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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
NATIONAL FOREIGN ASSESSMENT CENTER

29 February 1980

MEMORANDUM

Uganda: Internal Situation

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Factional disputes within the Ugandan leadership probably will continue to undermine President Binaisa's fragile government despite the apparent resolution of a "crisis" triggered by Binaisa's recent attempt to oust Interior Minister Muwanga, one of his principal opponents. The factionalism will come more into the open and intensify if Tanzanian President Nyerere makes good on his threat to withdraw his 20,000 troops, the only effective security force in Uganda.

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Binaisa, who has been concerned about the freewheeling political activities of his Interior Minister, announced the dismissal of Muwanga from his sensitive position in early February. Binaisa subsequently accepted a decision by the powerful National Consultative Council--Uganda's quasi-legislature--to appoint Muwanga as Labor Minister. The Council, which jealously protects the authority it has gradually acquired, appeared to be irked by Binaisa's failure to seek its approval for his move. Although Muwanga may not be able to cause as much trouble in the less sensitive Labor Ministry, he and others with strong factional support remain a threat to the politically weak Binaisa.

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The author of this paper is Africa Division, Office of Political Analysis. It was coordinated with the Directorate of Operations, the Office of Strategic Research and the National Intelligence Officer for Africa. Comments and queries are welcome and may be addressed to Chief, Africa Division, Office of Political Analysis

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Following the announcement of Muwanga's dismissal, some Council members tried to engineer a vote of no confidence in the government over Binaisa's failure to consult the Council and his alleged involvement in corruption. Although the move failed when a majority in the Council apparently concluded that voting Binaisa out of office would only lead to increased instability, Binaisa still has little personal support in the Council. [redacted]

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Several groups are continuing to maneuver against the regime and are trying to position themselves for national elections scheduled to be held next year. Some Council members hope to bring an early end to instability by moving up the election date to late 1980, but this probably would cause even more frenzied political maneuvering. [redacted]

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Factions within the Ugandan leadership are based on ethnic and personal rivalries and ideological differences. A few leaders have recruited their tribal brethren into personal militias, although the recruits ostensibly are part of Uganda's fledgling army that is being formed to replace Idi Amin's disbanded army. Old-line political parties dating from before the Amin regime--including one that supports Tanzanian-based former President Obote--are trying to reestablish themselves through the Council. Although Binaisa supports generally moderate pro-West policies, some influential leftists favor closer ties with the USSR. [redacted]

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Nyerere also is concerned about the continuing instability in Kampala. He wants to withdraw his troops as soon as possible because Uganda has become a heavy economic and political burden. After Binaisa's move against Muwanga, Nyerere warned the Ugandans that all of Tanzania's troops might be withdrawn soon if the factional disputes continued. [redacted]

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Nyerere apparently hoped his warning--which quickly became public knowledge--would influence the Ugandans to play down their differences, but Binaisa's domestic opponents may be encouraged to take further action if they feel his government has lost Tanzanian support. Binaisa himself now fears that Nyerere would like to see Obote, who shares the Tanzanian leader's socialist views, back in power in Kampala, and the Ugandan President has asked the US for support. Violent incidents between undisciplined Tanzanian soldiers

and Ugandans have increased the desire of Binaisa and most Ugandans to see the Tanzanians depart as soon as possible. Ugandan security forces will not be fully trained for some time, however. Binaisa's suggestion that the Tanzanians be replaced by a Commonwealth force has generated little interest. [redacted]

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Because Binaisa and Nyerere realize they still need each other, they probably will patch up their differences. Having overthrown Amin and remained in Uganda this long, Nyerere probably would not want to be responsible for a return to chaos--the likely result of a precipitate withdrawal of his troops. Nyerere, however, is clearly upset with the way things have evolved in Uganda, and might stand aside if a more ideologically compatible Ugandan leader staged a coup against Binaisa. [redacted]

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The ousted Amin is still in Libya and periodically makes statements about returning to power, but he has no significant support in Uganda. Remnants of his defeated army, however, are in southern Sudan, and have clashed with Tanzanian and Ugandan troops along the border from time to time. [redacted]

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