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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 4 ANTANANARIVO 1704

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, MA
SUBJ: STATUS OF RATSIRAKA REGIME

REFS: A) ANT 1399; B) ANT 0627; C) DAO MESSAGE: IR 860
0013 78; D) 77 ANT 2158; E) ANT 0646; F) 77 ANT 2206;
G) VICTORIA 0391; H) ANT 912; I) 77 ANT 2307

1. SUMMARY. INTERNAL: THE RATSIRAKA REGIME HAS MADE
LITTLE OR NOW PROGRESS IN TWO OF THE THREE FIELDS TO WHICH
IT HAD PUBLICLY ATTACHED PRIORITY INTEREST: PUBLIC SECURITY
AND EDUCATION. IN THE THIRD PRIORITY AREA, PRODUCTION AND
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DISTRIBUTION OF RICE, THERE HAS BEEN A NET REGRESSION. THE
INCLUSION IN THE GOVERNMENT OF VARIOUS POLITICAL TENDENCIES
AND THEIR LEADERS HAS INCREASED TENSION IN THE HIGHER
REACHES OF THE ADMINISTRATION AND IS INHIBITING THE
ABILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT TO ACT DECISIVELY AND EFFEC-
TIVELY. IN SPITE OF THESE DIFFICULTIES, THE WORK OF
INSTALLING AND BREAKING IN THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE NEW

GOVERNMENT GOES ON, FURTHER LEGITIMIZING AND ENTRENCHING THE REGIME IN POWER, AND EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVE TO RATSIRAKA'S LEADERSHIP HAS APPEARED. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE POLITICIANS BOTH IN AND OUT OF THE GOVERNMENT WHO MIGHT LIKE TO SEE HIM STUMBLE OR FAIL, AND EVEN TO REPLACE HIM, THEY ARE NOT WILLING TO OVERTLY CHALLENGE HIM AND MOST OF THEM PREFER TO WORK FOR THEIR VARIOUS ENDS BY GIVING HIM AT LEAST PUBLIC SUPPORT.

2. EXTERNAL: RATSIRAKA'S DISILLUSIONMENT WITH THE SOVIET UNION, REPORTED IN LATE 1977, SEEMED TO ABATE IN 1978, AND HE MADE A STATE VISIT TO THE USSR IN JUNE, BEFORE AND AFTER WHICH HE LAVISHED PRAISE ON THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES AS "NATURAL" AND "OBJECTIVE" ALLIES. SO FAR HIS MATERIAL GAINS FROM THE VISIT IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD DO NOT SEEM CONSIDERABLE AND IT IS SAID THAT HE MIGHT WELL BE SECRETLY DISAPPOINTED ON THIS SCORE. WHETHER OR NOT THIS IS SO, HE TOOK THE INITIATIVE IN MID-1978 TO RESUME TALKS WITH THE UNITED STATES TO SETTLE THE PROBLEM OF THE NASA STATION, CLOSED BY THE DRM (DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF MADAGASCAR) IN 1975, WHICH HAS BEEN THE PRINCIPAL OBSTACLE TO IMPROVED BILATERAL RELATIONS. ON THE AFRICAN SCENE, RATSIRAKA ATTENDED HIS FIRST OAU MEETING AS CHIEF OF STATE AND MADE A BIG PITCH TO PROMOTE MORE CONCENTRATION AND JOINT ACTION AMONG PROGRESSIVE AFRICAN STATES AGAINST THE

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MACHINATIONS OF THE WESTERN POWERS AND THEIR AFRICAN CLIENT STATES. THE COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH FRANCE CONTINUED IN SPITE OF STRAINS CAUSED BY RATSIRAKA'S DENUNCIATIONS OF FRENCH ACTIONS IN ZAIRE AND ESPOUSAL OF SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE FRENCH INDIAN OCEAN DEPARTMENT OF REUNION. MILITARY COOPERATION WITH COMMUNIST COUNTRIES CONTINUES, AND MAY INCREASE, BUT SO FAR THERE HAS BEEN NO INDICATION THAT RATSIRAKA INTENDS TO DEPART FROM HIS POLICY OF DENYING MADAGASCAR'S PORTS TO WARSHIPS OF ANY LARGE POWERS, INCLUDING THE USSR. END SUMMARY.

