

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
NATIONAL FOREIGN ASSESSMENT CENTER

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MEMORANDUM

SENEGAL: Facing Change [redacted]

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Senegal, long the flagship state of French-speaking Africa, is beginning to confront the problems of being a small, poor African nation and an impending change in political leadership. President Leopold Senghor, 73, has indicated his intention to step down when his term ends in 1983, but there is rampant speculation that he might retire earlier to facilitate transfer of power to his talented but uninspiring Prime Minister. The uncertainty on the political front is occurring at a time of mounting economic and social pressures and threatening foreign developments. Together, these factors have created unprecedented uneasiness in Dakar. [redacted]

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The Political Scene

President Senghor has provided Senegal with 20 years of relatively stable political development and honest administration. He has emphasized cooperation and compromise and has seldom forced confrontations. While accepting membership in the nonaligned movement, he has tried to keep Senegal well within the moderate, Western system he experienced in France. [redacted]

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This memorandum was written by [redacted] the Africa Division of the Office of Political Analysis. It was requested by the Director of Central Intelligence, and has been coordinated with the Office of Economic Research, the Office of Central Reference, the Directorate for Operations, and the National Intelligence Officer for Africa. Research was completed on 2 June 1980. Questions and comments are welcome and should be directed to Chief, Africa Division, OPA [redacted]

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Senghor is an anomaly among African leaders in that much of his active career took place in France. Born in Joal, a coastal town south of Dakar, he was sent to a Catholic school there and then on to Paris for secondary school and university. The late French President Georges Pompidou was a classmate and life-long close friend. During the 1930s, Senghor was a prominent literary figure in Paris and one of the key innovators of the philosophy of negritude, which stresses the values of African culture. Meanwhile, he taught grammar in the French school system. As the first African to earn the agregé (roughly equivalent to a Ph. D.) he became a celebrity in Senegal. When France offered representation in the French Parliament to its African colonies after World War II, Senghor was elected as Senegal's delegate. [redacted]

During his years in the French National Assembly, Senghor gradually worked out a socialist platform that was more moderate than the positions of most of the other African deputies in Paris and was also distinct from that of the French Socialist Party and its Senegalese branch. He had created his own party, the Senegalese Progressive Union (UPS), well before independence became an issue. Senegal--like all the other African colonies except Guinea--voted in 1958 to remain tied to France, but by 1960 it joined the others in seeking independence and Senghor was chosen as Head of State. [redacted]

During the 1960s, Senghor concentrated on developing political institutions for his new country and on suppressing, mainly through conciliation but with an occasional show of force, opposition from other political factions. Senegal became a one-party state, but policymaking was shared within the ruling group. [redacted]

In 1970 Senghor reinstated the position of Prime Minister, and he has gradually increased the administrative powers of its incumbent. The Prime Minister has been officially designated to finish out the President's term in the event of a vacancy. In 1976--contrary to the prevailing pattern in Africa--Senghor arranged a constitutional amendment that formally allows opposition. The amendment spelled out the three political labels under which the parties could operate--socialist and democratic (assigned to Senghor's

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renamed Socialist Party), liberal and democratic, and Marxist-Leninist; a fourth--conservative--category was added after the 1978 election. [redacted]

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The Senegalese Democratic Party, led by a middle-aged lawyer named Abdoulaye Wade, accepted the liberal and democratic label and functions openly and rather successfully as an opposition party. It holds 18 of the 100 seats in the National Assembly. The other legal parties are the revived vehicles of oldtime politicians and have little influence. There are a few modest illegal opposition groups that might gain a sympathetic hearing, but they seem unprepared to cause serious problems for the government. [redacted]

Political attention is focused mainly on Senghor's designated successor, Prime Minister Abdou Diouf. Now 44, Diouf has held the second-ranking post in Senegal since 1970. He was born in Louga, a railroad town in the northwest, and identifies himself as a Wolof. He attended secondary school and university in Senegal and then went to France for further training in law and administration. Shortly after independence he entered the Senegalese administration at a fairly high level and filled a variety of positions in order to learn how the government functioned. From 1963 to 1968 he worked directly for Senghor, first as Cabinet Director and then as Secretary General of the Presidency. After two years as Minister of Plan and Industry, he was appointed Prime Minister. [redacted]

