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Area Survey of Africa

This is much too bright an afternoon to deal in great detail with all the problems of the dark continent. I think I shall content myself with an overall survey which will attempt to point out some of the main terrain features of the continent in an economic, political, and social light, and which I hope may provide you with some guideposts, some points by which you may orient yourselves if you go into further study of this particular area. The first thing I would like to do is to define the area a little bit. Now this lecture is generally labeled "Africa" as a whole. Actually our office in OCI only deals with the part of Africa that's outside of this line; in other words, Lybia, Egypt, the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, belong in the Arab states world, so that those would be wholly excluded from my talk this afternoon. Now there are three other areas which I will not have very much to say about. Those are North Africa, Ethiopia and the contracts of the Somalilands, and Eritrea, and Madagascar. Actually from the standpoint of continental Africa, those represent, in the case of Madagascar an actual sea island, and in the other two cases, land islands. They have relatively little connection, physically or politically, with the rest of the continent. Ethiopia has peculiar problems to itself; it's isolated in the highlands of the so-called loin of Africa. North Africa again, is separated from the rest of Africa by the Sahara, which acts as an effective barrier, and also as, in some ways, as a means of communication for caravans and that sort of thing. But there's not much interaction between them. Madagascar has a very different culture from any of those in the west of Africa, and again presents very peculiar problems.

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Now I should like to say a few words, first, as to why we might be interested in this particular area. American direct interest in the area is concerned primarily with the resources that the area can produce, or has that we can develop. Some of those resources you'll be very familiar with. Uranium in the Belgian Congo, and the Union of South Africa; chrome, manganese, asbestos, mica, various other types of minerals which are of considerable strategic importance, and some of which are on the critical list. That's one problem. The second type of interest which we have in Africa is an indirect interest -- the way in which events in Africa affect the fortunes of the colonial powers, Britain, France, Portugal and Spain, which control the area to a greater or lesser extent. Africa is both a source of strength and weakness to those powers. It's a source of strength insofar as the sheer physical area which they control gives them a certain amount of prestige. It's a source of strength insofar as they can control the direction in which the resources coming from Africa flow into the rest of the world; but it may be a source of weakness if, in the necessity of maintaining control over this part of the world, they are compelled to expend battallions of troops, equipment, money, and so on, which they might prefer to expend in more critical or more immediately critical areas. I can illustrate that with a recent example: we are afraid at the moment that there is going to be trouble in Northern Rhodesia, one of the British colonies. Last February, the governor of N. Rhodesia asked the British War Office that a battalion be returned from Malaya to N. Rhodesia to forestall possible disorders there. This last week, troops, an extra battalion of British troops had to be flown out to Kenya colony in East Africa to combat the well-known Mau-Mau situation. All of this unrest in Africa which draws forces away from other and perhaps more critical areas is a source of weakness.

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Now I should like to outline the main geographical and political divisions of the continent. There are a lot of ways of dividing the continent, but generally speaking, when talking about Africa, you divide it into Africa north of the Sahara and south of the Sahara. You divide it into Moslem Africa and Black Africa. Now, the shadings that may come, particularly in this middle belt of the lower Sahara, there are a good many shadings where you have both black and Moslem Africa in together. That is, the Moslem peoples in the area are also black, and so on. But generally speaking, that's one of the fundamental divisions of Africa—on a line running roughly across the continent this way, swinging down below the Sudan, and then running out on the east coast. And the main emphasis in what I have to say this afternoon will be placed on the area south of that line rather than north of it.

