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# CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

## OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

15 March 1973

STAFF MEMORANDUM NO. 10-73 (Revised)

SUBJECT: Prospects for Portuguese Guinea

### NOTE

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The plan for independence has been seriously disrupted by Cabral's death. An orderly march to independence would take some months, perhaps a year or more. But Cabral's successors might see some advantages in a speedy, if less organized, move towards that goal. This memorandum discusses the background and current status of the insurgent movement, and speculates on possible developments in Portuguese Guinea. As such it may be useful in lieu of an estimate.

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## A. The Portuguese and the PAIGC

1. Portuguese Guinea 

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important because the African liberation movement there has been the bell-wether of all other insurgent efforts directed against white rule in Africa. Under the able leadership of Amilcar Cabral, the African Party for Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) fared reasonably well in the field, and represented the hopes of black Africans. For their part the Portuguese believe that the loss of Portuguese Guinea would have a domino effect on the more important provinces of Angola and Mozambique. They have, therefore, chosen to defend their position in Portuguese Guinea with as much determination as in the larger provinces.

2. The Portuguese have had some contact with Portuguese Guinea for over 500 years, but only in the twentieth century have they established any semblance of control over the interior. Only 2,000 or so of the half-million inhabitants are Portuguese, and nearly all are government functionaries living in a few towns. There are some 30,000 Portuguese troops, mostly in garrisons sprinkled around a central core area. They protect a few trade routes and tribes loyal

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to Lisbon, and occasionally venture out to seek battle against the guerrilla bands of the PAIGC.

3. The insurgency has dragged on for 10 years, but with a greater measure of success than similar movements in Angola and Mozambique. The guerrilla forces -- believed to number some 6,000-8,000 -- hold perhaps a third of the territory, and are contesting another third. The swampy terrain, the effective leadership of Amilcar Cabral, and material support from the Republic of Guinea, the USSR, and others have contributed to the relative success of the insurgency.

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4. In the last couple of years the military situation has reached a stalemate. General Spínola, the Portuguese governor and military commander, has conducted the war more effectively and with more troops than his predecessors, and has persuaded Lisbon to pay greater attention to economic and social needs in the territory. Meanwhile Cabral restrained his more bellicose field commanders, who yearned for more rocket and artillery attacks

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on Portuguese positions, a tactic tried briefly but with good effect in mid-1971. Cabral for several years had been publicizing his cause in Africa, Europe, and North America, and lining up foreign support for his planned declaration of independence. In the latter half of 1972 PAIGC officials in the "liberated" areas of Portuguese Guinea conducted elections for a national assembly. The plan was for the assembly to meet within Portuguese Guinea, declare independence as the Republic of Bissau (or some name to be determined later), and appeal for international recognition. Presumably this would have included application for membership in the OAU and the UN. The murder of Cabral in January 1973 has thrown all of this into limbo.\*

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\* *The murder of Cabral still has some unresolved loose ends. A suspected murderer and some accomplices, all members of the guerrilla movement, are under arrest in Conakry, Guinea. Guinean authorities blame the Portuguese, partly because it fits their preconceptions of imperialist conspiracies, and partly because the suspects attempted to flee by boat in the direction of Portuguese Guinea. (They were intercepted by a Soviet naval vessel and returned to Conakry.)*

*case can be made that Cabral was the victim of a long simmering racial conflict within the guerrilla movement. Cabral, as a Cape Verdian mulatto, was resented by mainland blacks; and as an advocate of a coordinated military and political policy, he was opposed by the more hawkish field commanders. The unity and discipline which for long distinguished Cabral's movement from other African liberation organizations broke down in the early weeks of 1973.*

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B. Sekou Toure and the PAIGC

5. In the 1960s when the insurgency in Portuguese Guinea was new and promising, Sekou Toure gloried in his role of host and sponsor. By providing PAIGC with a headquarters in his own capital, propaganda assistance and training facilities there and in camps close to Portuguese Guinea, Toure enhanced his own revolutionary anti-imperialist credentials. But tensions built up over the years between Toure and the PAIGC. Relations between Toure and Cabral were fairly cordial, but never warm. Both were heavily influenced by Marxist concepts, but differed in interpretation. When the Portuguese staged a raid on PAIGC facilities in Conakry in 1970, Toure publicly reaffirmed his attachment to the liberation cause and struck a martyr-like pose. Privately, he was somewhat shaken by the event, enough at any rate to call for Soviet naval protection and to instigate a massive purge of his own party in a search for traitors. For over a year there were trials of "fifth columnists" and numerous warnings of imperialist attacks, coupled with appeals for national unity.