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While few question Diouf's technical competence, he is not particularly popular. He is uncommonly tall, reserved, and does not project himself well before groups. More seriously, he has had no experience in grass-roots or electoral politics and has no political base of his own. Since the last election in 1978, Senghor has increased Diouf's responsibility and given him greater foreign and domestic exposure. It is hard to see anyone but Diouf succeeding Senghor, even if an election is involved, for he would have the formal--though perhaps grudging--support of the ruling party and would be unlikely to face a strong opponent. Charges that he is impatient with the system might even become an advantage for him with younger voters. [redacted]

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Senegal has a conventional military establishment that is one of the best organized, disciplined, and competent in

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Africa. It is, however, so small--fewer than 9,000 in all services--that the government continues to rely on the 2,000 French forces stationed in Senegal. The army is apolitical and will probably be an influence for stability whenever Senghor relinquishes power. Chief of Staff General Idrissa Fall is close to Senghor and may retire about the same time. While random acts of rebellion cannot be ruled out, there are few indications that the Sengalese military would be inclined to disrupt the succession. [redacted]

It is becoming increasingly clear that Senegal is approaching a new political era. Leaders of Senghor's generation are dying or retiring, and their replacements most likely will come from the group of young people whose ideas have been formed since independence. Once the change is effected, French influence may become less pervasive, cultural and intellectual achievement may decline in prestige, Senegal's preoccupation with international affairs may lessen, the art of politics may be subordinated to technical and administrative skills, and--above all--unpleasant economic realities may move to the forefront. [redacted]

In the current waiting period, some jockeying for position is going on, and corruption apparently is on the upswing among officials who discount their future prospects. An overactive Dakar rumor mill, meanwhile, is keeping public opinion stirred up. Diouf and young politicians associated with him--such as Foreign Minister Moustapha Niass--have already broken up some of the powerful provincial political machines, but the outcome of the struggle between old-style and new-style politics is far from certain. Nevertheless, Senegal has a politically informed population and an apparent dedication to democratic government and legal procedures that is expected to contribute to a smooth transition. [redacted]

The People

Senegal's 5,500,000 people are fairly free of tribal divisiveness. The Wolof are the dominant ethnic group, and their culture and language are being assimilated voluntarily by the others. They are essentially local people, residing in significant numbers only in Senegal and The Gambia. Originally a warrior tribe, the Wolofs were pacified by the French in the mid-19th century. Once under colonial rule, they settled into a life of peanut culture, business, and government service. [redacted]

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There are five additional tribal groups of some importance--Serer, Toucouleur, Fulani, Diola, and Malinke. The Serer--President Senghor's tribe--are a relatively small group of fairly prosperous farmers and traders who live along the coast south of Dakar. The Toucouleur mainly cultivate farms along the Senegal River, but many of them operate small businesses in the cities. They belong to one of the great ruling tribes in West African history and are now thinly spread among a number of countries in the area. The Fulani--herdsmen and traders--are also widely dispersed throughout West Africa and constitute the ruling group in several countries; those in Senegal live mainly in the desolate eastern area and play only a small political role. The Diola and the Malinke both are mainly in the Casamance and, as forest people, are culturally different from other Senegalese. The rice-growing Diola are basically a local people, while the Malinke are part of a large tribal group important in several neighboring countries. [redacted]

Senegalese are unusually mobile people. They not only travel within their own country, but also become migrant traders in Africa and foreign workers in Europe. During the five-month dry season when little farm work can be done, there is considerable informal movement to Senegalese urban centers and fishing ports. There is a reverse flow when large amounts of labor are needed for planting or harvesting. Not all the movement is seasonal, however, and some displacements last for years. The overall population growth rate is 2.6 percent a year, with the cities gaining population somewhat faster than the rest of the country. [redacted]

The internal migration involves mainly people from the central regions where it is easy to get around. Tribal intermingling and intermarriage are traditional, but family and village ties are carefully maintained by frequent visits. Annual religious festivals attract hundreds of thousands of Muslim worshippers. [redacted]

