

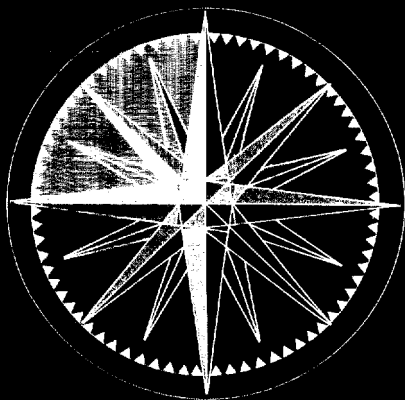
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SPECIAL REPORT

FRANCE'S POSITION IN TROPICAL AFRICA

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

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FRANCE'S POSITION IN TROPICAL AFRICA

France's claim to global power status rests to a considerable extent on the influence it continues to wield in the territories it formerly ruled in tropical Africa. Paris has manipulated a variety of economic, military, and cultural ties to maintain its presence in these now-sovereign states, and there are some indications the French would like to expand their influence into neighboring areas. The French position in this part of Africa, however, seems likely to suffer somewhat as a result of the recent association agreement between the EEC and the 14 pro-French states of the African and Malagasy Union (UAM). It may be further undercut by a move last August to submerge the UAM in the larger Organization of African Unity (OAU).

Cultural and Technical Links

In the long run, the cultural and technical agreements France has with most of its former African territories are perhaps the most effective assurance of continuing the French presence there. While many African leaders have mixed feelings about continued French cultural dominance in their countries, their educational systems, their civil services, and local technical facilities are largely controlled by French teachers and technicians.

French influence is particularly pervasive in education. In the UAM states and Mali, 80 percent of the secondary-school teachers are French. In addition, four regional universities have been recently established in the UAM states, with French assistance.

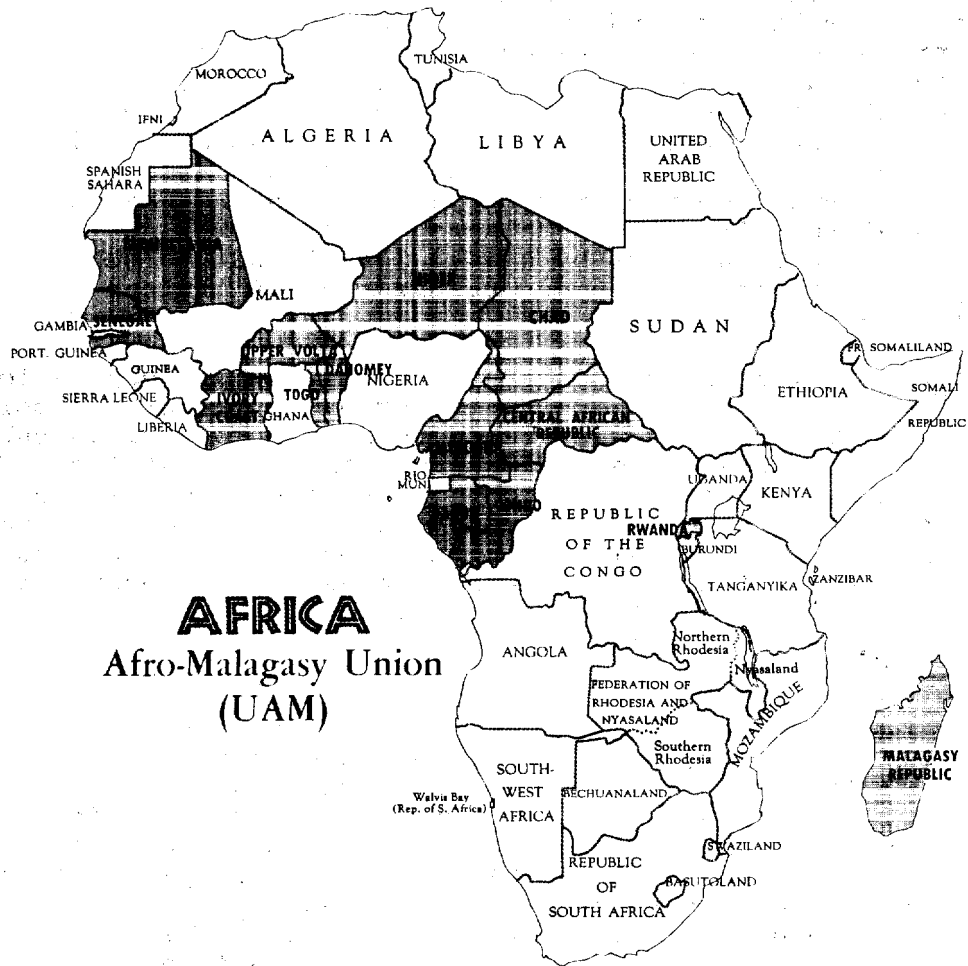
Under a number of agreements with the UAM states, the

