



**Director of
Central
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Postcoup Prospects in Liberia

Interagency Intelligence Memorandum

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*NI IIM 80-10019
December 1980*

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POSTCOUP PROSPECTS IN LIBERIA

Information available as of 22 December 1980 was
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CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
KEY JUDGMENTS.....	1
DISCUSSION	3
I. INTRODUCTION.....	3
II. US INTERESTS IN LIBERIA	4
A. Military-Strategic Interests	4
B. Economic Interests	5
C. Political Interests	5
III. FACTORS OF STABILITY AND INSTABILITY	6
A. Political Factors	6
B. Military Factors	8
C. Economic Factors	9
D. Emerging Foreign Policy Orientation	10
IV. PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES	12

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KEY JUDGMENTS

The United States enjoys valuable access rights and facilities in Liberia which probably cannot be duplicated elsewhere on the continent. In the eyes of the world, Liberia is inextricably linked to the United States, and its failures will be interpreted as American failures. As a result, the symbolic importance of Liberia to US interest may even transcend material considerations. If Liberia is disappointed with US assistance, it will turn elsewhere. This could allow nations unfriendly toward the United States to make significant inroads.

The coup last April left Liberia with a fragile political system and profound weaknesses in its institutions, leadership, and social structure. Realization of these conditions, and fear that the most likely alternative to the Doe regime is unpredictable chaos, is probably the major cement holding the system together today. The regime depends on the support of the military, and therefore must satisfy the personal and professional demands of the ethnically disparate rank and file. Continued relative stability in Liberia depends on solving the near-term fiscal crisis to permit continued importation of petroleum products and foodstuffs. In the longer term, basic economic stability will depend on a return of foreign investor confidence. Foreign assistance will be crucial both in the short and in the long run.

Despite the grudging acceptance of the new regime by other African governments, Liberian leaders remain frightened of subversion supported from the outside. Efforts by Communist and radical African regimes to exploit the situation have so far generally been unsuccessful because of the Liberian Government's continued attachment to America and its suspicion of Communist motivation.

Civilian rule will not return to Liberia until the economic situation improves to a point where civilians and military alike can count on some benefits from the system. This in turn depends upon the ability of a fragile administration to sustain progress and to resolve day-to-day crises in the fiscal and public security areas. Liberia is bound to the United States and its progress, or lack of it, will depend upon cooperation with the United States or replacement of the United States with some other outside benefactor.

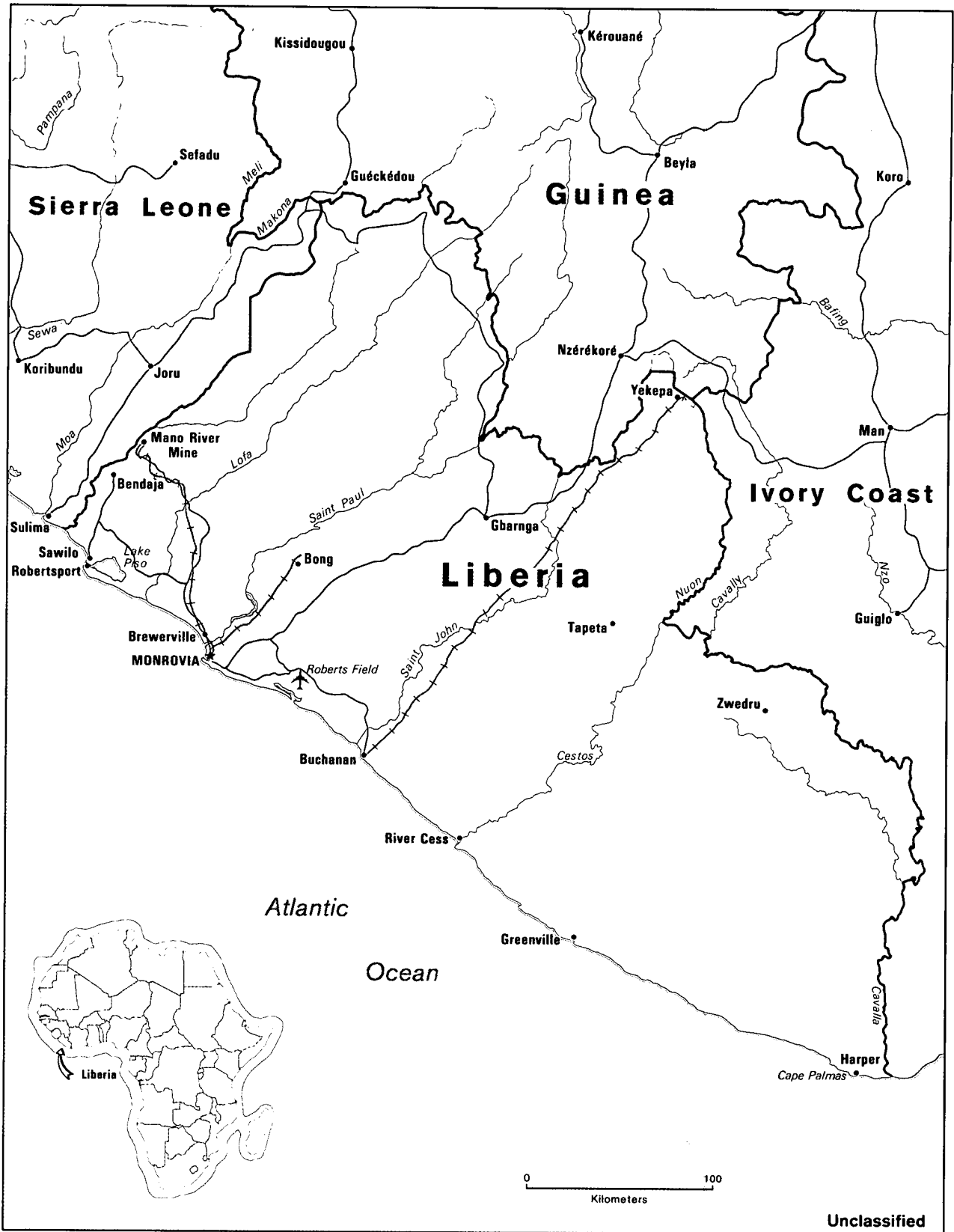
Note: This memorandum was prepared under the auspices of the National Intelligence Officer for Africa with contributions from the Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the Department of State, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Central Intelligence Agency. It has been coordinated with Intelligence Community representatives at the working level.