3. INTERNAL: NO PROGRESS IN PRIORITY AREAS
A YEAR AGO PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA'S GOVERNMENT SPECIFIED THAT IT WOULD GIVE PRIORITY ATTENTION TO THE PROBLEMS OF LAW AND ORDER, RICE AND EDUCATION, THUS GRATUITOUSLY PROVIDING BENCHMARKS BY WHICH ITS PERFORMANCE COULD BE JUDGED. IT IS OBVIOUS TO EVERYONE BY NOW THAT THE LAW AND ORDER SITUATION HAS NOT IMPROVED AND THAT THE RICE SITUATION HAS GOTTEN WORSE, EVEN THOUGH THE LATTER CAN BE PARTIALLY BLAMED ON THE ELEMENTS. THE SITUATION IN THESE TWO FIELDS IS DESCRIBED IN REFS A AND B.

4. IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION, THE GOVERNMENT'S PERFORMANCE IS SOMEWHAT HARDER TO JUDGE. THE PROBLEM IS BASICALLY THREEFOLD: A) EXPANDING PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION IN THE COUNTRYSIDE; B) PUTTING ORDER BACK INTO THE EXISTING PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN THE CITIES; AND C) QUIETING DOWN THE VOLATILE STUDENTS IN THE SECONDARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION ESTABLISHMENTS. THE GOVERNMENT HAS APPARENTLY MADE SOME PROGRESS IN A) AND IS WORKING ON B). A NUMBER OF NEW SCHOOLS ARE BEING BUILT WITH VOLUNTEER LABOR IN THE COUNTRYSIDE AND THE GOVERNMENT HAS UNDERTAKEN TO STAFF THEM, PARTIALLY WITH 1978 GRADUATES OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL SYSTEM WHO WILL SERVE ONE YEAR AS TEACHERS IN THE

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COUNTRYSIDE AS AGAINST TWO YEARS OF MILITARY OR OTHER KINDS OF NATIONAL SERVICE LATER ON. THE SCHEDULES FOR MOST EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ARE GRADUALLY BEING BROUGHT BACK INTO LINE WITH THE FRENCH SCHOOL YEAR - AN ATTEMPT TO SET UP A SCHEDULE ANSWERING MORE TO MADAGASCAR'S SEASONS WAS FOUND TO BE IMPRACTICAL IN VIEW OF MADAGASCAR'S CONSIDERABLE DEPENDENCE ON FRENCH TEACHERS WHO INSIST ON TAKING THEIR SUMMER VACATIONS ON EUROPEAN TIME. THE SITUATION IS STILL SOMEWHAT PERTURBED AS DIFFERENT GRADES ARE GOING BACK TO THE OLD SCHEDULE AT VARYING SPEEDS - LARGE FAMILIES WITH

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CHILDREN OF DIFFERENT AGES ARE PARTICULARLY BOTHERED
BY HAVING THEIR CHILDREN ON VACATION AT DIFFERENT TIMES.

5. THE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS HAVE BEEN QUIET OVER THE
PAST YEAR BUT THERE CONTINUES TO BE ACTIVE UNREST AMONG
SOME OF THE SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENDS OVER
SPECIFIC CONTENTIONS ISSUES IN THE EDUCTIONAL SYSTEM.
AS EVIDENT EXAMPLE OF THIS WAS THE STUDENT-POLICE
CONFRONTATION WHICH LED TO THE MOB ACTION OF MAY 29-30
(REF A). THE UNIVERSITY CONTINUES TO FUNCTION
ERRATICALLY, PLAGUED BY THE PROBLEM OF DECENTRALIZA-
TION, AND A GENERAL LOWERING OF STANDARDS RESULTING
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FROM LAGAGASIZATION AND OVERCROWDING.