French Ministry of Cooperation provided 5,000 technical assistance personnel to various sub-Saharan African countries. Without these specialists it is doubtful that most of the states in question would be able to carry on day-to-day operations effectively.

Military Links

For the present, France's military ties with the UAM states appear to transcend all others in importance. These ties give France the exclusive right to form, supply, and train an indigenous force in each republic. Moreover, they grant France base and troop-stationing rights in all UAM states except Upper Volta. Also, Paris is obligated to answer any call for assistance to restore order in the Ivory Coast, Niger, Chad, Gabon, Madagascar, and Congo (Brazzaville).

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More than anything else it was this obligation that motivated De Gaulle to accede to President Youlou's request for French troop reinforcements during the Brazzaville upheaval last August. De Gaulle probably reasoned that nothing less would preserve confidence among the other African regimes that France would redeem its promise to assist in the event of internal disorders.

The Brazzaville episode, however, may have raised second thoughts in France as well as in the UAM states about their mutual security managements. French policy now seems to be aimed at distinguishing between situations requiring the use of French military forces to maintain law and order and those involving their use to maintain an unpopular local regime. While UAM reactions to the limited French intervention in Brazzaville have been generally favorable, some African leaders, noting that the French action did not save Youlou, now may find the pacts less appealing. In addition, there is widespread sensitivity to charges of fostering neocolonialism, and these states may be increasingly disinclined to tolerate French forces on their soil.

In any event, the prospects seem to be that Paris will soon be withdrawing some of the 43,000 military personnel it presently has stationed in the UAM states. As

a consequence of the Brazzaville coup and the earlier one in Togo, the French commanders of the defense forces in those countries have already been replaced by indigenous officers. The French, however, intend to train and equip a mobile force, based in France, capable of quick deployment to Africa.

A strong deterrent to any extensive curtailment of France's military commitment to African countries is its suspicion of US intentions. France fears that US military assistance to the UAM states is designed to lessen their dependence on Paris. Paris argues that even minimal American assistance is likely to trigger an arms assistance race with the USSR, force the receiving country to maintain costly equipment it does not need and cannot afford, and leave France obliged to pay the bills. Paris also opposes any arrangement providing for US training of UAM military or police officers.

Economic Relations

Until recently, a sizable portion of French aid to UAM states has been for budgetary subsidies. This program, however, is being gradually phased out, because of difficulties in obtaining parliamentary approval and misgivings that such subsidies encourage fiscal irresponsibility.

French economic interests in Africa are, nevertheless,

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preserved by a variety of other assistance programs which, in 1963, will cost France more than \$1 billion. Included in this outlay are several generous loans and grants. At the same time France assures most of its former sub-Saharan territories guaranteed markets for their tropical products, often at prices considerably above the world market. The UAM states, in turn, reciprocate by reserving large portions of their markets for French products. This is accomplished by granting French goods tariff preferences and exempting them from cumbersome licensing procedures.

France exercises a strong influence over the financial affairs of the UAM states. By virtue of their membership in the franc zone, they give France control over their money and credit, gold and currency reserves, and allocation of their foreign exchange. Management of these affairs rests with the directors (many of whom are French) of the three central banks located in Africa and the French managers of their local branches.