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DISCUSSION

I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 12 April 1980 Master Sergeant Samuel K. Doe and a handful of other noncommissioned officers assassinated Liberia's President William Tolbert, ending the regime that had ruled the country since it achieved independence in 1847. The coup d'etat put in question the "special relationship" that has long characterized US-Liberian relations. Although the coup itself was spontaneous and unexpected, tensions had been building since unprecedented riots over a proposed increase in the price of rice rocked Monrovia, the capital, in April 1979. A deeper cause, however, was the effect of economic and social progress and of rapidly rising expectations on the century-old cleavage between Americo-Liberians and Liberia's indigenous majority.¹

2. The growth of dissent was facilitated by the liberalized political atmosphere that Tolbert, with US encouragement, had allowed. The increasingly free press and rapid development of education spread the arena of political discussion to remote parts of the country, to reach a growing proportion of the indigenous majority. The Progressive Peoples Party (PPP), an opposition group espousing social-democratic principles, was able to register legally in December 1979, while the Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA), with a more radical socialist creed, flourished in academic circles. In March 1980 the PPP called an abortive general strike in Monrovia, and was held responsible for subsequent public disturbances; the arrest and threatened treason trials of its leaders raised fears that the relative liberalism of recent years was at an end.

3. Meanwhile, Sergeant Doe—a career soldier from the remote but increasingly ambitious Krahn tribe—felt that his career prospects were blighted by the Tolbert regime and the Americo-Liberians who dominated it and the upper ranks of the army officer corps. On the night of 11-12 April 1980 a handful of soldiers directed by Doe invaded the presidential mansion and murdered Tolbert. As news of their success spread, the rank and file of the army mutinied. Their officers

made no serious effort to restore authority. Doe's plans had not gone much beyond killing the President, but this proved sufficient for complete victory.

4. Unexpectedly finding himself in power, Sergeant Doe established a Peoples Redemption Council (PRC) of his principal noncommissioned associates as Liberia's ultimate authority. Recognizing the ignorance of PRC members about the functioning of the government, Doe named a composite Cabinet made up of politicians from the PPP and MOJA, some army officers, and a few technocrat holdovers from the deposed Tolbert regime. Lines of authority have remained confused, both within the PRC and among it, the Cabinet, and the renovated military hierarchy.

5. It took Doe some days to restore order in Monrovia, where jubilant soldiers looted and harassed Americo-Liberians and, to some extent, foreigners. Several hundred leading officials, army officers, and politicians associated with Tolbert or believed guilty of major corruption were arrested and sometimes brutalized; on 22 April, 13 leading officials, including Foreign Minister Cecil Dennis, were publicly executed after a travesty of a trial. Lower levels of the government bureaucracy were, however, retained in place. While many detained individuals were eventually released, some 75 remain in custody. Most prominent Americo-Liberians who were outside the country on 12 April, including Vice President Bennie Warner, went into exile; many others escaped from Liberia or at least sent their families to safehaven abroad.

6. Although Doe and his associates were at first very jittery, no real attempts were made from inside the country or from abroad to contest his victory. Nevertheless, many African leaders were horrified, less by the fact of a coup than by the public killing of prominent Liberians (including personal friends) and because the easy victory of an army sergeant in Liberia seemed a potential threat to all African governments. Though some radical regimes backed Doe from the first, it was not until July that his regime was, in effect, accepted as legitimate at the annual summit of the Organization of African Unity.

7. At home, Doe and his government face enormous difficulties. Despite general public support, the regime

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itself remains weak and often ineffective. The economy, in trouble before the coup, has been made worse by inept government management and an atmosphere of political instability that has shattered the confidence of the business and banking communities. The possibility of conflict between indigenous ethnic groups, in the past muted by Americo-Liberian domination, poses new problems, especially in the army. Under these circumstances, the security of US interests in Liberia—political, economic, and strategic—is significantly endangered.

II. US INTERESTS IN LIBERIA

A. Military-Strategic Interests

8. The close relationship between the United States and Liberia has, especially since World War II, given the United States access rights and facilities which it does not, in 1980, enjoy anywhere else in Africa and which could probably not be duplicated elsewhere on the continent. Though the future reliability of the access rights has undoubtedly diminished as a result of the revolution, the existing facilities—which have so far not been threatened by Liberia's new government—remain of considerable value.

9. *Port and Airport Access Rights.* The Port of Monrovia and Roberts International Airfield were built by the United States during and after World War II. In the process of turning the facilities over to Liberian control the United States negotiated special rights of access.

10. In accordance with a confidential exchange of notes of 13 and 14 April 1964, the United States may establish in the Monrovia Free Port area "such military installations as are agreed upon" by the US and Liberian Governments, if they jointly find it "necessary for the maintenance of international peace and security." Such installations—which would be built and maintained entirely at US expense—may not be used "as weapons of conflict" without prior Liberian consent.

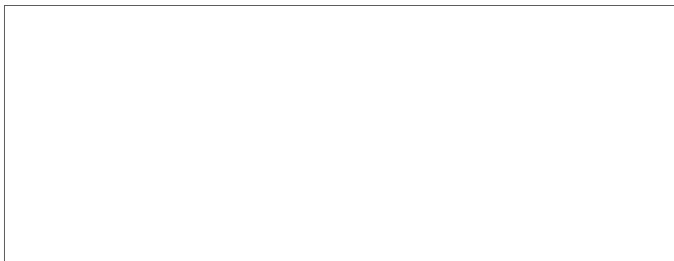
11. An unpublished exchange of notes of 6 and 13 July 1954, allows the United States to use Roberts International Airfield "during a national emergency" under the "exclusive jurisdiction" terms of the otherwise obsolete Defense Areas Agreement of 31 March 1942. What constitutes a "national emergency," and to which nation it applies, is not specified. Plans to upgrade the airfield, at US expense, have been in abeyance since the coup, in part because of US doubts

about their reception by a new government with other priorities.

