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# Africa Review

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AFRICA REVIEW (U)

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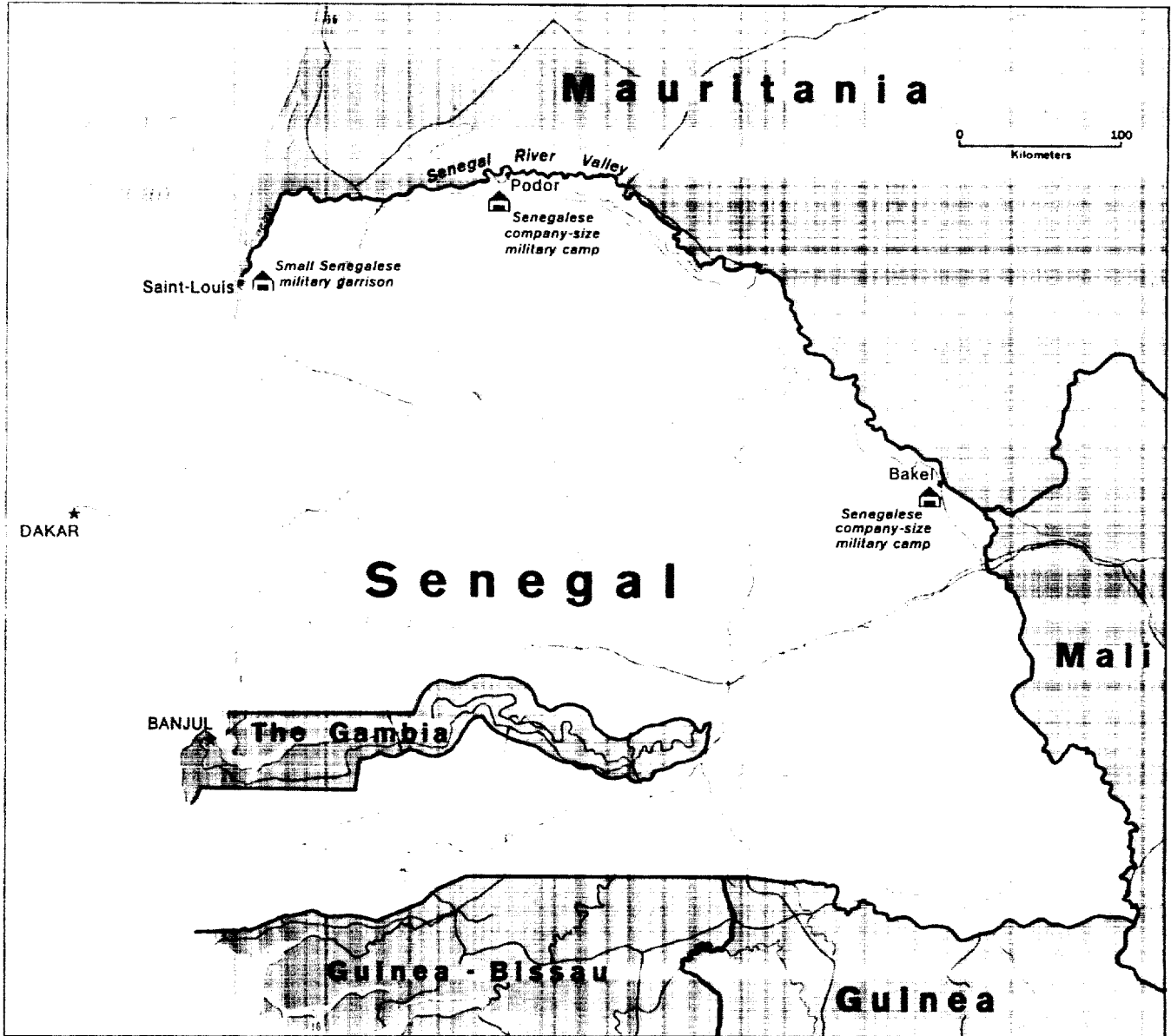
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Senegal: Growing Concern Over Mauritania (U)