The expatriate community--consisting mainly of French residents--lives somewhat apart from the Senegalese population because of its higher income level, though no legal restrictions separate it from the rest of the population. The smaller Lebanese community still plays an important role in Senegalese business. Aware that it is not well regarded by the local population, it tends to stay out of politics. [redacted]

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Class is a bigger factor in the social structure of Senegal than ethnic identification. Under the influence of the French, education became the mark of the African elite; diplomas and advanced degrees are still highly respected. Professional careers in and out of government pay well and bring high status. The elite among the emerging second generation tend to be technicians and civil servants. [redacted]

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A majority of the population is farmers, and they are viewed as socially inferior. Within this category, there are subbranks for different types, ranging from peanut farmers at the top of the pyramid to herders at the bottom. Another large group, sometimes overlapping the farmers, includes those involved in petty commerce, fabrication and repairs, and personal services. The unemployed--only a few percent of the total--form the lowest category. [redacted]

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Religion is both a unifying and a divisive force in Senegal, where well over 90 percent of the population is Sunni Muslim. A special feature of Senegalese Islam is the heavy influence of the mass-membership Muslim brotherhoods. Adherence to a brotherhood is an individual matter--one in which ethnic, class, and even national lines can be crossed with impunity. [redacted]

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There are a number of brotherhoods, each with distinct rituals and revered teachers, but the two largest can swing considerable weight and could influence the political succession. The Tijanes and the Mourides have long competed for adherents, economic privileges, and political patronage. The differences between them go back to their historical origins and ethnic makeup. [redacted]

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Tijanism is rooted in the 12th century Islamic renaissance in North Africa. It entered Senegal through Mauritania and found an enthusiastic reception among the Toucouleur farmers of the Senegal River basin. In the 19th century, Toucouleur warriors and clerics spread the brotherhood widely through West Africa. Toucouleur influence still permeates the sect, which avoids central control and accords individual caliphs authority over their own disciples. Tijane orthodoxy emphasizes study and meditation and a devotion that strictly follows Koranic prescriptions. Its schools draw Islamic students from all over Africa. Tijanes,

proud of their orthodoxy, their ties to historical Islam, and their autonomy within their own caliphates, look down on Mourides as social inferiors. [redacted]

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The Mouride movement originated early in the 20th century when a Wolof preacher established a brotherhood that provided an alternative to the Wolof warrior society destroyed by the French conquest. After the conquest, many Wolofs heeded Mouride injunctions to concentrate on prayer and work, and they laid the foundation of the peanut economy. Eventually, the Mourides reached an accommodation with the French administration--carried over to the independent Senegalese Government--that recognized a mutual interest in political stability and economic production. [redacted]

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Mouridism reflects the hierarchical organization and communal social structure of the Wolofs and is spreading through Senegal along with other aspects of Wolof culture. Its devotions tend to be emotional, though the greatest stress is placed on obedience to the caliph and support of the brotherhood through hard work. Mourides criticize the Tijanes for intellectual snobbery. [redacted]

Although their differing backgrounds contribute to the tension between the Tijanes and the Mourides, much of their rivalry is directed toward the future. Senghor, a neutral because he is a Christian, has always carefully balanced his relations with the major brotherhoods. As prosperity declines and the political succession looms, however, they are intensifying their competition for members, money, and government patronage. Both the Tijanes and the Mourides have recently undergone their own generational change as longstanding leaders have died and been replaced by younger, less charismatic, and less experienced ones. [redacted]

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In general, the Tijane brotherhood has been more cooperative and less demanding of the government. Most top political officials, including Prime Minister Diouf, are Tijanes, reflecting that group's ties with Senegal's intellectual elite. The Mouride leadership--controlling the country's largest bloc of votes and dominating the richest economic sector--can virtually veto any national candidate who does not please them. Since any successor to Senghor will almost

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certainly be a Muslim, political juggling to maintain the support of the brotherhoods and cultivate their leaders will continue. [redacted]

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The Economy

Senegal inherited one of the most advanced economies of West Africa when it became independent. At the same time, however, the French West Africa grouping that had served as its market area broke up into eight nations and left Senegal without a hinterland. [redacted]