Turning now to the political characteristics of Africa, the first political characteristic that strikes us at once — it would strike you in the colors of this map, if you could see it — is the fact that Africa is a colonial territory. There are only two independent states on the entire continent. This has important consequences. It means, first of all, that the basic decisions as to the political nature of the continent are not made in the continent but in the European capitals, in Paris, London, or Lisbon, or what have you. Now, that of course, is not true of the Union of South Africa, which occupies that peculiar position, a dominion within the British commonwealth, a self-governing dominion and one that is becoming increasingly restive in that position. Not only are they all colonial, but within the colonial complex, the policies that have

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been put into effect in Africa by the different European powers are not

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commonwealth. The French policy on the other hand has a different aim and view. The basic object of French policy is to unite its overseas territories as closely as possible with France. Frenchmen disagree rather violently on the proper means by which this may be accomplished and in consequence, French colonial thought has always been divided between what they call a policy of assimilation, which means a policy of making the overseas territories more French than the French, if possible; and a policy of association, which means bringing the territories into some kind of relationship with France on a more or less equal basis, probably less equal. In the French Union it is quite clear that everybody is going to be equal, but some are going to be more equal than others.

Portuguese policy, the policy that affects the two colonies of Angola and Mozambique as well as a small territory in Portuguese Guinea, has not been worked out quite so clearly or on such rigid ideological lines as French policy has. The Portuguese, however, subscribe generally to the idea of assimilation. Their colonies are politically integral parts of the Portuguese realm, they simply happen to be separated from Portugal by a few thousand miles of ocean. Other than that they should be treated no differently than provinces of Portugal itself.

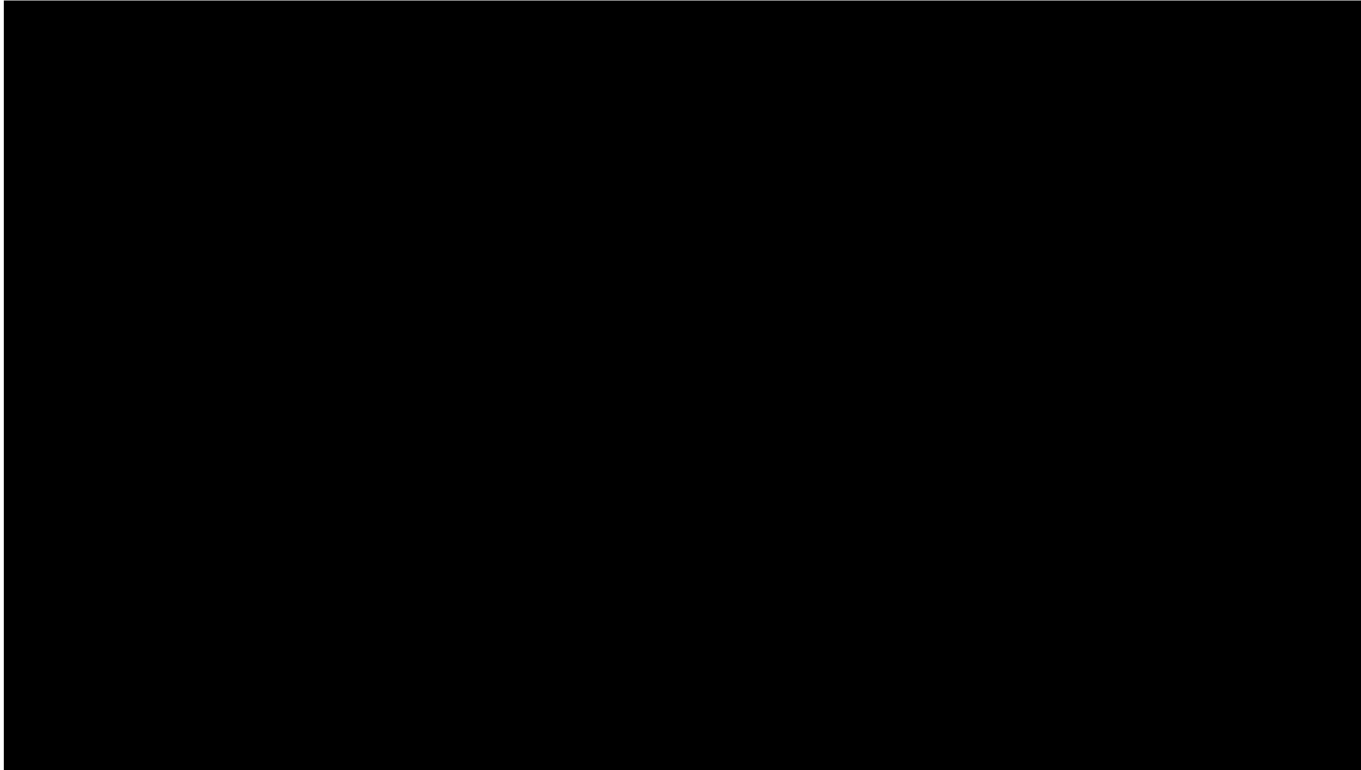
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Belgian policy is concerned with Belgium's only colony. That has been fortunate for Belgium, and in a sense for the colony. Belgium has been able to concentrate its interests in that particular place. This policy has been one of what we can call I think, "Materialistic Paternalism." It's not interested in assimilating the native. It's interested in seeing to it that he's very well fed, very well cared for, that he is happy as possible, and that he works just as hard as he can. So far, that policy has been pretty much successful. Observors who go to Africa are struck very favorably by the material accomplishments of the Belgians. They strike them much more favorably than the material accomplishments of the territories in British West Africa, where the liberation policy of Britain has been pursued. It remains to be seen which policy, which of these several policies in the long run, will turn out to be the more realistic in terms of providing a reasonably happy relationship between the overseas territories and the metropolitan country.