Senegal is concerned about signs of instability, maneuvering, and ethnic tensions in neighboring Mauritania and fears it could become involved if the situation boils over. If serious problems do ensue between the two countries, Senegal probably would turn for help to Morocco, France, and the United States, which Dakar looks upon as the principal defenders of black Africa's moderate, pro-Western states. For now, Senegal's position is one of noninterference, cooperation, and watchful waiting. Senegal is also establishing a modest security force along its previously undefended frontier with Mauritania, although there is little prospect of any military intervention by the Dakar government. Events ultimately could cause Senegal to raise its as yet unpressed claims to ethnically similar southern Mauritania, a development that would add serious new tensions to the Western Sahara region. (C)

The Senegalese worry above all about the emergence in Mauritania of a more radical and potentially hostile Moor-dominated regime.\* Senegal fears that a negotiated settlement of the Sahara conflict might give presently unrepresented Polisario elements an influential position in the Mauritanian Government. The result, the Senegalese believe, could be a less tolerant attitude toward Mauritania's black minority population that is concentrated in a narrow zone in the far south along the Senegal River valley. The existing military regime in Mauritania already is viewed by Senegal as markedly more Arab-oriented, less attuned to black Africa, and less committed to building a genuine biracial society than was the previous government led by Ould Daddah. (C)

\*The Moors are descended from Arab and Berber peoples, are Arabic-speakers, and make up some two-thirds of the country's 1.5 million people. They traditionally have controlled the Mauritanian Government, economy, and the top ranks of the armed forces. (U)

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The Dakar government is concerned about Senegal's military weakness along its long and porous border with Mauritania. It is especially worried that a Polisario force could be deployed along the border to mount punitive raids in retaliation for previous French use of Dakar as a staging base for anti-Polisario air strikes over Mauritania. (C)

Senegal is also troubled by growing racial tension and strife in Mauritania between the Moor majority and restive blacks who are seeking greater political and economic equality. President Senghor feels obliged quietly to look out for the welfare of Mauritania's 500,000 blacks, whom he regards as ethnic Senegalese torn away from their homeland by arbitrary French demarcation of colonial frontiers in 1905. He is concerned that if racial problems continue to mount, they may force Senegal to take measures to defend the rights of Mauritanian blacks. (C)

Economically, Senegal looks to Mauritania as a key partner in the development of the water resources of the Senegal River valley to help alleviate the recurrent problem of Sahelian drought. Mauritania also is an important export market for Senegal, which itself benefits from the services of some 200,000 Mauritanian Moors who work as small shopkeepers, artisans, and traders. (C)

The only important Senegalese military presence near the border with Mauritania is a small garrison at the old Atlantic port city of Saint Louis. Two new company-sized military camps have recently been constructed in the interior along the Senegal River at Podor and Bakel. The latter is to be manned by some of the troops currently serving with the Senegalese battalion in Shaba Province in Zaire. (C)

Algeria is seen by Senegal as the key to what happens next in Mauritania, and President Senghor is promoting a dialogue with the new Algerian leadership in hopes of contributing to a peaceful resolution of the Western Sahara dispute. A settlement that would enhance Polisario and Algerian influence in Mauritania would be unacceptable to Senghor, who wants to keep Algerian "hegemony" as far as possible from Senegal's borders. He traditionally has seen the Western Sahara