6. Small wonder, then, that Toure over-reacted to the murder of Cabral. At Toure's moment of decision his own fear and insecurity

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won out over revolutionary attachments. He quickly disarmed all PAIGC guerrillas in Conakry, sealed off the barracks, and incited his security forces to deal with stray PAIGC personnel as they would with Guinean citizens.

7. For several weeks after the murder Toure took virtual command of the PAIGC, and played a central role in selecting a temporary leader of the movement. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Toure's speeches on the undying solidarity of Guinea and the PAIGC failed to assuage the bitter feeling of the guerrillas about Guinean mistreatment. A token group remained in Conakry to handle the continued flow of Soviet arms, and occasional arrival of Cuban advisors, and to sustain what remained of the relationship with the Guinea government. Toure is not holding back on supplies and aid to the insurgents; indeed, he hopes that they all go off to the front and win the war. If they are not able to do this, he expects them to confine their internal feuding to their own camps, far from Conakry.

C. Prospects for the PAIGC

8. At the moment and for the immediate future, the PAIGC faces two major interrelated problems: finding a leader, and restoring

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internal discipline and cohesion. The temporary leader, Aristides Pereira, was selected by the PAIGC Central Committee and Toure, in full awareness of his known deficiencies. The blacks in PAIGC were opposed to all Cape Verdians but, lacking an agreed upon candidate of their own, accepted the weakest of the top rank of mulattoes -- Pereira -- until a more formal election under calmer circumstances, perhaps in a few months' time. So long as Pereira is in charge, the field commanders are likely to operate independently, long on bravado but short on coordination.

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[REDACTED] If action in the field fails to produce either tangible results (in terms of territory gained, weapons or prisoners captured) or a new hero, then the PAIGC is likely to pass into a phase of racial bickering, defections, desertions, and perhaps a split into rival factions. This situation may, indeed, not be far off.

9. If, on the other hand, one or another military commander appears to be making headway against the Portuguese, or displays some heroic or charismatic qualities, the movement would probably gravitate in his direction. If the new hero were a black mainlander

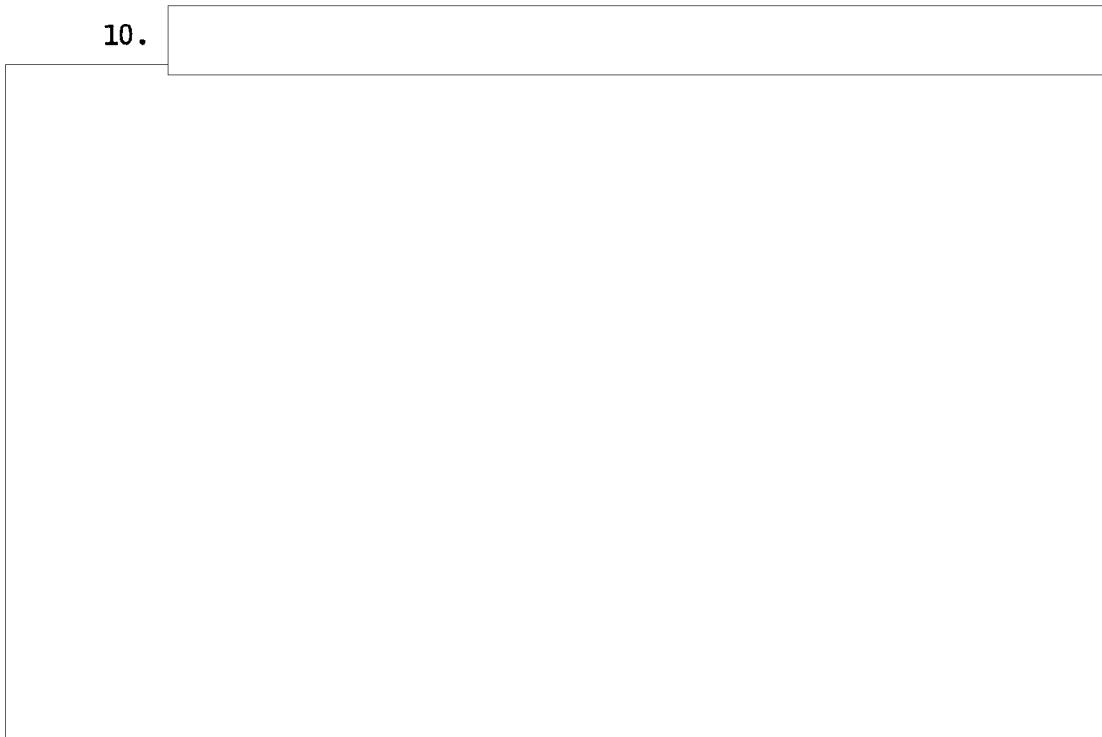
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from one of the larger tribes, rather than a Cape Verdian, the path to the top would be easier. It would be more difficult though not impossible for a Cape Verdian with either political or military credentials to attain the top spot. If the leadership issue can be resolved before the current internal disputes tear the movement apart, then there would be a chance to resolve or paper over the racial conflict, restore the confidence of foreign backers, and step up recruitment. The Portuguese would then be in for some difficult times.