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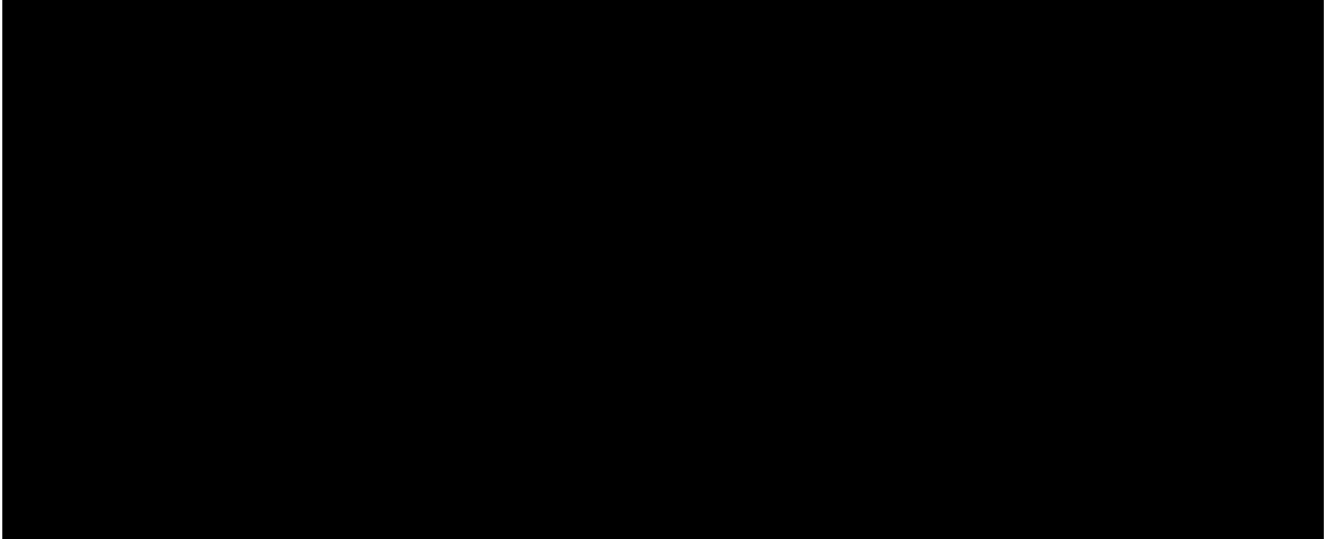
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Now that, of all, I think should illustrate some of the difficulties in making broad generalizations in Africa. All of these generalizations that I am making before you today should be taken with a very large measure of salt indeed. They will be affected in a very large measure by the conditions that pertain there. In concluding this very brief political survey, I should indicate that the current trend in Africa is that the initiative, the political initiative, is being taken over more and more by Africans themselves. Now it is still true as I said before, that the basic decisions as far as the political future of Africa are concerned, are being made in Europe. But those decisions are being made not as positive decisions, but rather as decisions made in response to things that the Africans do in the territories to political activity that the Africans carry on, rather than as decisions that are made according to a long range policy. That trend of course, varies from territory to territory. It's most obvious in the British territories. It's least obvious, perhaps, in the Portuguese and Belgian territories.