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conflict as a manifestation of Algerian and therefore Soviet expansionism, aimed in part at subverting Mauritania and Senegal. If a pro-Algerian radical, racist regime were to come to power in Mauritania, President Senghor has already said he would mount a diplomatic campaign on behalf of the right of Mauritania's black minority to "self-determination" or reunification with Senegal. We believe, however, that Senghor would not risk exacerbating relations with Mauritania without carefully weighing the security implications for Senegal, which argues for a continued policy of caution and flexibility on his part. At present, there are no signs of militancy on Senegal's part to recoup the land it says was arbitrarily assigned to Mauritania by France. (C)  
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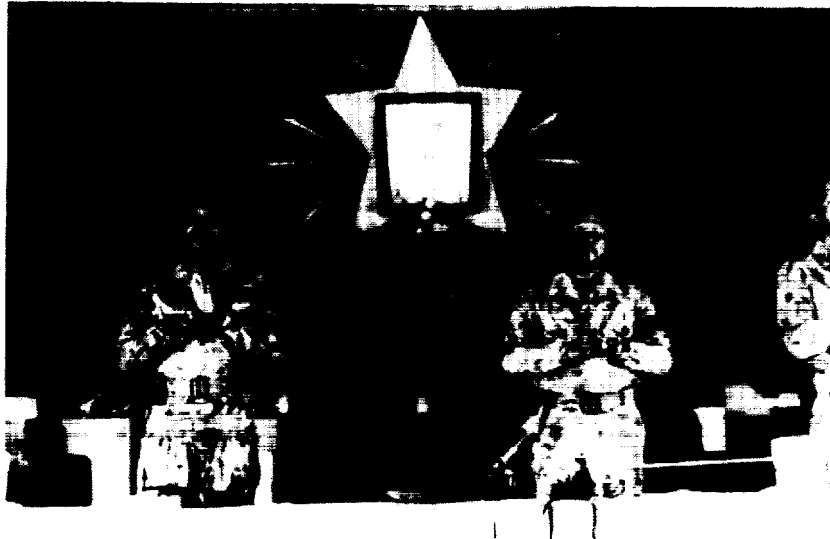
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Congo: The New Government Settles In (U)

Colonel Denis Sassou-Nguesso, who replaced Joachim Yhomby Opango as interim President last month in an interparty shuffle, appears to be consolidating his position. Although Sassou is thought to be more pro-Soviet and radical than Yhomby, we have no evidence that the Soviets played a role in the power changeover. Sassou's accession to the presidency appears to have been largely the result of his ability to outmaneuver Yhomby and Labor Party unhappiness with Yhomby's failure to check governmental corruption and waste, improve the country's declining economy, and obtain foreign aid. (S)



President Yhomby Opango (R) and Denis Sassou-Nguesso during former's swearing in ceremony. (C)

During the past few weeks tension in Brazzaville has subsided as the Congolese, who greeted Yhomby's downfall with enthusiasm, have involved themselves in political rallies and meetings. This activity is a prelude to the special party congress scheduled for 26 March, when Sassou will probably be confirmed as head of state. (C NF OC)

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The ruling Labor Party, anticipating international concern over the replacement of the more moderate Yhomby, has attempted to reassure current and prospective Western aid donors that Congo will maintain its interest in broad international cooperation, which was given impetus by Yhomby. The party has also emphasized that it will not discourage private or foreign enterprises from operating in the country. (C)

Although the Soviets are reportedly putting hard pressure on Sassou for military access to the port of Pointe Noire, the President insists that he will maintain a policy of nonalignment and that he does not intend to grant Moscow military access to Congolese facilities. Sassou's political intentions and ideological proximity to the Soviets are unclear, but we will probably have a better reading of his plans after he is confirmed as President by the party congress. In any event, while Sassou may make some tactical shifts in Congolese policy, he will probably not make an abrupt shift towards the leftist camps--given Congo's serious economic and financial situation, and the country's strong dependency on the West for economic and technical assistance. (S) (SECRET NOFORN-ORCON)

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Malawi: Succession Prospects (U)

Under the authoritarian leadership of President H. Kamuzu Banda, Malawi has become one of Africa's most stable and conservative countries. Banda shows no interest in retiring despite his advancing age (he claims to be 73, but probably is closer to 80), and he is likely to die in office. Although Banda has carefully avoided designating a successor, he has devised a complex constitutional system for the selection of the next president. The ability of his colleagues to carry out these provisions will have much to do with whether Malawi's carefully nurtured stability departs with Banda. There is no Vice President in Malawi and, at a minimum, there is likely to be a period of intense political infighting as various competitors struggle to grasp Banda's mantle. None of the potential successors seems likely to continue all of Banda's extremely conservative policies, which have made Malawi something of a pariah in black Africa, although all contenders will probably maintain close relations with the West. (S)



President Banda. (U) ©

Key questions in Malawi's future are whether the constitution will be respected; if so, who will be the successors; and if not, what forces or individuals are likely to benefit by opposing the constitutional measures. (S)

<sup>1</sup>This Is Malawi, July 1975.