6. THE PROBLEM OF OVERCROWDING IS ONLY A SYMPTOM OF
THE GREATER PROBLEM WHICH FACES HIGHER EDUCATION,
NAMELY THE LARGE NUMBER OF SECONDARY SCHOOL GRADUATES
WHO EXPECT ADMISSION TO THE UNIVERSITY. THE NUMBER OF
UNIVERSITY STUDENTS INCREASED AT AN ANNUAL RATE OF 25 PERCENT
FROM 1971 TO 1977, GOING FROM 5,684 TO 15,042. THE
GOVERNMENT HAS TEMPORARILLY ALLEVIATED THE PROBLEM BY
ARRANGING FOR SOME OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL GRADUATES
TO DO THEIR NATIONAL SERVICE BEFORE PURSUING THEIR
EDUCATION (REF C).

7. LOOKING FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD, THE INCREASING
NUMBER OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS CAN ONLY WORSEN THE ALREADY
DIFFICULT PROBLEM OF FINDING SUITABLE EMPLOYMENT FOR ALL
THESE PEOPLE. IT IS SAID THAT ONE OF THE REASONS
PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA IS SO ANXIOUS TO START ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES IS, IN ADDITION TO DEVELOPMENT
ISTELF, TO PROVIDE SUCH EMPLOYMENT FOR MADAGASCAR'S
YOUNG EDUCATED PEOPLE. THE SITUATION IS ALREADY BAD
BECAUSE OF THE DIMINUTION OF PRIVATE BUSINESS ACTIVITY

OF THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS WHICH HAS NOT YET BEEN
COMPENSATED FOR BY GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT.

8. AT ANY RATE, THE PROBLEM POSED BY THE EXISTENCE OF
A VOLATILE STUDENT POPULATION IS THE CAPITAL IS OF CON-
STANT CONCERN TO THIS GOVERNMENT, WHICH IS ONLY TOO
CONSCIOUS OF THE FACT THAT IT WAS ACTION BY THE YOUTH
OF THE CAPITAL WHICH LED TO THE OVERTHROW OF THE PRE-
VIOUS GOVERNMENT IN 1972. THE MALAGASY ARE UNCOMMONLY
ATTACHED TO THE WELFARE OF THEIR CHILDREN, AND PRESIDENT
RATSIRAKA FULLY UNDERSTANDS THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS QUESTION
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COULD HAVE ON THE STANDING FATE OF HIS GOVERNMENT.

9 DISAGREEMENT WITHIN GOVERNMENT
AS FORESEEN IN REF D, THE VARIETY OF POLITICAL TENDENCIES
WITHIN THE RATSIRAKA GOVERNMENT HAS IMPEDED THE ADMINI-
STRATION OF THE ECONOMY. DIFFERENCES ON SUBJECTS SUCH
AS HOW FAST THE ECONOMY SHOULD BE COLLECTIVIZED, ALREADY
CITED IN REF E, HAVE OCCASIONALLY LED TO SOMETHING LIKE
NEAR PARALYSIS. IN ADDITION, THERE ARE INDIVIDUALS IN
THE TOP LEVEL OF THE GOVERNMENT WHO, ALTHOUGH PROFESSING
TO SUPPORT RATSIRAKA, WOULD BE JUST AS GLAD TO SEE HIM
STUMBLE. SOME PERSONS BELIEVE, FOR INSTANCE, THAT THE
MOB ACTION OF MAY 29-30 WAS DELIBERATELY ENCOURAGED BY
PARTIES WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT AND THAT THIS WAS THE
REASON WHY THE AUTHORITIES THEMSELVES WERE SLOW TO REACT
AND RATSIRAKA TOOK NO PERSONAL ROLE IN RESTORING ORDER
- NOT KNOWING WHO HE WAS DEALING WITH, HE PREFERRED TO
STAY OUT OF IT. THE MAIN RESULT OF THIS SITUATION IS
EXTREME SLOWNESS IN GETTING ANYTHING DONE. IN SPITE OF
THE SOCIALIST RHETORIC, MADAGASCAR REMAINS AT THE STAGE
OF STATE CAPITALISM AND THE PRINCIPAL RESULT OF THE
NATIONALIZATIONS OF THE PAST FEW YEARS HAS BEEN THE
PROMOTION OF THE MALAGASY CADRES WHO REPLACED THE
FORMER EUROPEAN MANAGERS.