12. Neither agreement has an expiration date. While the United States has not formally invoked either, it has maintained annual naval port visits to Monrovia, and operates some three military transport flights to Roberts Airfield each month; Roberts has been used during various international crises, including the 1978 Shaba invasion. To the extent that they can in fact be exercised, these access agreements would be of considerable strategic value to the United States, since they are not duplicated elsewhere in the region.

13. *Defense Agreements.* The Cooperation Agreement of 8 July 1959, which remains in effect until terminated with one year's notice by either party, provides that: "In the event of aggression or threat of aggression against Liberia, the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Liberia will immediately determine what action may be appropriate for the defense of Liberia." The United States also affirms its intention to "continue to furnish" aid for economic development and the preservation of Liberian national independence and integrity. This agreement is of significance in protecting US facilities and interests in Liberia.

14. The United States has provided military training for Liberia since 1912, currently under the Army Mission to Liberia Agreement of 11 January 1951, as most recently amended and extended by a series of notes ending 10 March 1977. Article 18 of this Agreement provides that "the Government of Liberia shall not engage or accept the services of any personnel of any government other than the United States of America for duties of any nature connected with the Liberian Armed Forces" except by mutual agreement between the two parties. The United States is seeking extension of the present agreement, which expires on 11 January 1981. At the time of its last renewal, the Tolbert government sought unsuccessfully to amend Article 18 to provide that if the United States refused a training request the Liberians could look elsewhere.



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US investment has probably declined this year, as depreciated assets are not being replaced. Liberia ranks third among Sub-Saharan African countries hosting US investments, with about 8 percent of the total.

20. **Trade and Raw Materials.** Liberia's share of US world trade is minuscule, totaling about \$310 million in 1978. Sub-Saharan African trade as a whole represents less than 5 percent of total US trade, with Liberia ninth in the area among US trading partners. US exports to Liberia consist mainly of food and manufactures; imports are primarily iron ore and rubber. Liberia provides only 5 to 6 percent of US imports of both commodities; they could easily be replaced from other sources.

21. **American-Controlled Shipping.** US shipping under Liberian registry is important to US transportation interests. Liberia's flag-of-convenience fleet is the world's largest, at 150 million deadweight tons. About one-third consists of US-owned tankers and bulk carriers—some 75 percent of US-owned shipping. Owners and users of Liberian flag vessels enjoy such money-saving advantages as low taxes and access to cheaper, nonunion labor. Although registrations appear to be lower in 1980, total revenue may rise significantly next year because of a 200-percent increase in registration levies, agreed to by the owners before the coup.

22. Some shipowners are worried at the possibility that Liberia might seek to nationalize the Liberian-flag fleet, or—somewhat more realistically—that attempts might be made to attach Liberian-flag vessels in foreign ports if Liberia should default on its debts. Such fears act as a stimulus to explore alternatives to Liberian registration, as do concerns about the caliber of men the new regime may name to top maritime positions. While some new shipping will seek a different flag, most shipowners prefer to stick with Liberia for the time being.

C. Political Interests

23. **US-Liberian "Special Relationship."** Liberia's "special relationship" with the United States was born in its settlement by American blacks in the 1820s and has been nurtured by more than a century of close relations, at first largely philanthropic and political, but in more recent years economic and cultural as well. From it, Liberia derives its American-style political institutions and the American cultural veneer so apparent in Monrovia. Liberians—of tribal origin as

16. **VOA Facilities.** A major US asset in Liberia is the Voice of America's Liberia relay station, which occupies 1,600 acres on two sites near Monrovia. An agreement of 13 August 1959, implemented by exchanges of notes in 1960 and 1961, gives the United States the right to establish a series of 500-kW transmitters, and to operate them without Liberian interference, until 13 August 1999—for a payment to Liberia of less than \$2.50 per acre per year. The relay station transmits all of the VOA's programming to Sub-Saharan Africa, including the new relay station in Botswana. A location in West Africa is essential for technical reasons. To rebuild the station elsewhere would take five years and cost at least \$60 million. Moreover, it is highly improbable that any other country in West Africa would allow it.

17. **OMEGA.** Pursuant to an exchange of notes of 10 and 18 April 1973, the United States Coast Guard has constructed an OMEGA navigational station on a 700-acre site outside Monrovia, as part of a worldwide network serving ships and aircraft of all nationalities. While the United States will continue to maintain the OMEGA station, it will by late 1981 be operated by Liberians. Replacement at another site would cost \$15-25 million.

B. Economic Interests

18. US economic relations with Liberia are crucial to that country, though of marginal significance, in purely economic terms, to the United States. Because they are vital to Liberia's welfare, however, they are of considerable political importance to US-Liberian relations.

19. **Investment.** The value of US investment in Liberia—less than 0.5 percent of all US investment abroad—totaled about \$340 million in 1979; most of it was in rubber and iron ore production facilities. This was about half the foreign investment in the country.

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well as Americo-Liberians—look to the United States as a model and a patron, and believe that the United States both can and should come to Liberia's aid in time of need. Liberians have had extensive, and generally favorable, contact with the United States—in Liberia through American businessmen, Peace Corps volunteers, and missionaries and exposure to American media; and in the United States, where many Liberians have studied.

24. The extent of the Liberians' positive feelings toward the United States has been amply demonstrated by the noncommissioned officers from the hinterland who now make up the ruling Peoples Redemption Council. Despite resentment at generations of perceived exploitation by Americo-Liberians, their image of America seems overwhelmingly favorable. But it is also true that some Liberians, principally among intellectuals, harbor anti-American sentiments.