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11. A transfer of PAIGC operations to a base in Senegal would not be easy to arrange, even though Senegal's southernmost province, the Casamance, borders on Portuguese Guinea and much of its population is tribally related to groups in the Portuguese colony. The Casamance has long been at odds with the Dakar government and from time to time indulges in separatist agitation. Central control over the Casamance has always been tenuous. Senegal's president, Leopold Senghor [redacted] [redacted] refuses to permit operational activity from Senegal soil. He is not sympathetic with the PAIGC's leftist leanings, and he regards their military activity near his borders as a threat to Senegalese internal security. He would like to see a compromise solution to the conflict, and to that end keeps a line open to Lisbon. It is unlikely, therefore, that Senghor would be receptive to a PAIGC request to move into Senegal. Moreover, in light of the Portuguese practice of the hot pursuit of guerrillas into Senegal, some of the PAIGC leadership would have serious reservations about even requesting help from Senghor.

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12. It is more likely that the PAIGC will swallow its resentment of Sekou Toure and try to patch up the quarrel. Toure will allow the PAIGC to use bases in the northern part of Guinea, and will continue to funnel supplies to them. It is in his nature to want to advise the guerrillas, and if possible to dominate them. Hence, relations between host and guests are not likely to be pleasant or easy, but a workable arrangement is possible. In any case, the PAIGC will be forced to rely much more than before on support and sustenance from the locals inside the "liberated territories".

13. The uncertainties surrounding the PAIGC and its future are so great that it is hardly possible to estimate its prospects. In the broadest terms, the insurgents are not likely to gain spectacular victories against the Portuguese, nor will they exert enough pressure to force a Portuguese withdrawal. On the other hand, the Portuguese will probably not be able to defeat the insurgents in the field. Therefore, some variation of the present stalemate is likely to persist for a long time.

D. Independence

14. As for independence, the chances are still good that at some point the PAIGC will declare itself a government in place and

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seek recognition. There is really nothing to prevent Pereira and his colleagues from picking out some hamlet in a secure area of Portuguese Guinea, calling it a capital and launching a drive for recognition. If they were to tackle this in an orderly way, it would take some months, perhaps a year or more, primarily because of the confusion in the leadership and the preoccupation of most top officials with simply establishing their own positions. Also the external relations with capitals around the world, which Cabral had cultivated so assiduously, would have to be revived. All of this would take time.

15. Yet, from the PAIGC standpoint there is a strong case to be made for instant independence. Considering the unsettled problems of leadership and the frayed discipline in the ranks, a political move towards independence might seem a useful unifying act to give some aura of authority to the leadership and boost the morale of the troops. Indeed, if the internal divisions are actually greater than we think they are, then the harried leaders may seek a very early declaration of independence. However the matter is resolved, we are not likely to get much advance warning.

16. Until the independence issue is advanced to the level of a UN membership proposal, PAIGC activities are not likely to cause

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much concern for US policy makers. At the UN the Africans, the Communist states, some Asian and Caribbean countries, and a few Western Europeans would support membership for an independent 'Bissau'. There would be considerable pressure on France, the UK, and the US from both the Portuguese and the Africans.

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[REDACTED] If the US were to vote against the PAIGC, there would be considerable clamour at the UN, some demonstrations in African capitals, but probably no lasting damage in relations with most of the African states. Portugal and the Portuguese settlers and troops in Africa would suffer some psychological damage from a PAIGC move towards independence. Conversely the move would boost the morale of African liberation movements elsewhere and would inspire one or more of them to consider a similar course of action.

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