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AFRICA REVIEW

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Note: A Supplement to today's edition of AFRICA REVIEW has been published and disseminated in special intelligence channels.

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A Perspective on the Angolan Leadership

Angolan President Agostinho Neto appears to be firmly in control of his party and the government, despite continuing but sporadic signs of popular unrest and discontent among blacks in the cabinet. In recent months, Neto has consolidated power in his own hands at the expense of other government officials. It now appears that all important decisions are made by him or by a small number of trusted advisers.

Although we continue to receive reports that Neto is in poor health and may have a serious drinking problem, there have been no indications that his ability to govern has been impaired. Neto has a history of heart and circulatory problems that could be aggravated by the pressures of office.

An indication of Neto's current strength is the apparent lack of internal opposition to his recent diplomatic initiatives, including the campaign to improve relations with the West. Those members of the party and the government who in the past had strongly opposed the return of Portuguese technicians and who generally advocated a more radical, "black-power," and pro-Soviet line have maintained a low profile in recent months. Although some reportedly may be considering a move against the government, Neto probably commands sufficient support to keep them in check. Nevertheless, this group probably enjoys considerable support at the grass-roots level of the party and the government and probably would quickly assert itself if Neto were to leave office.

The most immediate consequence of Neto's departure would be a significant diminution of mulatto influence in party and government circles. The younger blacks, particularly those in the military, strongly resent the disproportionate influence wielded by the mulattoes and probably would push for their removal if Neto were no longer in a position to protect them. Prime Minister Lopo do Nascimento, a mulatto, lacks a strong independent

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power base and recently has been rumored to be losing influence. The other high-ranking mulattoes--party theoretician Lucio Lara and Second Deputy Prime Minister Carlos Rocha--probably are in a stronger position, but still vulnerable because of their race. Defense Secretary Iko Carreira, a mulatto who has come under increasing scrutiny for his corrupt activities, reportedly expects he may have to flee the country. Many other mulattoes would probably join him if it appeared a major power struggle was about to break out in the post-Neto period.

Although the mulattoes might press for a collegial form of government to include them and other high-ranking blacks, such a solution probably would only be temporary. If a power struggle resulted, the type of regime most likely to emerge would be strongly nationalistic, more Marxist-Leninist, and directed if not controlled by the military. While the emergence of such a regime would bode ill for Portuguese interests in Angola, given Angola's economic and security problems it probably would not lead to a major reversal in current foreign policy initiatives.

Prime candidates to lead such a government would be Pascoal Luvualu, the black foreign affairs spokesman for the party who has gained considerable influence and exposure over the past year, and Rodrique Joao Lopes, known as "Ludy," the black director of the internal security service. Although Joao Luis Neto, "Xioto," a black and the Deputy Defense Minister, has long been considered a leading candidate for the presidency, his future may now be clouded if reports are correct that he recently was in Yugoslavia for psychiatric treatment. Others who would likely be jockeying for top positions include the extremely competent black provincial commissioner for Huambo, Pedro Maria Tonha, "Pedale"; black Minister of Education Ambrosio Lukoky; and Enriques de Carvalho Santos, "Onambwe," a mulatto who has been closely associated with the Cubans but may now be somewhat in their disfavor. (SECRET NOFORN-NOCONTRACT-ORCON)

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Namibia: Cuban Assistance to the South-West Africa
People's Organization

As diplomatic efforts to reach a Namibian settlement have stalled in recent months, Cuba has stepped up its training of South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) guerrillas. Cuba has also improved its air defense system in southern Angola, presumably to deter South African raids like that against the SWAPO camp at Cassinga last May. Although Cuba wants to avoid a direct military confrontation with South Africa, it will not shrink from defending major SWAPO installations in Angola.

Following South Africa's announcement in September that it would proceed unilaterally with elections in Namibia, Cuba added 10 military advisers to the 16 already in Zambia to train new troops for SWAPO's guerrilla struggle. By late October the new Cuban advisers had reportedly been assigned to forward staging camps in Zambia to prepare for SWAPO operations to disrupt the elections to be held next month in Namibia. Those slated to take part in the attacks include 150 SWAPO guerrillas fresh from a year's training in Cuba. Since 1977 at least 450 SWAPO personnel have returned from Cuba after receiving tactical training and weapons instruction. Cuba has provided assistance to SWAPO since shortly after the Angolan war.

