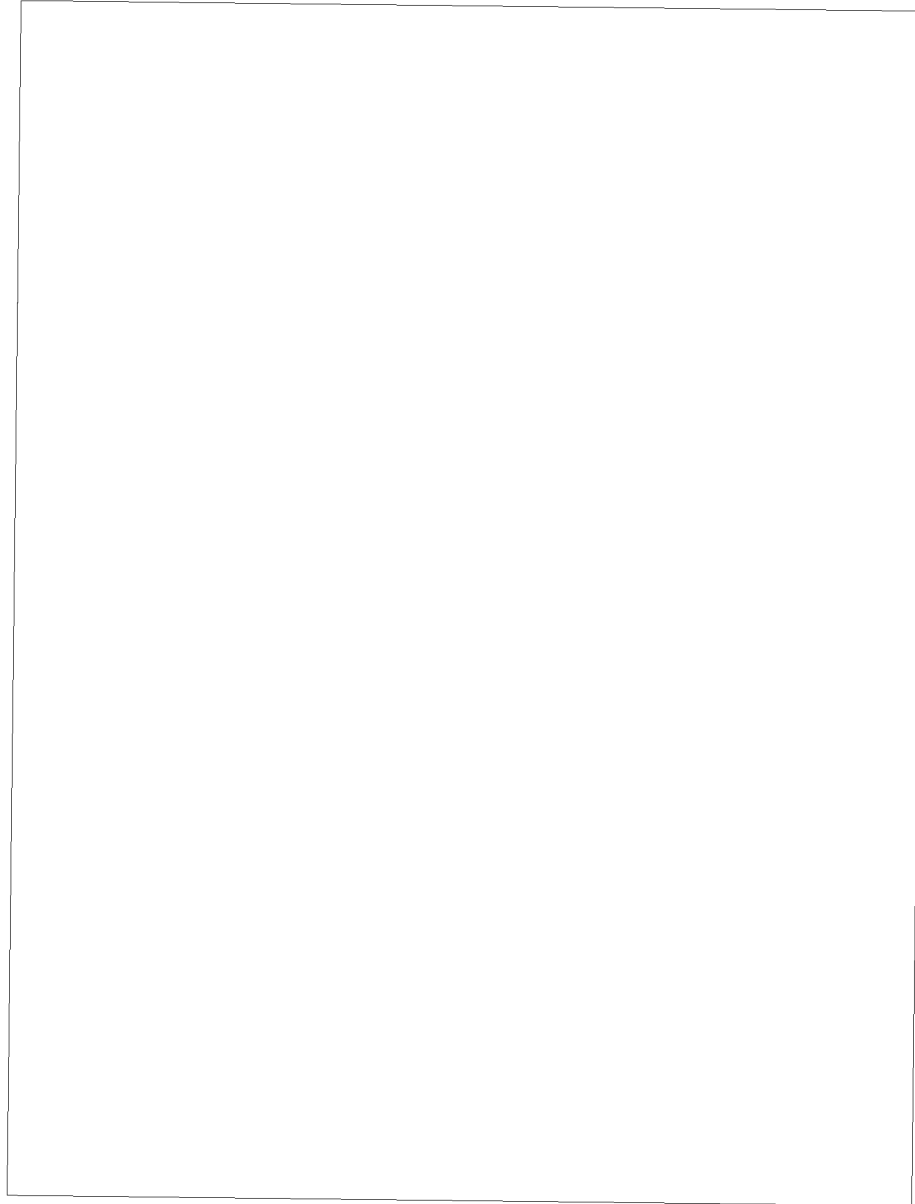
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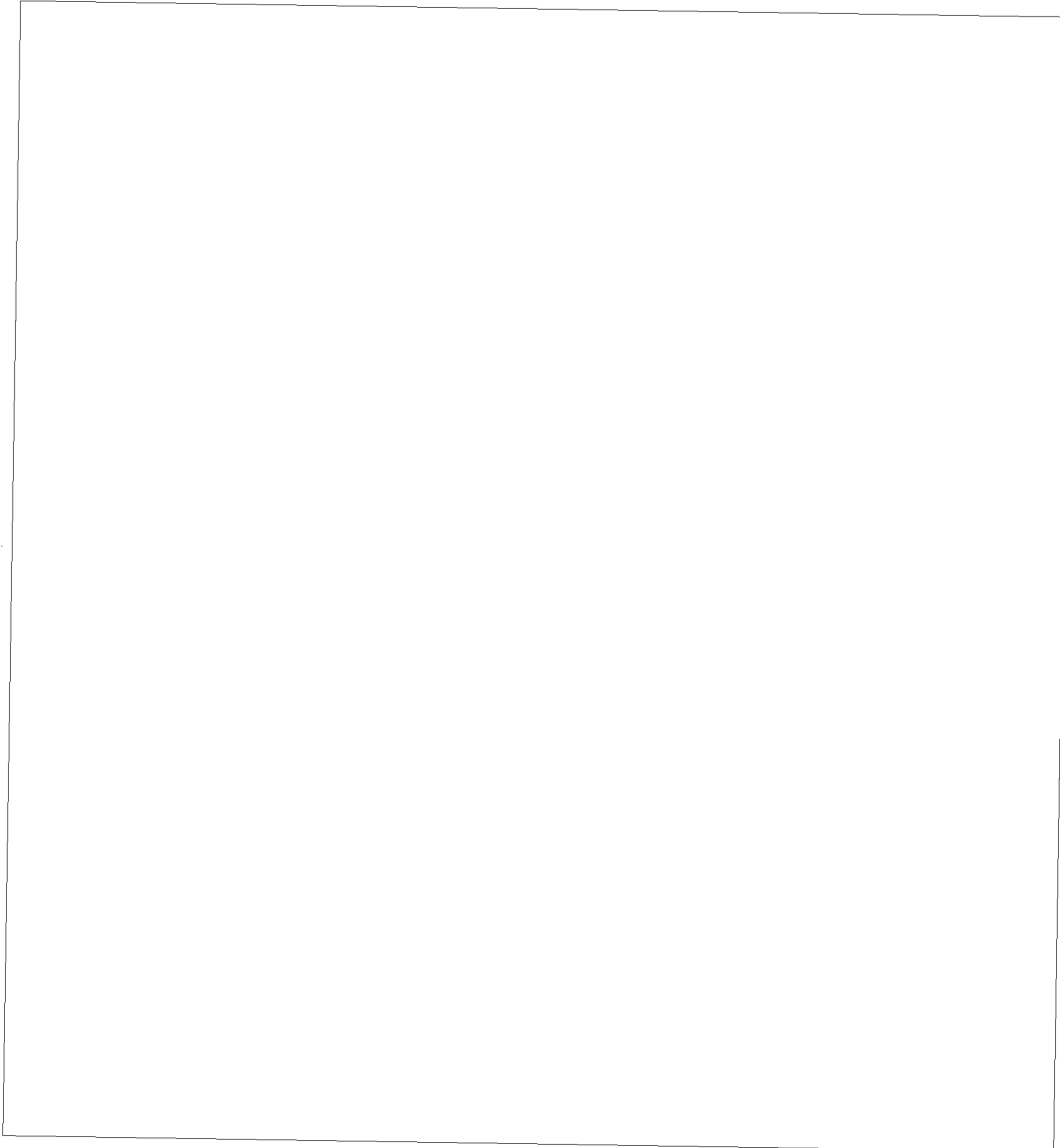
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~~Top Secret~~**INDIA: Mounting Diplomatic Efforts on Kashmir**