25. *Support in International Forums.* Despite efforts in recent years to improve its nonaligned credentials, Liberia has given the United States significant diplomatic support in many international forums—both because of the special relationship with the United States and because Liberian leaders have shared many US perceptions of international problems. Often more important than votes has been the corridor support for American positions given by experienced Liberian diplomats, within the UN system, and in forums, such as the Organization of African Unity and the nonaligned movement, where the United States is not directly represented. It remains to be seen to what extent such diplomatic support will continue—both because the new Liberian regime is likely to take a more “nonaligned” stance on international issues, and because the corps of hitherto largely Americo-Liberian diplomats is undergoing change.

26. *Liberia's Fortunes as an Element of American Prestige.* In the eyes of Africans, and of the world generally, Liberia is inextricably linked to the United States. Indeed, many have considered it little better than an American colony, a reputation that Liberian leaders have striven to overcome. Its successes may redound in favor of the United States, but its failures are interpreted by many as American failures. That Liberia has hitherto combined a largely capitalist economy with a pro-Western international orientation identifies it not just with the United States, but with the Western world and its values generally. To detach Liberia from the United States would have a symbolic and psychological value to the Communist

world considerably exceeding even the important material interests involved.

III. FACTORS OF STABILITY AND INSTABILITY

A. Political Factors

27. The coup last April left Liberia a fragile political system, with profound weaknesses in its institutions, leadership, and social structure. Realization of this weakness, and fear that the most likely alternative to the Doe regime is unpredictable chaos, may be the major cement holding the system together today.

28. *The PRC and the Cabinet.* The 28-member Peoples Redemption Council, a self-appointed group whose nucleus is the band of soldiers that assassinated President Tolbert, is the supreme executive, legislative, and at times judicial authority in Liberia. Composed of uneducated noncommissioned officers (all but Doe now raised to officer rank), its membership is naive and wholly inexperienced in either the substance or procedure of government. Only a few PRC members—notably Chief of State Doe and Army Commander General Quiwonkpa—have demonstrated leadership qualities. Many are easily distracted from the PRC's mission by opportunities for the petty exercise of power for themselves or on behalf of tribal associates, or the enjoyment of the perquisites of office.

29. In the PRC, Doe is the predominant personality, but his authority is not absolute and most decisions are made collegially. Where there is contention, Doe can probably swing the Council in his favor in most instances; otherwise, the issue will be resolved by compromise. Doe has clashed with several officials, in particular Major General Thomas Weh Syen, the cochairman of the PRC. Most of the incidents appear based more on personality conflicts than on ideological or political differences. If the Council should perceive Doe as weak or unresponsive, other members might unite to replace him.

30. The 17-member Cabinet, though far better educated, is also short on real governmental experience, and is united only in its opposition to the ousted regime (two of the three holdovers from the Tolbert government quietly left the country, and were ultimately replaced). Personalities and the continuing rivalry between the two main civilian groups, PPP and MOJA, prevent the Cabinet from acting with the authority with which its comparative sophistication might otherwise invest it. Though it carries out the day-to-day functions of government and supervises the ministries,

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it is presided over by Chief of State Doe and has developed no clear program of its own. Relations with the PRC are, probably inevitably, strained. The Cabinet must constantly seek to rein in the PRC, not to mention individual PRC members, while the PRC resents the patronizing attitude sometimes shown by ministers.

31. Partially counterbalancing these deficiencies are the will of Doe and some of his colleagues to shoulder the responsibility they have assumed for the betterment of the Liberian masses and soldiers with whom they identify, and the genuine efforts of many Cabinet members to help Liberia survive its current difficulties.

32. *Political Goals and Intentions of the Military.* Sergeant Doe has proclaimed that the PRC took power to eliminate corruption and to bring about "justice, human dignity, equal opportunity, and fair treatment for all." He says the military will relinquish power when it is satisfied that the country's problems have been made more manageable. In addition, the PRC undoubtedly wants to improve the military before relinquishing power. It seems improbable that the PRC will voluntarily step down much before 1983, at the earliest, when national elections are due.

33. *Role of Civilian Parties in the Regime.* With the demise of the Americo-Liberian-dominated True Whig Party, which had ruled Liberia for more than 100 years, only two organized political groups remain on the scene:

— The Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA), which has never claimed party status, was founded by Liberian university students in 1973 to support African liberation movements. Espousing a generally Marxist future for Liberia and Africa, its main strength is among Liberian university students and faculty. It has tried to expand its roots among workers and peasants, in part by sponsoring cooperatives. MOJA's leaders, Planning Minister Togba Nah Tipoteh and Education Minister Henry Fahnbulleh, Jr., are the most ideologically oriented and leftist members of the Cabinet. Fahnbulleh has approached the Soviets for aid to his ministry.

— The Progressive Peoples Party (PPP) was registered in December 1979, but is the offshoot of an organization founded by Liberian students in the United States in 1974. The brand of socialism it espouses is both vaguer and milder than that of MOJA, and perhaps closer to social democracy,

though sometimes described in provocatively radical terms. Apart from PPP founder Foreign Minister Gabriel Baccus Matthews, other PPP members in the Cabinet are Presidential Affairs Minister George Boley, Local Government Minister Oscar Quiah, and the [] Justice Minister Chea Cheapoo. The suppression of the PPP and the threatened treason trial of its leaders were among the immediate catalysts for the coup, but neither the PPP nor MOJA seems to have known of Doe's plans in advance.

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In the short run, at least, both MOJA and PPP leaders support Liberia's present, capitalist economic structure, and its economic ties with the United States, while they demand social reform and a much better deal for the masses.

34. A third group, with little public following, is made up of Liberians—many of them longtime residents or students in the United States—who have recently returned home and attached themselves as "civilian advisers" to the PRC. Many were associated with the Union of Liberian Associations in the Americas (ULAA), of which the PPP is an offshoot. Their principal interest is probably in preserving the present regime, which has given them high positions. Most prominent are Tambakai Jangabe (ex-Johnson), senior adviser to the PRC, and Doe's special assistant, Bai Gbala. MOJA and the PPP may despise these advisers as opportunists, but they seem to be valued by the PRC as educated men who are outside the civilian movements maneuvering for power.