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Peanut production--well established in western and southwestern Senegal since the turn of the century--remains the basis of the economy. Peanuts are one of the few crops viable in Senegal's sandy soil and dry climate. They comprise nearly half of the total exports--sold almost exclusively to France for peanut oil, but no longer at subsidized prices--and constitute the principal source of cash income for about 70 percent of the population. The government has not succeeded in its efforts to encourage crop diversification and to nationalize and regulate peanut marketing. [redacted]

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Outside the peanut-growing area, Senegalese farmers produce traditional food crops--cereals in the north and rice in the south. Cattle are raised by Fulani herdsmen in the north and east, and fishing is a major occupation along the coast. The recurrent droughts of the last decade have adversely affected most traditional types of food production. [redacted]

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Senegal has the most developed industrial sector in French-speaking West Africa. Much of this industry is devoted to materials processing, though there is some manufacturing for import substitution. Costs are extremely high, however, and despite the existing industrial base Senegal has not been able to stimulate expansion in the manufacturing sector. Some mining is carried on, and phosphate is a major export--the only one going predominantly to non-French buyers. [redacted]

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Transportation facilities are relatively good. There is a first-class port at Dakar, as well as a major international airport. The road network is above average for West Africa, and there are railroads connecting Dakar with

St. Louis on the Senegal River and with Bamako, Mali, on the Niger River. The Gambia, however, cuts off easy access to Senegal's Casamance region. [redacted]

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Imports on a sizable scale are needed to operate Senegal's basic economy and to supply consumer goods to satisfy the demands of the local elite and the expatriate community. Prices for these imports--notably for fuels, but also for manufactured products--have escalated rapidly in recent years and have been a major cause of Senegal's 15-percent annual inflation. [redacted]

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In addition, Senegal has a large and growing "parallel economy" based on a more informal exchange of goods and services. This supports much of the urban population and also extends into the rural areas. The problems in the modern economy have been reflected in heightened competition in the parallel economy and the resulting increase in hustling has contributed to uneasiness in the cities. [redacted]

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The economic situation is getting worse. Recurrent failures in agricultural production--due mainly to drought--have been the most serious problem. Restricted markets and extreme price fluctuations for peanuts and phosphates have also contributed, along with soaring import costs, to a balance-of-payments deficit and a sharp decline in government revenues. [redacted]

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The Senegalese Government is aware of its economic problems and has taken steps to address them. A new five-year austerity program, with concrete targets and an orientation toward free market competition, was introduced late last year. A 25-percent increase in minimum wages--the first such raise in four years--was put into effect in January to alleviate hardships among workers. [redacted]

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Prospects for improvement are grim. The agricultural sector is near the limit of its development, and there is little hope of expanding the high-cost industrial sector. Development of the river valleys has long been recognized as the brightest hope for the economy, and Dakar has strongly advocated such a course. Such large-scale projects would require international financial backing, however, and many donors regard them with skepticism. Moreover, Senegal does

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not fully control its rivers. The lower 200 miles of the Gambia River lie entirely within The Gambia, and the north bank of the Senegal River belongs to Mauritania; the headwaters of both rivers are in Guinea. After years of negotiations, Dakar appears to have gotten one dam project on the Senegal River under construction and is nearing agreement with Banjul on the form a joint project on the Gambia River is to take. Practical results are still remote. [redacted]

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Prime Minister Diouf has become identified with the formulation and implementation of economic policy, and he may eventually be blamed for failing to achieve improvement. As the economic situation has gotten worse, there has been a loss of confidence in the government and a growing tendency for groups with grievances to resort to violence, especially in areas outside the Wolof heartland. [redacted]

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Foreign Affairs

President Senghor has made foreign affairs his special province; he has interwoven theory and policy articulately and tirelessly. His program is an extension of the literary and philosophical theories Senghor has developed during his career, and he uses it to address Senegal's political weaknesses and focus on external solutions. Despite his persistence, Senghor has gotten little serious support from foreign leaders, and he sometimes appears to speak alone even in Senegal. [redacted]