10. IN SPITE OF THESE HANDICAPS, THE RATSIRAKA GOVERN-
MENT CONTINUES TO ENTRENCH ITSELF ADMINISTRATIVELY AND
THEREBY TO FURTHER LEGITIMIZE ITSELF. THE VARIOUS UNITS
OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT INSTITUTED BY THE 1975 CONSTITU-
TION ARE REPORTEDLY FUNCTIONING BETTER AS THEY LEARN
THEIR JOBS AND LIMITATIONS. AND ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT
AND RATSIRAKA HIMSELF HAVE NOT GENERATED ANY GREAT DEGREE
OF POPULAR SUPPORT, MOST OF THE PROMINENT PRESENT DAY
POLITICAL LEADERS HAVE CHOSEN TO WORK WITHIN THE
GOVERNMENT AND NO ONE HAS ELECTED TO CHALLENGE HIM
OVERTLY.
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11. EXTERNAL: RENEWED ASSERTION OF SOVIET TIES.
IN THE FIRST HALF OF 1978, PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA SEEMS TO
HAVE GOTTEN OVER THE TEMPORARY DISENCHANTMENT WITH THE
SOVIET UNION WHICH WAS ATTRIBUTED TO HIM IN LATE 1977
AS A RESULT OF SOVIET ABANDONMENT OF SOMALIA AND THE
LOW LEVEL OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FORTHCOMING FROM THE
USSR (REF F). IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT THIS DISPLEASURE
SHOULD DECREASE WITH THE PASAGE OF TIME IN VIEW OF
RATSIRAKA'S CLEAR IDEOLOGICAL PREFERENCE FOR THE SOCIALIST
SYSTEM, HIS AMBITION TO BE A LEADING FIGURE AMONG
AFRICAN PROGRESSIVES, AND HIS NEGATIVE REACTION TO
CERTAIN WESTERN ACTIONS IN AFRICA EARLIER THIS YEAR,
NAMESLY IN ZAIRE AND THE COMOROS, AND ALLEGEDLY IN
MADAGASCAR AND THE SEYCHELLES. HE CHOSE THIS TIME TO PICK
UP ON AN ONGSTANDING INVITATION TO TRAVEL TO THE SOVIET
UNION AND, IN CONNECTION WITH THIS STATE VISIT, COINED
THE APPELATION OF "NATURAL AND OBJECTIVE ALLIES" TO
DESCRIBE SOVIET-MALAGASY RELATIONS. IN HIS MAJOR
SPEECH IN MOSCOW ON JUNE 29, AND LATER AT THE OAU SUMMIT
MEETING, HE REPEATED THAT THERE IS NO COMPARISON BETWEEN
WESTERN ACTIONS IN AFRICA, AIMED AS THEY ARE AT RETAIN-
ING OR RESTORING DOMINANCE, AND THOSE OF THE SOVIETS
AND CUBANS WHICH HAVE ONLY THE PUREST MOTIVE OF AIDING
AFRICAN LIBERATION AND INDEPENDENCE.