35. Finally, some young bureaucrats, who had worked for reform within the old regime and its True Whig Party, are meeting quietly behind the scenes to organize a new moderate party to the right of the PPP and MOJA.

36. Whatever their rivalries, all these groups fear that any immediate breakdown of Doe's regime would bring chaos. Therefore, while they continue to jockey for power to the extent that circumstances—and Doe's limited tolerance for politicking—will permit, all seem prepared to continue the fragile status quo.

37. *Changing Role of Americo-Liberians.* Much of the popular animus behind the April events was directed specifically against President Tolbert and his immediate relatives and associates, and the Americo-Liberians not identified with Tolbert (including some relatives of the still-revered President Tubman) have escaped its full fury. After the killings, arrests, and

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harassment that followed the coup, most Americo-Liberians are doing their jobs but keeping as low a profile as possible. Many who were able to do so have sent their families to safety abroad; not a few have themselves left or, because they were outside the country in April, stayed away. Despite the government's repeated claims of ethnic impartiality, Americo-Liberians see themselves as members of a marked group, even if they escape direct injury. Although Americo-Liberian talents and education will continue to be needed, Liberians of tribal origin are likely to be given preference for top jobs in the society and in government.

38. *Americo-Liberians as a Threat to Regime.* Some Americo-Liberians in the United States, Europe, and neighboring African states have sought to organize against the Doe regime. They might have the resources and the will to mount a mercenary expedition against it, but whether they have the requisite organization, discipline, and leadership is highly questionable.

39. The reality of the threat posed by Americo-Liberian dissidents is probably less than its psychological effect on Liberia's new leaders. The mere existence of an opposition Americo-Liberian community abroad frightens them, and the PRC has been reluctant to release political prisoners for fear they will join forces with the exiles.

40. It is doubtful that an Americo-Liberian-inspired coup attempt, whether internally or externally generated, could succeed in restoring an Americo-Liberian-dominated government to power. The termination of Americo-Liberian domination is one aspect of the coup on 12 April 1980 that is generally popular and probably permanent.

B. Military Factors

41. *Sergeant Doe and the Army.* Sergeant Doe, or any immediate successor, will require the support of the military to maintain his rule. At present, Doe is well respected and popular among army personnel, and probably enjoys their allegiance. Part of this stems from his image, reinforced by his unwillingness to promote himself, as a sincere soldier dedicated to improving social conditions in Liberia. But most of Doe's military support probably depends on practical considerations. The large pay increase granted immediately after the coup, which doubled the pay of lower ranks, is undoubtedly a major factor in Doe's popularity.

42. If Doe proves unable to deliver on other promises to the military—such as improved housing and

equipment—because of a serious downturn in the economy or a lack of foreign assistance, there is little doubt that his popularity would wane. In such an event, disillusioned elements within the military would probably support, or at least not resist, an attempt to remove Doe from power, and the rank and file would probably acquiesce in his ouster.

43. The 5,500-man Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) suffers from severe deficiencies, which hamper its operational effectiveness. Enlisted men have little respect or loyalty for officers, disciplinary problems are rampant, and decisions in many units are made by consensus. Most officers in significant command positions have been promoted from the ranks since April and have little education or command experience. Aside from two infantry battalions, which have received training from US Army mobile training teams (MTTs), units have not undergone even platoon-level training, are equipped with old weapons, and have no logistic support.

44. The AFL has little capability to deploy units to crisis locations, because of problems with vehicles and other equipment. Command and control are extremely poor, with little communications below battalion level except for telephones and messengers, and the military hierarchy lacks even the rudiments of an intelligence network. All major decisions are made by the PRC, with individual PRC members often taking unilateral action and passing commands directly to AFL units. This has an adverse effect on the ability of the AFL to function on a day-to-day basis, let alone during crisis situations. The AFL could probably deal with limited cases of sporadic unrest, particularly in the Monrovia area, but would be unable to contain widespread urban unrest or violence in the countryside and would crumble rapidly in the face of serious opposition. The result might well repeat the AFL's performance of April 1979, when many troops either faded away or joined the rioters.

45. *Tribalism Within the AFL.* Although the vast majority of AFL personnel are of indigenous (that is, non-Americo-Liberian) origin, the ethnic structure of the military does not parallel that of Liberian society. Most enlisted men probably still come from the Loma and Kpelle tribes, which represent only about one quarter of the country's population, though the proportion of Krahn and others in the military has been rising rapidly. The officer corps is dominated by Kru-speaking groups (especially the Kru, Krahn, and Grebo), which constitute only about one-fifth of the population.

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46. The average Liberian soldier feels more affinity for his own ethnic group than for any other grouping in the military. Personnel socialize primarily with individuals from their own tribe, and fraternization between officers and enlisted personnel from the same ethnic group is common. In addition, soldiers often feel a responsibility for their fellow tribesmen and aid them financially.

47. Since the coup, ethnic differences within the military have surfaced as a possible source of instability. The removal of the Americo-Liberians from political and military power has focused attention on ethnic differences among the indigenous Liberians. Each group is closely watching the others to ensure that no tribe receives more than its proportional share of the spoils of the revolution.

48. To date, most ethnic tension has centered on the tribal composition of the PRC. Immediately following the coup, about half of its 17 members were of Krahn or Kru origin. Despite the PRC's expansion, the Kru-speaking tribes still have a disproportionate share of power, as well as holding most of the command positions in the army. Moreover, while some officers from other tribes arrested since April remain in detention, almost all of Krahn or Kru origin have been released. Despite grumblings about ethnic imbalance and discrimination, there is no evidence that other ethnic groups are yet trying to unite against real or perceived Kru/Krahn domination of the AFL.

C. Economic Factors

49. The most immediate threats to the stability of the fragile regime that has governed Liberia since April are economic. The public expects that the events of April should lead to improvements in living standards. However, the state of the economy, already weakened by declining international demand for iron ore and rubber, and further shaken by the decline in investor confidence that the coup has engendered, demands increased austerity.