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Senghor is preoccupied with the danger he perceives in the expansion of Soviet and Cuban influence in Africa and from the ambitions of Algeria and Libya, which he sees as Soviet-dominated clients. He views the Soviet and Cuban presence in Ethiopia and Angola and the Algerian and Libyan involvement in the Western Sahara and Chad as evidence of Soviet intentions to establish a preponderant position in Africa. Moreover, he believes Senegal is surrounded by weak states vulnerable to Communist influence. His proposed solutions call for mutual defense arrangements among black Africans--whether ad hoc support of particular states or permanent defense agreements. On another level, he regularly pushes for a formal organization to unite the French-speaking nations of the world in order to bolster what he sees as their heritage of political moderation. [redacted]

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Senghor's foreign commitments indicate that he intends to stay in office at least another year. He is acting chairman of the Organization of African Unity until July, filling out the term of the late William Tolbert of Liberia. Later this year, he will be visited by French President Giscard. In 1981, he expects to preside over a summit meeting of French-speaking countries--one of his principal enthusiasms. [redacted]

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The day-to-day conduct of foreign affairs has few unusual aspects. Senegal is on good terms with all of its neighbors and faces no immediate security threat. Nevertheless, Senghor's foreign policy statements contain large doses of alarm about racist threats against black Africans by aggressive Arabs from North Africa and beyond, threats of Communist designs against moderate and pro-Western states, and threats that the world's wealthy countries will further victimize the poor ones. [redacted]

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Mauritania, which shares the Senegal River valley and its Toucouleur population with Senegal, has long been a subject of concern to Senghor. He distrusts the Moors--numerically and politically dominant in Mauritania--as racists and potential radicals and frequently reminds Mauritanian leaders that Senegal stands ready to protect the rights of Mauritania's black minority. Since the emergence of the Western Saharan problem and the war with the Polisario Front, Senghor has supported the principle of self-determination for the Western Sahara and worked for a negotiated settlement. While he is a friend of Morocco, he would particularly like to see a neutral and stable Mauritania that would be a buffer against Algerian expansion. [redacted]

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Relations with The Gambia--an enclave within Senegal--are equally important. After some early sparring, the two countries have agreed to renounce merger schemes, to respect each other's rights, and to cooperate closely on matters of common interest. They are linked through the permanent Senegambian Commission in Banjul and also in several multilateral development programs. [redacted]

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Relations with Guinea-Bissau, a cause of considerable concern during its Communist-supported war for independence, have improved since the Portuguese departure. Senegal still

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Mali is a source of worry because of its apparent inability to control its vast tribal territories, but government-to-government relations are untroubled. Guinea and Senegal for many years were openly hostile--mainly because of their differing political ideologies--but since a highly publicized reconciliation between the two presidents in 1978, tension has been greatly reduced. Although the border has opened and trade has resumed, there still are sizable numbers of Guinean exiles living in Senegal. [redacted] 25X1

Senghor is honored as an elder statesman by most African countries, and Senegal plays an active role in African regional affairs. Although Senegal fears it may be losing its longstanding competition with Ivory Coast for French favors, the two countries frequently cooperate on matters of mutual concern. [redacted] 25X1

It is France, however, that is of greatest importance to Senegal. President Giscard's state visit in November is anticipated in Dakar as indicating a favorable response to requests for additional economic aid. Senegal--which normally gets about \$150 million annually from Paris--has long headed the list of French aid recipients. Military ties between the two countries also are close. Besides relying on the French contingent stationed near Dakar, Senegal looks to France for equipment and training. Joint military exercises are held periodically, and France has on occasion been permitted to increase its military presence in Senegal to support operations elsewhere in Africa. Despite these arrangements, Senghor appears to believe that Giscard tends to favor some of the newcomers among African leaders--even those, like former Emperor Bokassa, with dubious reputations--to the detriment of ties with older, tried friends. [redacted] 25X1

Senegalese-US relations are good, though Senghor would probably like to see them even closer. He has long sought signs of US willingness to act in defense of free world interests in Africa, [redacted] 25X1

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 Dakar maintains diplomatic relations and conducts business with the Soviet Union and other Communist countries, though it makes clear that it opposes any attempts by them to extend their influence in Africa. 

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