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12. THE COMPLETE MATERIAL RESULTS OF PRESIDENT RATSI-
RAKS'S TRIP TO MOSCOW ARE NOT YET KNOWN. THE SOVIETS
GAVE HIM A VIP AICRAFT, 200 TRACTORS, AND AGREED TO
SELL HIM 1,000 MORE AT AN ADVANTAGEOUS PRICE. HE SAID
ON HIS RETURN THAT CONTRACTS HAD BEEN ENTERED INTO FOR
ARMS BUT DID NOT SPECIFY ITEMS OR QUANTITY, OR SAY
WHETHER THEY WERE GIFTS OR SALES. ACCORDING TO ONE
SOURCE, THERE WILL BE MIGS AND A TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT,
THE LATTER ON LOAN. BUT THERE ARE REPORTS THAT RATSI-
RAKA MIGHT HAVE BEEN DISAPPOINTED AT THE CONTINUING
LOW LEVEL OF SOVIET ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. HE INTIMATED
AS MUCH UPON HIS RETURN FROM HIS TRIP WHEN HE SAID THAT
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THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES HAD HELPED MADAGASCAR AND OTHER
AFRICAN COUNTRIES IN THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY FIELDS
AND THAT NOW HE HOPED THEY WOULD DO DO IN ECONOMIC FIELD.
AT ANY RATE, THE ACTUAL EXPENDITURES MADE BY THE SOVIETS
FOR ECOMOMIC DEVELOPMENT REMAIN QUITE LOW COMPARED TO
THOSE OF FRANCE, WESTERN EUROPE, AND INTERNATIONAL DONORS.
ONE EXCEPTION TO THIS SO FAR UNIMPRESSIVE RECORD IS THE
NUMBER OF SCHOLARSHIPS PROVIDED BY THE USSR TO MADAGAS-
CAR. THERE ARE ABOUT 500 MALAGASY STUDENTS NOW STUDYING
IN THE USSR AND 250 MORE ARE TO GO THIS YEAR. AT THIS
RATE, THERE WILL SOON BE MORE MALAGASY STUDENTS IN THE
USSR ON OFFICIAL SCHOLARSHIPS THAN IN FRANCE.

13. ALTHOUGH THE USSR IS DEFINITELY INTERESTED IN EX-
PANDING ITS INFLUENCE IN MADAGASCAR, THE PRIORITY
ACCORDED TO THIS OBJECTIVE MIGHT NOT BE HIGH. THE
SOVIETS HAVE REPORTEDLY REQUESTED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS
THE USE OF MALAGASY PORTS FOR THEIR INDIAN OCEAN FLEET
BUT HAVE BEEN REFUSED. ON THE OTHER HAND, THEY HAVE
NOT YET SUPPORTED THIS REQUEST WITH ANY LARGE AMOUNTS
OF AID IN EITHER THE MILITARY OR ECONOMIC FIELDS.
ACCORDING TO THE LATEST FIGURES (COMMUNIST AID TO LESS
DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FOR THE FREE WORLD - AUGUST 1977)

THERE ARE MANY COUNTRIES IN AFRICA RECEIVING MORE SOVIET SUPPORT THAN MADAGASCAR. SO FAR, THEREFORE, IT APPEARS THAT WHILE THE SOVIETS WOULD DEFINITELY LIKE MILITARY ACCESS TO MADAGASCAR, IT IS NOT IMPORTANT ENOUGH FOR THEM TO DEVOTE EXTRAORDINARY EFFORTS OR EXPENSES TO PURSUE THIS OBJECTIVE. IT IS, OF COURSE, POSSIBLE THAT ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE MIGHT HAVE BEEN OFFERED AS A QUID PRO QUO, TO BE PROVIDED AFTER MILITARY ACCESS HAS BEEN GRANTED. BUT WE HAVE HEARD NO SUBSTANTIATION FOR THIS HYPOTHESIS.

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14. OTHER FOREIGN CONTACTS

PATIRAKA'S TRIP TO THE USSR WAS ONLY ONE OF HIS OUTINGS THIS YEAR. HE TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE AIRCRAFT LOANED TO HIM BY THE SOVIETS FOR HIS TRIP TO MOSCOW TO VISIT SEVERAL COUNTRIES ON HIS WAY BACK TO MADAGASCAR, NAMELY ALGERIA, LIBYA, MOZAMBIQUE AND TANZANIA. HE THEN WENT TO THE OAU SUMMIT MEETING AT KHARTOUM, HIS FIRST VISIT TO THE OAU AS CHIEF OF STATE.