Cuba sees the South African presence in Namibia as an important obstacle not only to the country's "liberation" but--more importantly to Havana's immediate concerns--to the consolidation of the Neto regime in Angola. In an effort to reduce if not completely remove the South African presence, Cuba has cooperated with Western diplomatic initiatives while remaining suspicious of South African and Western intentions.

Reflecting Havana's desire to reduce the risk of confrontation with South Africa, Vice President for

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Foreign Affairs Carlos Rafael Rodriguez reportedly indicated to the Argentine Ambassador in mid-October that Cuba favors the creation of a buffer zone along the Angolan-Namibian border. Yet, Cuba is committed to defending SWAPO installations in southern Angola, and for this purpose Cuban units reportedly were sent to reinforce some SWAPO bases in southern Angola earlier this fall.

Earlier Assistance to SWAPO

Cuba has provided military assistance to SWAPO since shortly after the Angolan war. In October 1976, SWAPO President Sam Nujoma visited Cuba to ask for military aid. The following month, Cuban and Angolan forces helped SWAPO stake out an area in southern Angola, where the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) had been operating for military training and for staging raids into Namibia. This area is contiguous to Ovamboland--the native region of most of the guerrillas--and is therefore ideally suited for infiltration. Over the past two years, Cuban advisers have trained SWAPO personnel at various installations in southern Angola; from time to time, SWAPO troops have participated in Cuban and Angolan operations against UNITA.

In the fall of 1977, Cuban military advisers began to train SWAPO personnel in Zambia as well. In November of that year, 10 Cuban advisers were permanently assigned to the main SWAPO training base at Senanga, where they provided instruction in security, military intelligence, and small-unit tactics. As of last summer, the number of Cubans permanently assigned had increased only slightly to 16, although as many as 70 Cuban military personnel reportedly were temporarily detailed to SWAPO camps last June. (SECRET NOFORN-NOCONTRACT-ORCON)

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Benin: Internal Problems

The left-leaning regime of Mathiew Kerekou, which marks its sixth year in power this month, is having increasing difficulty coping with corruption, serious economic problems, and its own failure to awaken much public enthusiasm for its domestic policies. Although the regime is not seriously threatened, it has responded to its dilemma by raising the specter of a mercenary attack--reminiscent of an unsuccessful invasion in 1977 by anti-Kerekou exiles--and by tightening security. Many Beninese do not believe the government's claims that another invasion is in the offing, which has contributed to a growing public sense of malaise and cynicism about the regime and its internal policies.