Kashmir was relatively peaceful over the weekend as Indian officials started a diplomatic offensive to counter Pakistani moves to capitalize on the issue. Army-imposed curfews reined in most of the violence, although several hundred demonstrators reportedly took to the streets in the Kashmiri capital of Srinagar yesterday. A senior Indian official plans to travel to Kuwait and Iraq shortly to counter alleged Pakistani "disinformation" about the violence. Another official went to Moscow over the weekend to request Soviet support. Press accounts indicate a hardline Hindu group plans to stage a rally on 14 February at a religious site in northern India claimed by both Hindus and Muslims.

Comment: The curfew prevented radicals from staging the large-scale demonstrations they had planned for Friday, but the militants are gaining popular support; more clashes are likely. New Delhi fears Pakistan has had some success in heightening anti-Indian feeling in the Islamic world—for example, Iran recently suggested Foreign Minister Gujral might want to cancel a scheduled visit to Tehran—and feels it must move quickly to prevent further erosion. The government's key Hindu allies favor postponing Hindu hardliners' plans, and these allies will probably try to work out a compromise to avoid raising Hindu-Muslim tensions further.

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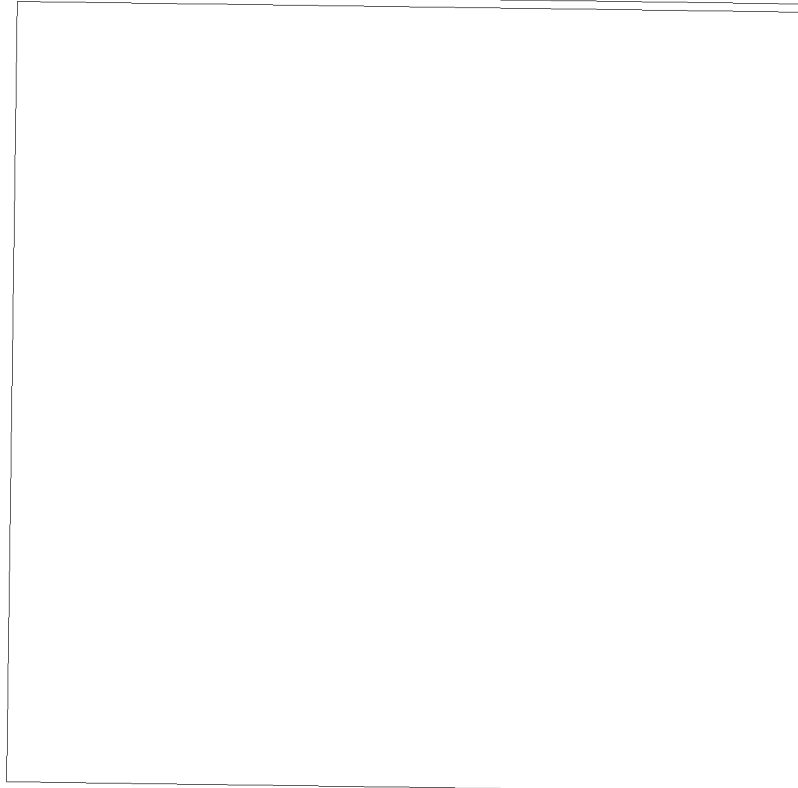
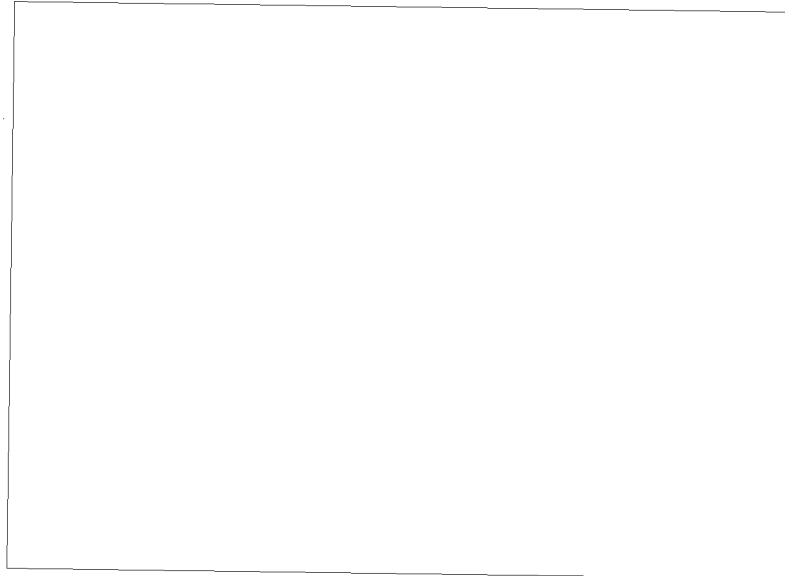
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~~Top Secret~~**ETHIOPIA: Regime Forces Hold Line in Central Region**