50. The Doe government has ushered in a period of high and unfulfillable expectations for most of the population. The doubling of basic pay for lower-ranking military and civil service personnel boosted planned budgetary outlays by \$30 million yearly. The government also promised free schoolbooks and reduced prices for rice, transport, and other necessities, all actions requiring subsidies for which funds are not available. The pay hikes set off demands for increased benefits by private sector workers. The large rubber,

iron ore, and grain companies, as well as many smaller firms, have been hit with wildcat strikes and exorbitant worker demands. Many companies have indicated that meeting these demands could put them out of business. The government has banned strikes, and some officials understand the need to keep Liberian enterprises viable, but the regime is inevitably under constant pressure to produce visible benefits for the Liberian masses.

51. **Fiscal Crisis.** The Doe government is currently suffering regular monthly deficits that will total at least \$35 million by the end of the year. It is under constant financial pressure to find funds to cover its deficits. The coup led to substantial currency hoarding and capital flight, reducing the deposit base of the banking system by one-fourth. The subsequent liquidity squeeze reduced credit for imports, curtailing overall business activity. International banks reacted by tightening credit, complicating Monrovia's difficulties in servicing a foreign debt of more than \$650 million. Government and large private enterprises have since found themselves hard pressed to meet their payrolls.

52. The budgetary practices of the government also have been chaotic. In part, this reflects the confusion of a new government faced with the steady evaporation of traditional revenue sources. More than 60 percent of government revenues comes from taxes on income, profits, and international trade. Import revenues, about one-third of total revenues, are down sharply because of a second-quarter drop in imports of nearly 45 percent. Business profits have dropped. Fees and taxes from ship registrations—nearly \$14 million in 1979—have declined since the coup.

53. Western bankers have not replaced the currency drained from their Liberian subsidiaries, which dominate the country's banking system. Instead, they have tightened credit to Monrovia. Month by month, the availability of untied credits diminishes. Liberia cannot resort to printing money to meet domestic obligations, because, except for some coins, the legal tender is US currency.

54. In spite of renewed aid flows, Monrovia shows little sign of overcoming immediate financial difficulties and will face recurring payments crises in the short run. US aid funds and a drawing under the International Monetary Fund standby agreement, which added \$20 million to September revenues, were rapidly swallowed up by debt payments. By October, the Doe government was looking for an additional \$15 million in emergency aid. Undisciplined spending has

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pushed government borrowing above IMF-imposed limits and temporarily halted Monrovia's access to badly needed further drawing against the \$70 million remaining under the standby agreement. Failure to meet IMF criteria reduces both commercial bank willingness to finance Liberia and the generosity of foreign creditors in rescheduling foreign debt.

55. *Export-Import Outlook.* Exports have been running at normal levels despite the coup. Prospects for maintaining them at these levels, however, are not favorable. Iron ore exports, about half of total exports, are likely to decline. The National Iron Ore Company (NIOC) and the Bong Mining Company are both experiencing financial difficulty; together, the two companies account for half of Liberia's iron ore output. LAMCO, the remaining ore producer, will not be able to compensate for reduced production if Bong or NIOC should fail. World economic conditions, including a weakening market for iron ore, do not favor a long-run upward movement of Liberia's raw material exports.

56. It is improbable that development of minerals other than iron ore will provide serious stimulus to the economy. Although Liberia produces some gold and diamonds and preliminary surveys have found deposits of manganese, bauxite, titanium, chromite, and tin, their development would require an infusion of expatriate skills and financing, which is unlikely in the current business climate.

57. Imports for 1980 are likely to fall below the level of last year. They were down sharply during the second quarter of the year because of restricted credit but appear to have stabilized since then. The major import concerns are food and fuel. The new government narrowly avoided a rice shortage in its first few weeks, but has since received a credit to help build up its rice stocks. Rice imports will probably continue to rise both absolutely and as a share of domestic consumption in the foreseeable future.

58. Prospects for sufficient oil imports are even more tenuous than for rice. Monrovia has been late with recent oil payments, endangering an oil credit provided by a US-led consortium. Several banks have threatened to withdraw from the consortium, and the group has cut the credit from \$75 million to \$50 million—barely covering Liberia's oil needs. Should continued late payments lead the consortium to withdraw financing, Saudi Arabia, which provides the oil and is paid directly by the banks, might terminate its supply agreement.

59. *Stabilizing the Economy.* Economic stability as experienced before 1979 is unlikely to return any time soon. Without the return of foreign investor confidence—a slow and difficult process at best—Liberia will continue to experience significant economic problems. Political instability and lack of labor discipline will also contribute to negative net private capital flows. Major expatriate firms have begun to eliminate marginally profitable operations and to delay expansion plans. The economy will contract and employment will be reduced, leading to greater instability. Further weakening of Liberia's balance-of-payments position will require increased aid. Obtaining this aid from foreign donors will be a major preoccupation of Liberian governments for the foreseeable future. During the next several years Monrovia will be looking to the outside for fiscal and management guidance.

D. Emerging Foreign Policy Orientation

60. *Acceptance of Regime by Moderate African States.* Sergeant Doe's coup d'etat shocked other African nations because it was carried out by enlisted men and because of Tolbert's assassination and the subsequent public execution of 13 other high officials. Both the fact and the manner of these deaths disturbed African leaders, many of whom identified with Tolbert and other victims as colleagues and personal friends. Their shock was intensified because of their fear that the Liberian coup might prove an example in other African countries.

61. Initial African response was, therefore, one of rejection, a situation that both insulted and frightened the new leaders. Both Doe and Foreign Minister Matthews were pointedly excluded from several African gatherings. Doe was anxious to restore good relations with his neighbors, but he did not receive complete support from other PRC members. Liberia's immediate neighbors (Ivory Coast, Guinea, and Sierra Leone, joined by Togo) subsequently decided to minimize the damage, preferring an attempt to guide Doe toward moderation rather than risk the chaos or even further radicalization that might follow his disappearance. Though only very partially successful in obtaining the release of political detainees, their efforts led to Liberia's acceptance at the annual OAU summit in July 1980, although Doe himself did not try to make an appearance. Today the new Liberian regime seems to have at least the reluctant acquiescence of all African states, and, barring further executions, its status should continue to improve.