15. IN ALL THESE TRIPS, RATSIRAKA GAVE HIS GREATEST ATTENTION TO PROMOTING UNITY AND JOINT ACTION AMONG THE PROGRESSIVE COUNTRIES OF AFRICA. AT THE OAU HE ALSO MADE A STRONG PITCH FOR THAT ORGANIZATION'S MAKING ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE FOR AFRICA ONE OF ITS MAJOR GOALS. BUT HIS MAIN PURPOSE SEEMED TO BE TO ASSERT FOR HIMSELF A LEADING ROLE AMONG THE PROGRESSIVE LEADERS. ALTHOUGH PAYING LIP SERVICE TO THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THE OAU, HE IS MORE INTERESTED IN PROGRESSIVE COLLABORATION AND HE HAS, SINCE THE KHARTOUM MEETING, SENT EMISSARIES TO ALGERIA, TANZANIA, MOZAMBIQUE, AND GUINEA, PRESUMABLY TO FOLLOW UP ON HIS SUGGESTION FOR A MEETING AT GOVERNMENT LEVEL OF THE AFRICAN PROGRESSIVE STATES.

16. RELATIONS WITH THE WEST UNEVEN: FRANCE

IN CONTRAST TO THIS SNOG OF FRATERNITY WITH THE USSR AND THE PROGRESSIVES, DEVELOPMENTS IN MADAGASCAR'S RELATIONS WITH THE WEST WERE MIXED. THERE WAS A COOLING OF RELATIONS WITH FRANCE. PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA HAD INTENDED TO VISIT FRANCE ALSO THIS YEAR, AND IN APRIL HAD ASKED THE FRENCH IF HE COULD DO SO ON HIS WAY HOME FROM MOSCOW (THE FRENCH WERE THE ONLY ONES TOLD IN ADVANCE ABOUT HIS TRIP TO THE USSR). THE FRENCH DEMURRED ON THIS AND RATSIRAKA WAS PROBABLY JUST AS GLAD WHEN SUBSEQUENT FRENCH ACTIONS IN ZAIRE WERE UNANIMOUSLY DE-
DOUNCED BY ALL PROGRESSIVE AFRICAN STATES. RATSIRAKA

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JOINED IN THIS DENUNCIATION AS COULD BE EXPECTED.
WHAT WAS NOT EXPECTED - IN VIEW OF HIS USUAL CARE NOT
TO TAKE ON FRENCH DIRECTLY - WAS HIS DENUNCIATION AT THE
OAU OF THE FRENCH MILITARY PRESENCE IN REUNION AND HIS
BLUNT DESCRIPTION OF THE REUNION PROBLEM AS ONE OF
DECOLONIZATION. POSSIBLY HE FELT HE HAD TO DO THIS IN
ORDER TO STRENGTHEN HIS HAND IN THE SW INDIAN OCEAN, IN
THE WAKE O MEETINGS OF PROGRESSIVE AFRICAN FORCES IN
THE SEYCHELLES (REF G) AND MADAGASCAR (REF H), AND THE
MAY 13 COUP IN THE COMOROS, WHICH IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE
BEEN TOLERATED, IF NOT COVERTLY SUPPORTED, BY
FRENCH GOVERNMENT AGENCIES. AT ANY RATE, RATSIRAKA'S
ATTENTION TO REUNION, ADDED TO HIS CRITICISM OF FRENCH
ACTIONS IN ZAIRE AND IN THE SAHARA, PRODUCED SOME STRAINS
WITH FRANCE IN SPITE OF THE VAUNTED FRENCH SANG FROID. HOW
BAD THIS STRAIN IS WILL BE MORE CLEARLY APPRECIATED
WHEN IT IS KNOWN WHETHER THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FRANCO-
MALAGASY COMMISSION WILL TAKE PLACE THIS FALL AS SCHEDULED.