The Army is trying to stabilize its position in central Ethiopia and apparently is planning an offensive sweep in the west. The [redacted] recent intense fighting against Tigray rebels north of Dese has ended in a stalemate, with heavy casualties on each side. Government troops reportedly have reoccupied several towns north and east of Lake Tana. [redacted] 30,000 Army troops, supported by heavy artillery and as many as 50 tanks, have assembled near Nek'emte to push back some 5,000 rebels in western Welega Province. [redacted]

Comment: The Army, at least temporarily, has held the line in central Ethiopia. In view of its superiority in manpower and firepower, it should have few problems ousting the insurgents from Welega, although the High Command has frittered away such advantages in the past. The government has capitalized on a virtual standdown by the main Eritrean rebel group by shifting seasoned troops from Eritrea to central fronts. Stalemates like that at Dese, especially if accompanied by heavy casualties, may favor the more numerous Army and almost certainly will prompt the Tigrays to press their Eritrean allies to resume fighting. The Tigrays probably will look for Army weak points or try to cut the key logistic route between Addis Ababa and Aseb. [redacted]

NAMIBIA: Democratic Constitution Moving Ahead

Namibia's draft constitution will be debated by the constituent assembly today; its adoption, which could come in the next two weeks, will mark the final step before independence. The document embodies Western-style democratic principles, including a declaration of human rights, regular elections, and an independent judiciary. It establishes a government with an executive president, prime minister, 16-member cabinet, and bicameral legislature. SWAPO leader Nujoma is widely expected to be elected president; his tenure would be limited to two five-year terms. [redacted]

Comment: SWAPO expects the debate to result in swift ratification of the constitution and that a late March date for independence can be set. The document, which encompasses proposals from SWAPO and suggestions from the six other parties in the assembly, demonstrates political consensus and refutes assertions by critics that SWAPO would institute a one-party Communist state. The UN plan requires ratification by a two-thirds majority of the 72-member assembly; SWAPO has 41 seats and probably will have no trouble winning the seven additional votes needed. [redacted]