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### Factors in a Smooth Transition

As one of Africa's least developed nations, Malawi has boasted a strong economic growth rate since its independence from the United Kingdom in 1964. But a decline in worldwide tobacco prices, overcrowded farming conditions, and difficulties in obtaining commodities through Mozambican rail lines are eroding Malawi's economic development. (S)

If Banda continues to cope effectively with Malawi's economic problems, chances are good that the transition of power after his death will take place according to the constitution. A three-man commission would be formed to handle the day-to-day responsibilities of the presidency until a new leader was chosen. The commission would be composed of the Secretary General of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) and two Cabinet members. An electoral college, dominated by district officers of the party and its affiliate organizations,\* tribal chiefs, and heads of district councils, would nominate a president from within the party, who would then be approved or rejected by the electorate. The electoral college would meet as many times as necessary to choose a president acceptable to the people. (S)

Factors that would favor the success of the constitutional process are the strong position of the MCP, which dominates the political system, and the loyalty of the ethnic groups to Banda. Even after his departure, the chiefs, who closely identify with Banda, are apt to adhere closely to those provisions sanctioned by their ngwazi (peerless chief). (S)

### Candidates for Succession

If the constitution is followed, there are currently three major front-runners for the presidency: Reserve Bank Governor John Tembo, Minister without Portfolio and MCP Secretary General Elson Muluzi, and Youth and Culture Minister Gwanda Chakuamba. Tembo, because of his close ties to the President, probably has the best chance of succeeding Banda, although Muluzi is moving rapidly to consolidate his political power. (S)

\*The Malawi Youth Pioneers and the Malawi League of Women. (U)

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Of the three, Tembo has been involved in government affairs the longest. He has a strong political base in his home area in the central region and holds a seat on the influential 15-man MCP National Executive Committee. Tembo is also popular among Malawi's educated elite and high-level civil servants. (S)

Tembo has spoken privately about the need for Malawi to align itself with the frontline states and, if he were selected he would probably gradually strengthen ties with Malawi's neighbors. He has also been critical of apartheid and might cut back on relations with South Africa. Because Tembo has always held a great deal of admiration for the United States and realizes Malawi's dependence on the developed nations, he would probably maintain close relations with Washington. (S)

Elson Muluzi is the youngest of the three contenders and has moved more quickly than the others in establishing a strong political base. As Secretary General of the MCP, he holds the most powerful party position (other than President Banda) and would automatically be included in the three-man commission that would govern after Banda's departure. Muluzi has moved up through the ranks of the MYP and until recently was regarded as being dependent on Gwanda Chakuamba for his political status. Since his appointment to the Cabinet, Muluzi has proved his independence, however, and is reputed to be handling his responsibilities well. Muluzi would be likely to continue close ties with the United States. (S)

Gwanda Chakuamba's political prestige stems from his position as leader of Malawi Young Pioneers (MYP), which he assumed in 1973. The MYP has expanded rapidly in recent years as has Chakuamba's influence in the party. He also commands widespread respect throughout the southern region, which has traditionally been politically apathetic and backward. Chakuamba accompanied Banda on his trips to the United Kingdom and the United States in 1977 and may have been the President's choice for a successor at that time. Since then, Chakuamba's personal financial problems may have eroded his political standing. (S)

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Unlike Tembo, Chakuamba would be unreceptive to any political moves that might endanger his country's relations with South Africa. He would probably continue Banda's strong pro-US line. (S)