17. RELATIONS WITH THE U.S.
WITH THE U.S. THERE HAS BEEN ONE FAVORABLE DEVELOPMENT.
UPON RATSIRAKA'S RETURN FROM MOSCOW, THE DRM REINITIATED
CONTACTS WITH US CONCERNING NEGOTIATIONS FOR A

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SETTLEMENT OF THE NASA STATION, WHICH THE DRM HAD CLOSED IN 1975. THIS DRM INITIATIVE PROBABLY REFLECTED TWO MOTIVES. THE QUESTION HAS BEEN DRAGGING FOR THREE YEARS AND RATSIRAKA IS KNOWN TO BE UNAHPPY THAT THE U.S. HAS NO AMBASSADOR HERE AND THAT HIS NON-ALIGNED TOUS-AZIMUTS POLICY REMAINS SOMEHOW UNCOMPLETED. AND IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT AFTER HIS MUCH PUBLICIZED CONTACTS WITH THE USSR AND THE PROGRESSIVE WORLD, HE WANTED TO MAKE SOME SMALL BALANCING GESTURE TOWARD THE U.S. AS LEADER OF THE WEST. AT ANY RATE, HE HAS FINALLY PERMITTED NASA INSPECTORS TO COME OUT TO INSPECT THE STATION WITHOUT CONDITIONS, THE INSPECTION TO BE CONFIDENTIAL

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EVENTUALLY FOLLOWED BY NEGOTIATIONS. THIS IS ONLY A SMALL STEP AND DOES NOT INSURE THE CONCLUSION OF AN AGREEMENT, BUT IS IS FURTHER THAN THE DRM HAS BEEN WILLING TO GO IN THREE YEARS TO PERMIT PROGRESS TOWARD A SETTLEMENT.

18. U.S./DRM COMMERCIAL TRANSACTIONS GO ON DURING THE FIRST HALF OF 1978, PROGRESS CONTINUED TOWARD THE DRM PURCHASE OF A BOEING 747, A CONTRACT WAS SIGNED FOR THE PURCHASE OF AN AMERICAN FERTILIZER PLANT, AND THE U.S. CONTINUED TO BE THE SECOND LEADING IMPORTER OF MALAGASY PRODUCTS, THE DRM ENJOYED A 10-1 TRADE SURPLUS WITH THE U.S. THE PURCHASE OF LOCKHEED CARGO AIRCRAFT SEEMS TO BE IN LIMBO RIGHT NOW FOR LACK OF SUITABLE FINANCING. THE DRM OBVIOUSLY DOES NOT OBJECT TO DEALING WITH THE U.S. ON PRACTICAL MATTERS - IN FACT, THE AMERICAN FERTILIZER PLANT WILL BE RUN IN PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE MALAGASY GOVERNMENT AND THE AMERICAN FIRM. IT IS THE FIRST JOINT VENTURE COMPANY TO BE FORMED UNDER THE NEWLY PROMULGATED CHARTER OF SOCIALIST ENTERPRISES.

19. IF THE DRM HAS NO PROBLEM IN DEALING WITH THE U.S. ON PRACTICAL MATTERS, IT MAKES NO VISABLE EFFORT TO GET ALONG WITH US POLITICALLY OR PSYCHOLOGICALLY. THE ANTI-WESTERN PROPAGANDA MACHINE OF THE GOVERNMENT GOES ON WITHOUT STOP. ALTHOUGH IT NO LONGER SINGLES OUT THE

U.S. FOR SPECIAL TREATMENT, AS WAS THE CASE IN 1976,
WE STILL COME IN FOR A GOOD SHARE OF OPPOBRIUM AS LEADERS
OF THE CAPITALO-IMPERIALIST CAMP. EVEN WITH FRANCE
NUMBER ONE ON THE LIST OF ENEMIES AND HELD PARTLY RES-
PONSIBLE FOR FRANCE'S MISDEEDS BECAUSE OF OUR LEADER-
SHIP POSITION IN THE EST. THE NORTH KOREAN AMBASSADOR
HAS COMPLETE ACCESS TO THE OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE MEDIA
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TO DESCRIBE IN HIS OWN TERMS THE CONDITIONS IN NORTH
KOREA AND SOUTH KOREA AND THE PERFIDY OF U.S. POLICY.
MY REPEATED REQUESTS FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO REPLY OR FOR
THE U.S. POSITION TO BE DISSEMINATED HAVE NOT EVEN
PRODUCED A REPLY. THE ONLY CONSIDERATION GIVEN US IS
THAT THE YEARLY "MONTH OF SOLIDARITY WITH NORTH KOREA"
HAS BEEN KICKED OFF FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS ON JULY 5
INSTEAD OF JUNE 25TH OUT OF REGARD FOR OUR NATIONAL DAY
- SO THE FOREIGN MINISTER TELLS ME.