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62. *Relations With the United States.* Over the years, Liberia has looked to the United States as its natural defender against outside enemies and its principal source of aid in times of need. The United States has reciprocated by assuming (though sometimes neglecting) a special responsibility for Liberia because of its historical American origins. Since World War II, with the emergence of the Third World and nonalignment, many Liberians have grown ambivalent about this "special relationship," in part because they and other Africans saw in it elements of neocolonialism. Students, in particular, have picked up facile, and fashionable, anti-American sentiments from Europeans, other Africans, or even while studying in anti-establishment environments in the United States, though they often retain more American attitudes than they would care to admit.

63. Many of the well-educated civilian members of the government clearly wish to move Liberia (as it had in fact been moving under Tolbert) toward greater nonalignment, as a sign of Liberian independence from foreign tutelage. Foreign Minister Matthews is typical of this group in defining nonalignment in terms of balanced contacts, visits, and acceptance of aid, and the avoidance of "cold war" foreign policy stands. More radical Liberians are also aware of how much the country is dependent on the West, in both the public and private sectors, and realize that there is no practical prospect of quickly replacing these ties.

64. The members of the PRC, however, seem to have retained much of the anti-Communist suspicion that previous governments had sought to instill in the Liberian people, while their image of the United States—largely garnered from experience with US military training teams—is distinctly favorable. Sergeant Doe thinks it only natural and proper that Washington should provide substantial military and economic aid to Liberia in its present crisis, and that this should be an easy thing for the all-powerful United States to do.

65. Sergeant Doe and other high-ranking PRC members are acutely aware of the shortcomings of the government and especially of the army, and they are concerned about both internal and perceived external threats. In addition to economic assistance, Liberia has formally requested additional MTT training, vehicles, communications equipment, infantry support weapons, and ammunition. It also wants US assistance in the construction of low-cost military housing, a major need to maintain soldier morale. Though Sergeant Doe has

been temporarily convinced that his army does not require tanks and jets, the PRC may be tempted to acquire sophisticated military equipment in the belief that it will provide a quantum leap in the AFL's capabilities and prestige. If they cannot obtain such assistance from the United States, they could turn to the Soviets or radical African governments, who are probably willing to supply such aid.

66. *Soviet Activities.* Moscow probably sees the combination of the inexperience of the PRC, its expressed interest in military assistance, and the announced adoption of a nonaligned foreign policy as an opportunity to enhance the Soviet position in West Africa at little cost while at the same time decreasing US influence. Soviet activities have not been particularly aggressive, however, as the Soviets probably realize that radical ideology is not well rooted in Liberia and it has historically played only a small role in the political life of the country.

67. In early summer the Soviets' request to increase the size of their Embassy staff was granted. Ambassador Ulanov then returned to Moscow for consultations, and a decision was made to step up Soviet activities, including an invitation to Doe to visit the USSR, which he accepted in principle. Doe, however, is under heavy pressure not to go, and an official Liberian visit to the USSR, if it takes place at all, is likely to be at a lower level and balanced by trips to the West.

68. Reportedly, the Soviets will provide scholarships for Liberian students to study in the USSR. They also have indicated a willingness to respond to generalized Liberian requests for military assistance, though no agreements appear to have been completed. The Liberian regime still looks first to the United States for military help and is well aware both of US sensitivities about Soviet involvement and of its treaty obligation not to bring in foreign military advisers without US consent. But Moscow seems prepared to keep its offers open in the hope that US aid will fail to satisfy Liberian expectations.

69. *Soviet Surrogate Activity.* The Soviets may also believe that efforts to obtain their objectives can be facilitated by using third parties more acceptable to the Liberians. They have encouraged the Cubans and Ethiopians to increase their efforts to establish closer relations with Monrovia. The three governments apparently plan to coordinate their Liberian policies in order to maximize mutual benefits.

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70. There is some evidence that the Ethiopians, acting in concert with the Soviets, hope to use assistance programs, and particularly offers to train a militia, to radicalize the Liberian revolution. Doe's visit to Ethiopia in late August 1980, however, did not result in any major military or economic assistance. The two sides renewed existing cultural and educational exchange agreements and signed an accord for agricultural cooperation. The Liberians also arranged for training of soldiers in Ethiopia and brought back a donation of small arms "for testing," but further discussions on military assistance were apparently deferred.

71. The Cuban ambassador, who is resident in Sierra Leone, has visited Monrovia several times for discussions with Liberian officials, and met with Soviet and Ethiopian representatives while there. The Cubans hope to open a resident embassy, but the project has made little headway to date. Future Cuban assistance would probably involve agricultural and medical aid and scholarships.

72. Liberian leaders for the most part tend to be suspicious of the Soviets and appear to understand, at least to some extent, the role of Soviet surrogates. So far they have been cautious in their dealings with Moscow, Addis Ababa, and Havana. A few PRC members, notably Brigadier General Quiwonkpa, have openly expressed anti-Communist views, and an attempt to expand relations with the East would probably lead to disagreements within the PRC. Nonetheless, Liberia's military leaders may find it increasingly difficult to resist offers of military assistance.

73. At a minimum, increasing Soviet and Cuban sponsorship of study programs for Liberian students and an enlarged Soviet or Soviet-surrogate representation in Monrovia will increase the potential for them to influence Liberia's new government.