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Now the economic situation in Africa is one that is changing very rapidly. Basically the African economy is a subsistence agricultural setup. There's relatively little specialization of labor under such conditions. Everybody has his chore to do but he has to keep doing it steadily, he can't switch jobs. He can't be taken off the job of hunting, fishing, or sewing, and put on another job of working in the mines without having serious effect on the ability of the economy to grow its own food. If he were taken off the job, if you were to recruit mine laborers, on a large scale, then you raise the problem of how the home folks and the mine labor is going to eat because there isn't anybody around who's going to be able to grow the stuff for them to eat. The common trend, however, is away from this subsistence agricultural economy. The introduction of western techniques, the demands of western technology for raw materials, have overridden the old agriculture economy, and more and more Africans are now being placed in the position whereby, for one reason or another, they are practically or legally compelled to go to work in the more or less specialized economy. They may be compelled or forced by the circumstance of having to pay a head tax or some other tax, to go to work on a European plantation, or in a European mine. They may willingly, in view of the high wages that are offered in the rapidly growing cities in Africa, go to the town to work as a houseboy in some domestic service; to work as a parts-assembly man in a GM plant in Natal, for example,--something of that kind. So there is this shift going on.

And this shift from one type of economy to another, this introduction of western techniques and western ways of operation and western ways of thinking about how to make a living has produced a great variety of strains on the African's mind. He doesn't pretend at the present time to understand

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how this thing came about. All he knows is that the situation that his fathers knew, the traditional situation in his village is not what it was, he's jerked out of that, put into a wholly alien environment, where the traditional sanctions of authority, the sanctions of his chief and his family no longer exist; he's looking around for other sanctions, and the question which continually bothers us is in what direction he is going to look, for an explanation of what has happened to him, and in what direction he is going to look for the new authority that he seems to need. The danger, of course, is that the Marxist, the Communists, in presenting a very simple, a very striking and dramatic explanation of how the African came to be where he is, and also presenting an apocalyptic vision of where he could be--if he follows their tenets. They'll successfully outbid us, outbid the local Europeans and the local governments in their competition for his long-term loyalty.

Now turning briefly to the social problems. I've already indicated what some of those are likely to be. I suggest first that the African society, as it has traditionally existed, is a communal one. The notion of individualism in the Western sense is alien to it; individual rights and property are alien to it; the land and a basic agricultural economy. The land was a property of the community and the community was conceived of not nearly as those people who happen to exist--to happen to be living on this land at this particular time but the community included those who have a bed and those who have not yet been born. The land was held in trust by the tribe as a unit for the future and was also held as a trust that had been handed down to them from the past. This society is not then

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an intensely individualistic one in our sense. But, the new society that is growing--a society that is growing in the towns in Johannesburg and Leopoldville and the Bidonvilles in North Africa--is a very individualistic society where every person has to scramble alone to get what he needs. And needless to say, this in turn produces again the psychological strains, the dissatisfactions which are (I stated earlier) in terms of an economic transformation. The agglomerations and the results therefrom are particularly crucial. The growth of population in native towns particularly towns of Leopoldville and Johannesburg - those towns and areas where intensive economic development has been going on - the growth of population threatens to and, as in many cases, has outstripped the capability of the European authorities to take care of sanitary arrangements, to take care of the various social arrangements, that are necessary to have a satisfied population. In consequence, we find Africa at loose ends; we find the rising crime wave, crime rate; we find the various types of political religious fanaticism that developed in a situation of this kind in a dissolving social situation.

I should like to , by way of illustrating some of the things that I have said, to move over four or five of the current hot spots in Africa; to illustrate some of these current problems for you.