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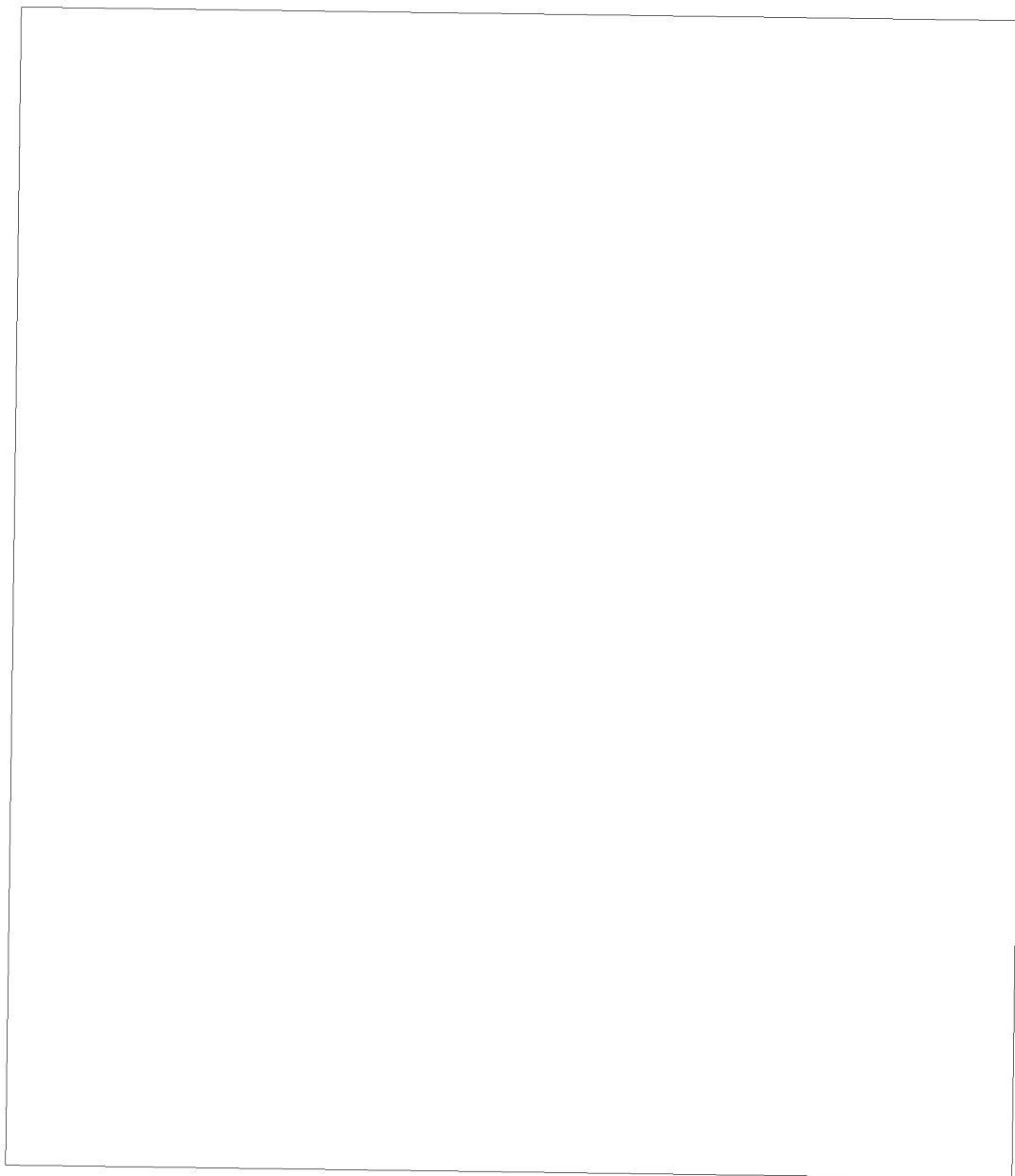
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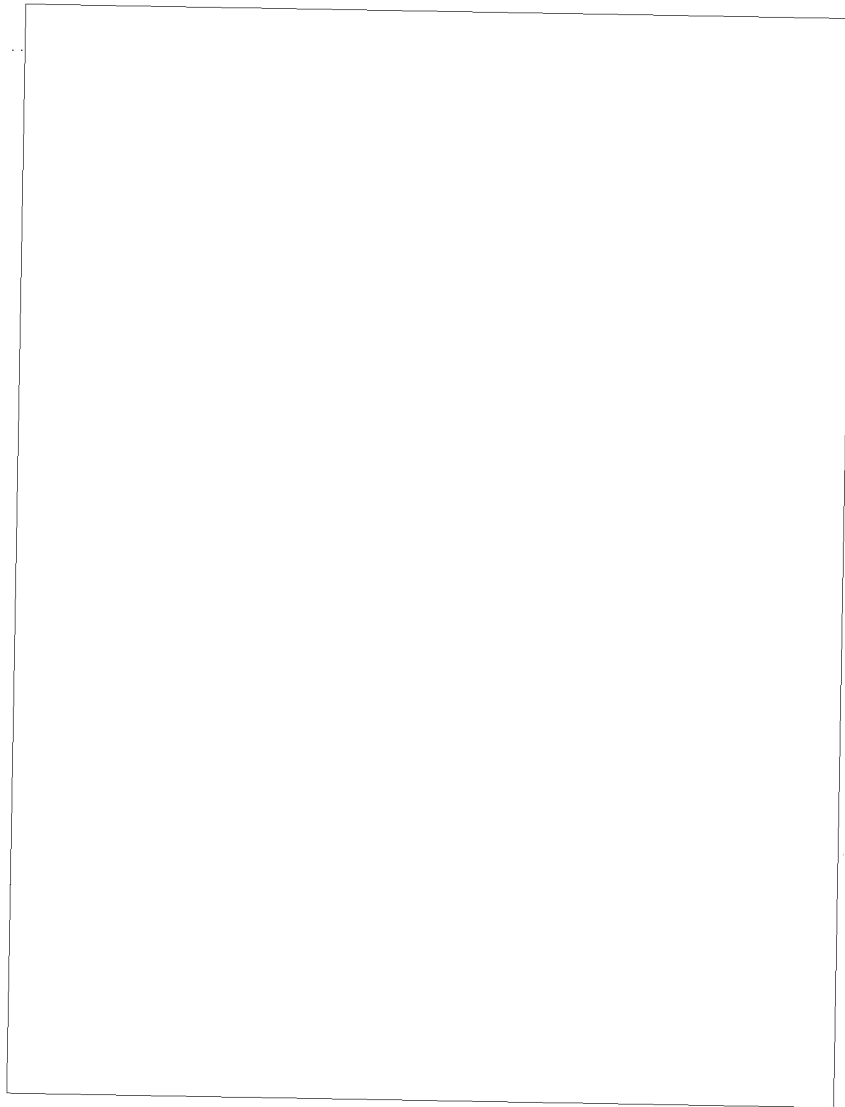


