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Next 2 Page(s) In Document Exempt

Approved For Release 2005/06/22 : CIA-RDP85T00875R002000190003-3

CIA/ONE/STAFF MEM 19-61

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

7 February 1961

STAFF MEMORANDUM NO. 9-61 (Internal O/NE Working Paper - CIA
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SUBJECT: The Widening Gulf Between African Radicals and the West

1. Within the past several months, a major rift has developed between Africa's most militantly nationalistic leaders and the West. In addition to engendering serious complications in the Congo situation, this rift has produced a schism of serious proportions between moderate Africans willing to maintain a pro-Western orientation and the so-called radical nationalists who are increasingly disposed to challenge Western policies and practices in Africa.* The decision taken by Guinea, the UAR, and Morocco to withdraw their troops from the Congo, their positions -- together with Mali and Ghana -- at the January 3-7 Casablanca "summit" meeting, and their growing dalliance with the Soviet Bloc, attest to the unhappiness of the radicals with the prevailing Western posture in Africa.

* Falling within the moderate category are such leaders as Houphouet-Boigny of the Ivory Coast, Prime Minister Balewa of Nigeria and Shadrach Tubman of Liberia. Africa's radicals include Ghana's Nkrumah, Guinea's Sekou Toure, and President Nasser of the UAR.

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A further widening of the chasm between African radicals and the West threatens to engender serious political difficulties for the West, its moderate African supporters, and the UN, whose effectiveness in the Congo already has been impaired by existing differences.

2. In general, the leaders of nations such as Ghana, Guinea, and Mali are disturbed by the prevailing process of economic and political balkanization in Africa. They are also fearful that the erstwhile European colonial powers will seek to resurrect new spheres of influence as weak and deeply divided African states acquire independent status, or will fashion neo-colonial bonds in the form of economic dependence, military alliances, and monopolization of advisory and technical positions in those African states faced with serious shortages of skills, resources, and capacity to govern effectively. The radicals wish to end the exclusive connections imposed during the colonial period and to diversify the sources upon which Africans must be dependent for economic and technical aid. In addition, they desire a predominant voice in what is said, discussed, or proposed about Africa.

- 2 -

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3. The Congo crisis has provided a focus for African fears and has tended to reinforce radical African suspicions that the colonial powers will: (a) relinquish its vestigial colonial influence only grudgingly; (b) seek to exploit African weaknesses to their own advantage; and (c) create "puppet" regimes which slavishly pursue pro-Western policies inimical to African interests. The US, which is regarded by radicals and moderates alike as a financial and diplomatic supporter of the Mobutu clique, has been the object of increasing criticism as well. The priority accorded NATO interests by the US, its position on the recent Algeria and colonial resolutions at the UN, and its tendency to view African problems in the cold war context, also have made for African disenchantment with the US. Some hope is expressed, however, that the new administration will initiate an "agonizing reappraisal" of US policies and practices in Africa.

4. As a result Africa's radicals are groping towards some form of unified political action. Although they are seeking to rally the support of other African leaders, they feel that opposition to neo-colonialism should be organized around the strongest and most militantly independent leadership in the area. This leadership would act as a self-appointed executive committee

- 3 -

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in the name of the African community as a whole -- one which may increasingly challenge the credentials of African statesmen considered too pro-Western.

5. The approach being taken by the radicals (with which the UAR has strongly associated itself) was perhaps most clearly revealed at the Casablanca conference of January 1961 [redacted]

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Although the conference concluded with an appeal for all African nations to join in the creation of a vaguely defined NATO-type organization to coordinate military, economic, and military policies, the principal emphasis was rather on a series of resolutions in which the conferees: (a) pledged themselves to a policy of non-alignment; (b) opposed the maintenance of foreign troops and bases on African territory; (c) called for the release of Patrice Lumumba and his restoration to the Congo premiership; and (d) renewed their threat to withdraw their troops from the Congo. Resolutions also were adopted on Algeria, Mauritania, and Israel which favored the special interests of the various conference participants.

- 4 -

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6. Despite this momentary display of consensus, Africa's "radicals" are themselves divided on a number of issues. Both King Mohammed V of Morocco and President Modibo Keita of Mali are essentially moderate leaders who feel impelled by domestic radical forces to assume extreme postures, but probably are privately reluctant to push too hard and too far on many foreign policy issues of vital concern to the West. Differences in social philosophy and in personality separate these men from other African leaders, especially those who seek preeminent positions as acknowledged heads of a Pan-African movement. Disagreements also obtain concerning Israel's proper role in Africa, recognition of Mauritania as an independent state, and the formation of an all-African Military Command. Finally, basic consensus often is absent on tactics to be adopted against Western neo-colonialism, the timing of diplomatic initiatives, and the extent to which Soviet Bloc blandishments should be accepted.*

*

The obstacles which confront Pan-Africanists are reflected in the difficulties facing the loose "union" of Ghana, Mali, and Guinea. All threenations have separate currencies. Different ethnic communities populate these countries. In addition, Ghana, after fifty years of British colonial tutelage, employs English as its official language, has inherited English judicial, educational, and governmental practices, and is a member of the Commonwealth. Guinea and Mali have inherited French institutions and administrative practices. The leaders of all three nations are unwilling to sacrifice their power in a real union, disagree on foreign policy initiatives, and are basically suspicious of one another's political ambitions. As a result, the Ghana-Guinea-Mali "union" remains a paper amalgam.

- 5 -

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7. Desp te absence of real consensus among themselves, Africa's radicals will continue to seek the means for joint action against Western neo-colonialism. Acting impulsively on a defensive reflex basis these leaders will continue to give an impression of extreme sensitivity and irrationality. Where the West is concerned, the negative political instincts of these states probably will provide additional impetus to declining Western influence/ ⁱⁿ the area. Radical initiatives probably will take such forms as: (a) demands for the early withdrawal of Western military assets throughout Africa; (b) further retaliation against France on Algeria, the Sahara bomb tests, and its policies in West Africa; and (c) frequent support for Soviet Bloc initiatives before the UN and elsewhere which are in harmony with African "aspirations".

8. The tendency of Africa's militant nationalists to adopt extreme postures on area issues will pose serious problems for the West, and particularly for the US. Under the threat of other Congo crises and further balkanization the militant nationalists may intervene more blatantly in the domestic affairs of their neighbors -- e.g. Ghana in Togo, Guinea in Liberia, the UAR in the Horn of Africa. Certainly moderate

- 6 -

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statesmen, such as Houphouet-Boigny of the Ivory Coast and Prime Minister Bolewa of Nigeria, will be placed under sustained pressure to alter their existing pro-Western orientations. The Soviet Bloc, at the same time, can be expected to gain widening entree into the continent and to find additional receptivity for policies which appear to coincide with African requirements. Concomitantly, the US probably will be challenged to make a clear distinction between its Western European security needs and US African interests, as well as come under further radical attacks for its seeming tendency to support Africa's conservative spokesmen rather than the continent's militant nationalists.

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- 7 -

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