Current intelligence, this month in Africa, is a pretty good business. Today, the verdict on the trial of Jomo Kenyatta on a charge of instigating Mau-Mau terrorism in Kenya is expected. The British authorities there are afraid that all hell is literally going to break loose, if he is acquitted and some kind of minor hell is likely to break loose if he isn't acquitted.

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It's twiddle dum and twiddle dee - if the verdict doesn't come today, it's going to come some time this week. There is such a situation in Kenya as this. The Kikuyu tribe is the tribe from which the Mau-Mau terrorists have been recruited. The emergency has now lasted officially some five months, actually some six or seven months, and shows no signs at the present moment of abating.

The Kikuyu tribe was paradoxically, and in some persons' view not so paradoxically considering the strains of this transformation that I have been talking about, the tribe which was the most Europeanized of all the tribes in Kenya. The Kikuyu is the tribe from which the good boys came, from which the bright boys came. They knew how to fix a truck, how to drive one, and how to do the work on a European farm. It's been a tremendous shock to local Europeans to discover the Africans with whom, by and large, they were in the closest association, are the Africans who have turned most violently against them. The loyal Africans, on the other hand, are what the British refer to as the loyal Africans who have come from what we would think of as rather more primitive tribes. They have not become so much socially disorganized, and some of them would like nothing better than a chance to take a whack at the Kikuyu. They are traditional enemies in one way or another. Essentially then, this struggle that is bearing out of East Africa is a product of the strains that I have been talking about between advancing European society and a disintegrated African society. Locally, of course, a great many more things are involved.

There's the long-term problem that when the Europeans came to Kenya they pre-empted the White Highlands which are the most temperate parts of the area. They are the areas that both Europeans and Africans would like

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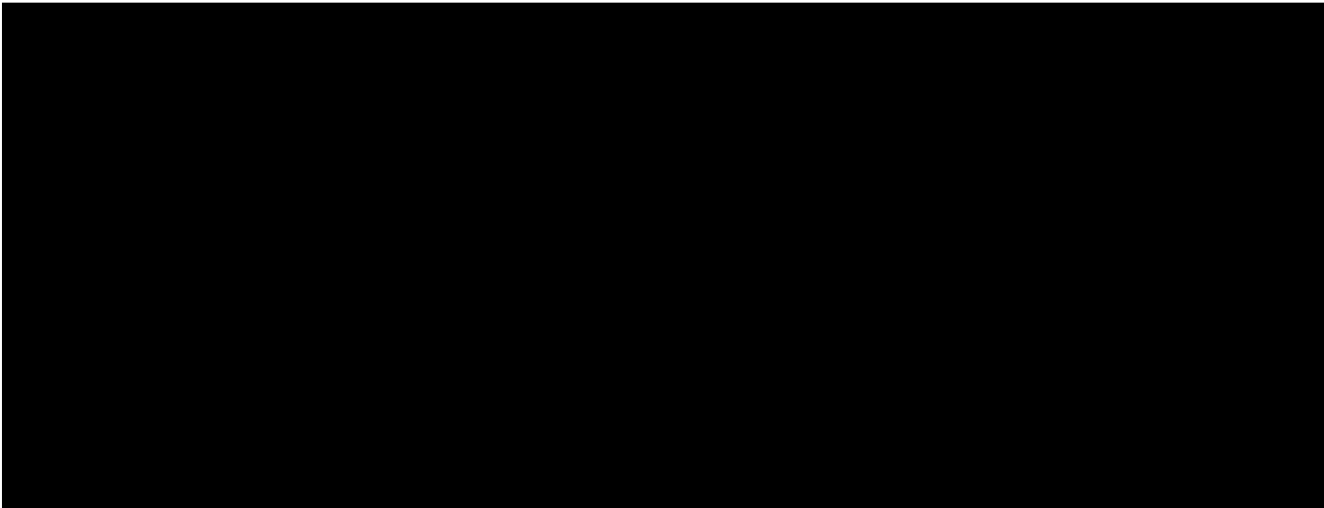
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best to live in. They are unfortunately the only areas where the white man in Kenya can live and prosper successfully. The Kikuyu, justly or not, have resented the fact that the Europeans have taken these lands over. The