20. IF U.S./DRM RELATIONS SHOW ONLY SLIGHT SIGNS OF
IMPROVING, WE CAN STILL TAKE COMFORT IN THE FACT THAT
RATSIRAKA HAS CONTINUED TO ADHERE TO HIS POLICY OF NOT
PERMITTING ACCESS TO MADAGASCAR'S PORTS BY THE NAVIES
OF LARGE POWERS, INCLUDING THE USSR. HE HAS NOT PUBLICLY
REPEATED THIS POLICY SINCE LAST DECEMBER (REF I), BUT
ON HIS RETURN FROM MOSCOW HE ANNOUNCED THAT THE SOVIETS
HAD PUBLICALLY REITERATED TO HIM THAT THEY SOUGHT NO BASES
IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. AS WE HAVE REPEATEDLY SAID, IT
WOULD NOT BE DIFFICULT FOR RATSIRAKA TO JUSTIFY GIVING
THE SOVIETS THE SAME TYPE OF SHORE FACILITIES THEY USED
TO HAVE IN SOMALIA, IN VIEW OF THE DRM'S SPECIAL
AFFINITY FOR THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES AND IN ORDER TO
MAINTAIN A BALANCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN BY SUPPLYING A
COUNTERWEIGHT TO THE AMERICAN FACILITY AT DIEGO GARCIA.
BUT SO FAR RATSIRAKA HAS SHIED AWAY FROM TAKING THIS
ULTIMATE STEP IN COOPERATION WITH HIS OBJECTIVE ALLIES,
FEARING THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL DIFFICULTIES IT MIGHT
CAUSE HIM AND ALSO FROM A LINGERING MISTRUST OF THE
USSR AS A GREAT POWER.

21. ANOTHER FACTOR MAY HELP DETER RATSIRAKA FROM SUCH
A MOVE. IN ADDITION TO THE USSR, MADAGASCAR MAINTAINS
CLOSE RELATIONS WITH FOUR OTHER SOCIALIST COUNTIES:
CHINA, RUMANIA, YUGOSLAVIA, AND NORTH KOREA, ALL OF
WHICH HAVE RESIDENT MISSIONS IN ANTANANARIVO. IN 1978
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THE LAST NAMED THREE COUNTRIES CHOSE TO MAKE A PUBLIC SHOW OF THEIR INDEPENDENCE FROM MOSCOW BY RECEIVING THE CHINESE HEAD OF GOVERNMENT. IT IS JUST POSSIBLE THAT THE EXAMPLE SET BY THESE FOUR COUNTRIES WILL HAVE SOME EFFECT ON RATSIRAKA AND WILL SERVE AS AN ADDITIONAL DETERRENT TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DANGEROUSLY CLOSE MILITARY COLLABORATION WITH THE USSR. AS THIS MESSAGE WAS CONCLUDED, RATSIRAKA HAD JUST LEFT FOR NORTH KOREA (ON SEPTEMBER 5), AND HAD STOPPED IN CHINA ON THE WAY FOR A TWO HOUR MEETING WITH VICE PRIME MINISTER KENG PIAO. WE MAY GET MORE INDICATIONS UPON HIS RETURN ON WHERE HE STANDS IN RELATION TO THE VARIOUS TENDENCIES IN THE SOCIALIST CAMP.BARRETT

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