#### Possible Opposition to the Constitutional Provisions

Because there is no single candidate for the presidency who commands a clear majority of popular support, the selection process will probably be characterized by backstage maneuvering in the best of circumstances. If this occurs, the military, led by General Graciano Matewera, is the only organization capable of taking power by force. Matewera, a loyal supporter of Banda, would probably authorize a military takeover only if he believed that the constitutional provisions could not be implemented. He would adhere more closely than the other candidates to Banda's foreign policy line. (S)

There is an outside chance that Matewera might plan a coup if Chakuamba were nominated as president. The Army and the MYP have become rivals in recent years as the MYP has grown in strength. Matewera, who contends daily with unrest and dissatisfaction throughout the Army, has shown signs of jealousy over the MYP's effective leadership and high morale. He also questions the MYP's paramilitary and intelligence gathering functions. (S)

Chakuamba is ambitious and would probably exploit the MYP's comprehensive intelligence network before the electoral college convenes. The MYP could be used as a vehicle to gauge nationwide support for the candidates, and Chakuamba might attempt to rig the voting in the college if he realized that he would not be nominated. (S)

#### Outlook

In any event, a military takeover would probably be temporary; the MYP and other party members would resist a military government. In the long term, a compromise choice, most likely a party official, or a power-sharing arrangement between Chakuamba and Matewera would prevail. (S)

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However the transfer of power is achieved, it will probably be followed by a short period of political instability. The new leader(s) will have limited executive experience because of Banda's autocratic style. Furthermore, no candidate for succession is likely to receive the nationwide support that Banda enjoys, and tribal rivalries, which have long been troublesome, may erupt on a larger scale. Continuing economic difficulties, such as the land crunch, will add to the new leader's responsibilities. (S)

In the long term, the unrest caused by these factors is unlikely to damage Malawi's reputation as a calm developing nation. Political infighting will probably not touch most of the rural, unsophisticated Malawians. (S)  
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FOR THE RECORD (U)

NIGERIA: The Nigerian Army reportedly has decided to purchase an unspecified number of T-54 tanks from the Soviet Union after a long search for a new tank suitable for its needs. The tank order probably will not be very large and will supplement the Army's 135 French and British armored cars and 55 British Scorpion light tanks. All four Nigerian Army infantry divisions now have armored brigades, which the Army leadership has wanted to outfit more fully before the scheduled turnover to civilian rule next October. Nigeria apparently will depend on Poland to maintain its Soviet-supplied tanks, which reflects the military's general dissatisfaction with the Soviet's record in providing training and spare parts for previously purchased military equipment. Nigerian Army Chief of Staff General Danjuma and Armor Director Brigadier Mohammed visited Poland last September where they met with top Polish military officials and toured armored units and a tank training school. (S NF) (SECRET NOFORN) [REDACTED] /ORPA, [REDACTED]

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ABSTRACTS OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS

South Africa: The National Party--Built for Survival (U)\*

There was considerable political turmoil in the Afrikaner community last year, leading to widespread public speculation that the basic cohesion of the National Party was beginning to dissolve. This paper examines the events of the past year in the context of the National Party "system" and assesses their impact on the party's dominant role in South African politics. (U)

In its 30 years in power, the National Party has shown remarkable internal flexibility, accommodating a diversity of opinion without risking self-destructive divisions. Nothing in the tumultuous events of the past year suggests this pattern is changing. (S)

The party does have significant regional and personal rivalries, and the key competition between its Cape and Transvaal branches is unlikely to disappear. This competition is not likely to become unmanageable or radically alter the historic movement of the party as a whole to the political right. (S)

The debate over minor aspects of racial discrimination will continue, but will remain within the narrow framework of universal agreement on the need to maintain separate development. (S)

If past practice holds, and we believe it will, Prime Minister Botha can count on the traditional ability of Nationalist politicians to sink their differences in order to avoid jeopardizing the fundamental interests of Afrikanerdom. (S) (SECRET)

\*These key judgments are taken from The National Party of South Africa--Built for Survival, RP 79-10087, February 1979. A copy of the entire text may be obtained from the author. (S)

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