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Next week, the Union of South Africa will have general parliamentary elections. These elections fundamentally, are going to decide two issues: one of them is the attitude that the European population is going to take toward the aspirations of the African and Indian majority in the country. The second issue is going to be the future relationships between the Union of South Africa and the British Commonwealth. We expect the Nationalist Party to win. The Nationalist Party's long range goal is a republic within the Commonwealth with a status comparable to India's. Its long range goal in terms of racial policy is the word you may or may not be more or less familiar with from the newspapers - "Apartheid" - a policy of total segregation of totally segregated developments. The only thing that we can say is that we think the Nationalists are going to win, and if they do win, then the situation in South Africa is likely to deteriorate fairly rapidly. There's every indication that the Africans are growing in their sense for

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political organization, that they are likely to get together with the Indians, perhaps not this year but perhaps next year. We've been through it before as to the time it would take them to organize and the whole thing is summarized as simply a mess to which no one sees any real out. The danger in this, as far as the U.S. is concerned, is that South Africa is the one pole on the continent which has showed some capability of defending itself and which would not have to be defended so much from outside. The South Africans went so far as to agree to contribute a fight of honor wing, an honor division, to the Middle East defense setup; at least to the old Middle East defense setup. At the present time, the internal situation, the strife between the whites in the country as well as to the security problems as far as blocs are concerned, there's absolutely no possibility that they can fulfill that commitment.

Between Kenya and the Union is an area which is shortly to be federated - we believe - called the Central Africa Federation. This is another British scheme. The referendum on Central African Federation is to take place in one of the areas to be federated in Southern Rhodesia tomorrow. The Africans - such African opinion as exists - indicates that they're fully opposed to this federation scheme. The African leadership in these territories appears to regard it as a method for, if not perpetuating this type of racial discrimination that is now practiced in Southern Rhodesia then perhaps even introducing a more stringent type from the Union of South Africa.

Now the contravallation of the coincidence - this marks the troubles in Kenya, troubles in Central Africa, and the possible troubles in the Union of South Africa is, I think, a very ominous one. We don't know how this

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trouble in the near future and the chances are that there is going to be trouble for a long time ahead. On the other end of the continent, next week, there will be Kaidal elections in Tunisia. The first elections in this French-North African protectorate that have ever been held under the French administration. This points up to another crisis.

The French have been attempting to introduce what they call political reforms into their North African protectorates. The local people believe that these political reforms are simply a cover for perpetuating and, in fact, strengthening the control of those French settlers who are in the area. The Kaidal elections tomorrow, or the next week rather, are parts of that reform program. The native Nationalist parties are boycotting the whole thing insofar as they can or at least boycotting those election districts where they're sure they'll lose; and generally speaking, they appear to have what looks like an impasse in that situation. The only hopeful, possibly hopeful part of the Continent is British West Africa from a political standpoint.

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And in the Gold Coast they have a fire-brand for a premier, Dr. Kwamin Kuma, an American-educated Goldcoaster. He has so far performed pretty well. He's actually taken on certain conservative shadings since he's started running the country and became aware of the complex problems that were involved. We can qualify the Gold Coast situation as something of a success.

Nigeria looked as though they're going pretty good. Nigeria incidentally is the largest colony and the most populous one yet remaining in the British Empire. There are 30,000,000 people in it. Unhappily, the perimeter lines that were drawn on this map were drawn in Europe. There are a lot of fissial lines and Nigeria in consequence is divided between the Moslem north and an animistic or westernized south. The Moslem north has no use for the southern politicians and lastly the southern politicians walked out of the Central Legislaturé in a huff because their program for self-government and the first self-government in 1956 had been turned down. by the representatives of the North. This is the conservative Moslem population which is deathly afraid that if the South gets control of the whole works, they'll predominate the thing and turn the resources of Nigeria toward the South rather than allowing the North its proportionate share.

A similar situation has prevailed in Sierre Leone; fortunately at the moment, things seem to be working out rather better than was expected. Now those in brief are some of the problems which Africa is currently facing. They illustrate, I think and hope, the sort of thing that we are up against intelligence-wise, in analyzing an African situation.