Domestic Malaise

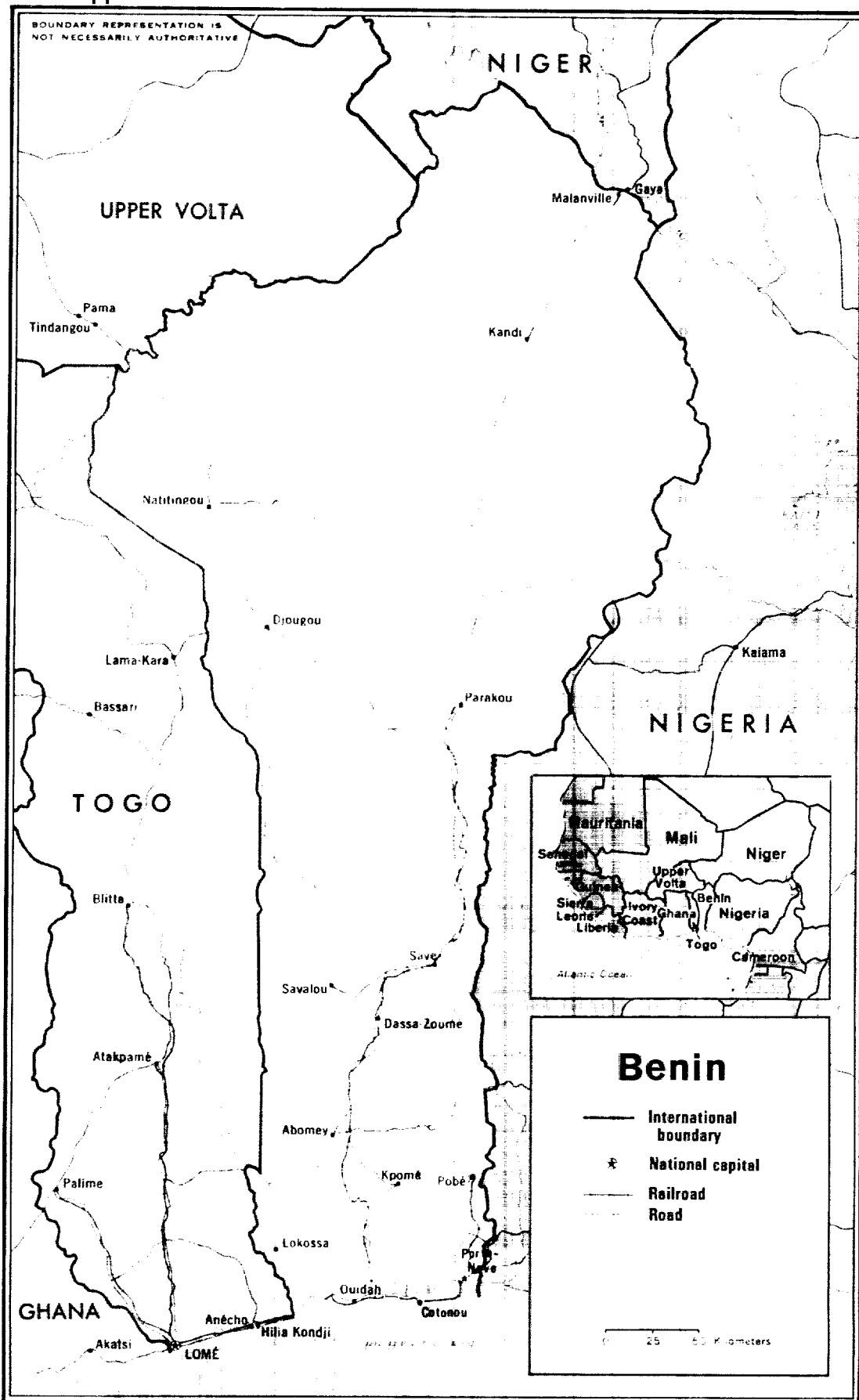
Kerekou and his revolutionary government continue to have difficulties in improving Benin's underdeveloped and slow-growing economy. Inadequate rainfall, managerial errors, and an inability to procure investment capital have caused the government to fall behind in its planned expansion of Benin's agricultural, industrial, and educational sectors.

Despite the government's efforts to evoke the mercenary menace, most Beninese are more concerned with the recent revelations of corruption and lethargy in their government. A major focus of local attention has been the recent financial scandal at the Commercial Bank of Benin, involving large discrepancies in the bank's accounts and the murder of a bank employee. Kerekou ordered a full-scale investigation into the bank's activities and announced that "counterrevolutionaries" will be executed. The bank scandal and Kerekou's harsh reaction has led to additional rumors and speculation that higher governmental officials may be engaging in other corrupt activities.

Kerekou's new electoral plan for the proposed National Assembly has also triggered considerable public uneasiness

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and apprehension. The President has decided that the National Assembly should be dominated by workers, the party, and teachers; middle-class merchants and religious leaders would receive only token representation. To achieve this combination, assembly delegates will be elected by class and trade, rather than by geographic regions.

Kerekou's electoral plan has generated little enthusiasm among rural voters who are being called on to devote several days of valuable planting time to government-sponsored sessions on revolutionary ideology and pay a stiff fee for a voter card. Urban response to the voter registration campaign has also been unenthusiastic, prompting Kerekou to announce that students without voter cards will be ineligible for foreign study grants.

Kerekou's preoccupation with foreign mercenaries led him recently to reinstitute night police checks in Cotonou and on the main roads to Nigeria and Togo. For most Beninese these measures are an inconvenience and serve more to emphasize the Army's arbitrariness than to meet security concerns. The public perception that the regime has difficulty coming to grips with its problems has been reinforced by the diversion of badly needed building materials to the construction of an extravagant monument, which so far has served only to snarl capital traffic.

Outlook

Despite Kerekou's apparent concerns, there seems to be little substance to his fears about another mercenary invasion. Both Cotonou and the interior remain calm, and we have no evidence of serious plotting against the regime. Kerekou does recognize, however, that the credibility of his regime is wearing thin and that there is growing public dissatisfaction with the government's internal shortcomings. In the absence of other alternatives, Kerekou may well respond by imposing even tighter security--or some other arbitrary measures--a move that would probably result in even greater public alienation.
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