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Special Analysis

USSR:

Limited Options in Azerbaijan

To gain some semblance of order in Azerbaijan without a continuing occupation, Moscow probably will have to allow nationalist elements effective control of the republic.

Current arrangements will not allow Moscow to regain control of the chaotic situation in Azerbaijan. The rules of engagement prevent Soviet forces from moving offensively against nationalists. Soviet authorities continue to arrest radical Azeri Front members and allow groups to violate existing emergency bans against large meetings and to break curfew with little or no retribution.

Attempting full-scale military control might bring a semblance of order but would not resolve the underlying crisis and would entail significant costs. Moscow would have to deploy massive manpower, fully manning the Ground Forces units currently in Azerbaijan and introducing four to six additional divisions to replace airborne and possibly MVD units currently in the region. This would strain USSR economically and provoke negative domestic international responses.

Moscow probably will pursue a combination of harsher tactics and then negotiations. It probably will fill out units already in the region and use them to open railways and enterprises and to establish basic government functions. The Soviets probably will arrest more radical Front leaders but eventually will negotiate with them because of the Front's dominant role in the republic.

In a bid for a negotiated resolution with a prospect of allowing military withdrawal, Moscow is likely to give Front leaders substantial control of the republic government and to promise them leeway to work toward autonomy within constitutional limits. The Soviet intervention has radicalized many Azeris, making it unlikely that Front leaders will settle for less than real control.

Moscow's resort to tougher measures in Baku this week probably was meant to isolate radical elements in the Front and gain position for negotiations. The Soviet leaders may believe draconian measures and the threat of escalation have a chance to intimidate Azeris into choosing peaceful means of increasing their control over the republic.

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