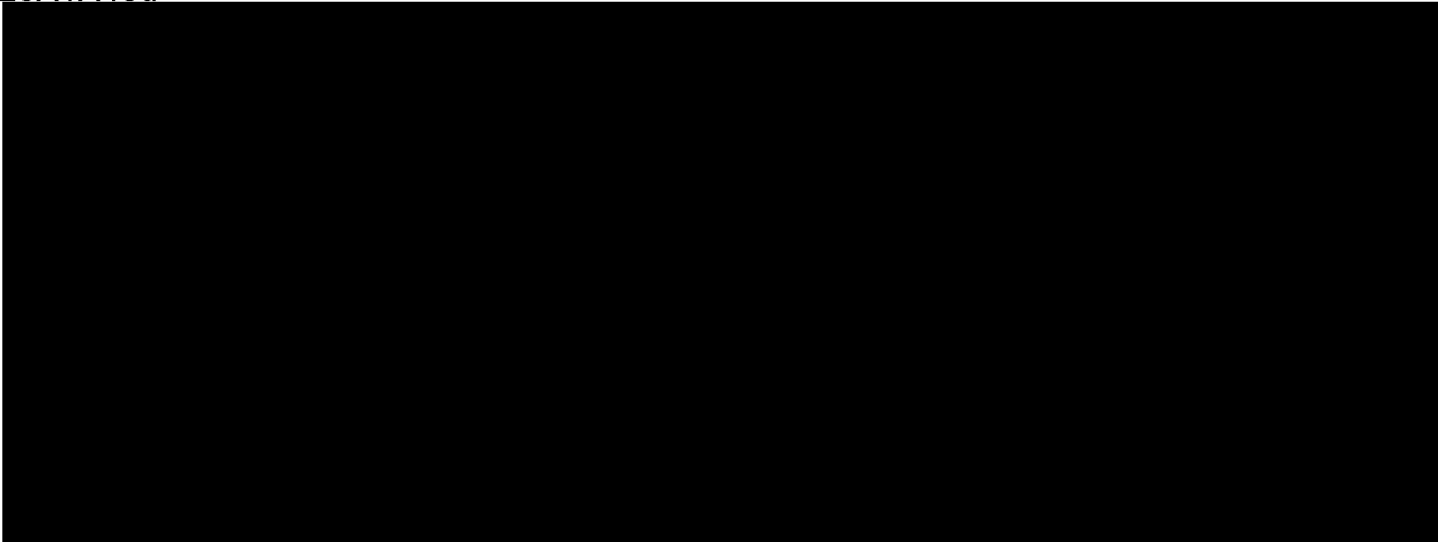
Now, as a final point, I should like to talk a little bit about the intelligence problems that we face in Africa. Most of our information from Africa comes from the Dept. of State's sources. That means the Consulate General in one or two cases, the counsulate Counsellor General in one or two cases, a legation or embassy in some cases. Now those sources are sometimes limited at best, even in the European situation where the personnel of a consulate can circulate fairly freely, where there are no physical difficulties involved in getting around the country, like France or a

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The basic factor there would depend upon the relations, essentially the personal relations, which the counsellor or legation personnel has with the government officials. Now in Africa the situation is a little bit different. On the whole in British colonies, American State Department officials have a good deal of freedom to range about, to talk to Africans as well as the European government. In French, Belgium, and Portuguese colonies on the other hand, that situation does not generally prevail. Many unofficial Europeans, any unofficial European who is not known to be an actual representative of the government there, who goes out and talks to Africans on his own hook, is likely to be viewed with a good deal of suspicion by the local security people; and he is likely to be given the snow treatment. He will be invited to a great many parties during his stay there and he will never see a blessed thing of the country. Everyone will be very friendly, very hospitable; and he won't find out a darn thing. That is one of the difficulties of operating under that type of situation - a situation where the people of the country and the government are two different entities; where the rapport between them and the type of thinking that they do is by no means necessarily the same.

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