Guinea, which is not a member of the UAM, recently settled most of its financial differences with France. Franco-Guinean economic relations had been poisoned since March 1960, when President Touré withdrew Guinea from the franc zone.

The rapprochement can be attributed to Guinea's disillusionment with bloc aid efforts and its steadily deteriorating domestic economy.

The OAU and the EEC

Some threat to French influence is implicit, however, in recent developments which have brought into question the cohesiveness of the UAM as an organization. Last August at a meeting of the Organization of African Unity foreign ministers in Dakar, three non-UAM states--Ghana, Nigeria, and Guinea--pressed a motion to dissolve the French-oriented grouping. While this particular move failed, the UAM's continued solidarity is far from assured. Not only is it likely to be the object of similar attacks in the future, but a serious threat to its existence stems from internal dissensions, particularly rivalry between Senegal and the Ivory Coast.

The French are troubled by these developments, but not dismayed. They are confident that the UAM nations have a basic community of interests, buttressed by their attachment to French culture and values. Therefore, the French think they will tend to form a distinctive grouping even if amalgamated with a larger entity, such as the OAU.

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A greater threat to French influence may be the UAM states' tie to the EEC. Under the UAM-EEC agreement, the preferential trade terms the UAM states have extended to France are also granted to the other Common Market states. Despite a non-discrimination clause, French dominance of UAM trade is favored by the linking of about one third of French aid allocation to Africa to the purchase of French supplies. France's EEC partners will probably demand, and receive, a quid pro quo for the aid they are funneling into the European Development Fund (EDF) in support of projects in the UAM states.

Nevertheless, Gallic pre-eminence in the aid field will be guaranteed by the likelihood that EEC development programs in French Africa will be administered by French personnel. This is logical since France is the only EEC country with broad experience in large-scale assistance programs in Africa.

France's Relations With
Non-French Africa

France has made little effort to expand its influence in the English-speaking states in Africa, but there are indications it intends to broaden ties

with former Belgian territories. Rwanda, for instance, has been accepted in the UAM, and has initialed two assistance agreements with Paris. The Leopoldville government has a technical and cultural agreement with Paris, negotiated last July. Latest figures show that about 250 Congolese students studying in France, and some 50 French teachers and technicians have assumed positions in the former Belgian Congo. Meanwhile, there have been unconfirmed reports that France is planning to provide Leopoldville with legal, military, agricultural and financial advisers.

France's relations with non-UAM African states have been deeply embittered by the nuclear tests in the Sahara. Ghana imposed economic sanctions on France in 1960 and Nigeria broke diplomatic relations with Paris in 1961. Since Nigeria's commercial output probably exceeds that of the 14 UAM states combined, French business interests have been exerting strong pressure on the government to resume diplomatic relations, but De Gaulle insists the initiative must come from Lagos.

Thus far France has been reluctant to support African initiatives against white rule in Africa. Indicative of this is the fact that Paris has refused to stop shipment of arms to Portugal or South Africa.

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Outlook

French influence in tropical Africa, under attack from the more extreme African nationalists, is likely to be reduced somewhat in the days ahead. However, the closeness of the economic cultural and military ties that Paris has so carefully nurtured over the years makes it improbable that France's pre-eminent role in its former colonies will be seriously impaired.

France, however, can be expected to look for ways of minimizing the losses to French interests which might otherwise result from sudden changes in UAM governments. The need for such a policy was driven home by the overthrow of the Youlou

regime. The French are also concerned that UAM countries will get the idea that they can move to reduce French influence with impunity. This outlook was encouraged by Mali's withdrawal from the franc zone last year without penalty, and more recently by Paris' failure to cut its aid to Algeria following the nationalization of French property there.

France will also continue the effort to expand its influence in Africa beyond the confines of the UAM, but its chances of success are presently slight. Nor are the prospects much better over the long run as long as Paris continues its atomic testing in the Sahara and extends tacit support to Portugal and the Republic of South Africa. (SECRET)

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