74. *Libyan and Palestinian Activities.* The Doe government has established contact with both the Libyan Government and the Palestine Liberation Organization since the coup. General Quiwonkpa visited Beirut in June and accompanied a PLO delegation to Monrovia on his return. The Palestinians provided a small number of weapons at the time of their visit and furnished some medical personnel. In return the PLO probably will seek Liberian support for Palestinian causes and permission to establish a PLO office in Monrovia; these efforts, however, will probably not be greeted with enthusiasm by the Doe government. Indeed, the original PLO delegation was sent home after

being caught operating a clandestine radio transmitter. The Liberian leadership seems aware that it stands to lose more from the West than it would gain from the PLO through too close an association with it.

75. The Libyan connection is perhaps more ominous, if only because Libya—unlike the PLO—could afford to "buy into" Liberia. A several-million-dollar agreement for the construction of a Libyan-financed Liberian-Libyan holding company building in Monrovia, a project which had been forming for at least a year, was the first major international transaction after the coup last April. This was followed by a visit by General Quiwonkpa to Tripoli and brief visits to Monrovia by envoys of Libyan Chief of State Colonel Qadhafi.

76. Rumors of a Libyan offer of large-scale budgetary support for Liberia have not been substantiated. Chief of State Doe accepted an invitation in late November to visit Tripoli to appeal for emergency aid and to seek an alternative source of oil. He was temporarily dissuaded from going by African and Western arguments regarding the dangers of Libyan involvement. A delegation headed by the Foreign Minister went instead; however, Doe is unlikely to have abandoned this option.

IV. PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES

77. *Stability of the Regime.* In view of the problems facing Liberia, political stability depends primarily on the lack of clearly visible alternatives to the weak Doe regime. Despite his limited background, Sergeant Doe has shown some leadership ability and a capacity for growth, but his popularity is still based largely on resentment against the ousted regime. Doe enjoys prestige as the man who successfully dared to challenge Tolbert.

78. Doe's personal popularity is not matched by significant institutional strength. The PRC has yet to establish clear lines of authority, and Doe must dominate it by his personality and by trying to forge a consensus on specific issues among its uneducated and sometimes venal members. The Cabinet is a conglomeration of politicians, soldiers, and technocrats, with differing perspectives and interests, and exists more or less at the whim of the PRC. The army command structure is filled with suddenly promoted noncoms from the Krahn tribe; despite an almost total lack of executive experience, they must seek to control a rank

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and file in which other ethnic groups clearly predominate.

79. The fact that Doe easily toppled a regime which had ruled for more than a century must give ideas to other would-be leaders of Liberia. Fear probably has kept them from trying to displace Doe. An unsuccessful coup attempt would be ruthlessly punished without regard for judicial niceties; moreover, the most probable alternative to Doe is chaos in which neither individuals nor political movements would be safe. The looting soldiers in the days after 12 April are not quickly forgotten by a people used to reasonable public order. There is considerable doubt as to whether an alleged military counter coup attempt in May, the presumed perpetrators of which are slowly being tried, ever really took place except in the suspicious minds of the PRC. For sophisticated Liberians there is also the realization that the frail economy rests on Western confidence—to provide credits and maintain investments—and that any further political shock could bring economic disaster in which nobody would win.

80. Liberians, whatever their political views, thus seem prepared to wait for a more propitious time to seek new leadership. The spokesmen of both MOJA and the PPP appear to hope that a return to civilian government, as eventually promised by Doe, will give them the opportunity to direct Liberian destinies. Many Americo-Liberians would certainly like to resume their former privileged position, but at least those inside Liberia seem frightened that the Doe regime will be replaced by something worse.

81. This does not make the Doe regime any stronger, but it suggests that real threats to political stability are likely to be spontaneous or (like the Doe coup d'etat itself) rapidly improvised. The United States is unlikely to have advance warning of their exact nature or timing of stability-threatening events or be able to predict their course.

82. One such event would be uncontrollable urban rioting, resulting from unemployment, shortages of basic commodities, and/or sudden price rises. If military discipline broke down, as it did to a large extent during the 1979 rice riots, this could lead to chaos and destroy the Doe government. In an anarchic situation, armed Liberians might turn against the white community for the first time.

83. Dissatisfied soldiers (whether officers or rank and file) might seek to displace Doe in a second palace coup, from within the PRC or from outside. Two of

the conditions that might precipitate such an event are: resentment that the army was not getting the improvements—in pay, housing, and military equipment—to which it thinks the coup entitled it; or a perception by the army's Mande-speaking majority that Sergeant Doe's Krahn tribe was unfairly monopolizing power and privilege for itself. Doe is probably better prepared to resist such an attempt than was the sloppily guarded Tolbert, but he remains vulnerable. If they succeeded quickly, the leaders of such a coup might be able to maintain public order among the [redacted] [redacted] Liberian public, but both their internal and external prospects would probably be worse than Doe's. Should Doe and his Krahn-dominated entourage resist, intertribal conflict could break out.

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84. A general breakdown of law and order in Liberia might lead to intervention by Guinea and/or Ivory Coast, though the modalities of such intervention cannot now be predicted. Ivory Coast might, though this is less likely, also intervene if the Doe government were to resume executions of Americo-Liberians on a significant scale.

85. None of these violent eventualities seems probable. More likely, the Doe regime will limp along for lack of any better alternative unless it is forced to the wall by financial collapse or administrative ineptitude. But its essential stability will remain fragile and hence subject to the possibility of sudden rupture.

86. *Transition to Civilian Rule.* Although Liberia's new military rulers have expressed their intention to return the government to civilian hands when conditions are ripe, they have refused to be drawn into specifics. US diplomats have repeatedly suggested that a formal commitment or timetable for a return to civilian rule, through democratic processes, would enhance US ability to provide economic aid, but they have received little response.

87. Sergeant Doe regards himself as only a temporary, and not really qualified, head of state. No other member of the PRC has endorsed indefinite military rule.

88. The Liberian public generally still looks on military rule as an aberration; it is accustomed to civilian government and adherence to the letter, if not always the spirit, of a written constitution which was in effect for over a century until suspended by the PRC. The year 1983, when new national elections are scheduled under the present constitution, seems to many a logical date for a return of the soldiers to their barracks.

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89. Nevertheless, there are significant obstacles to a restoration of civilian rule. The ruling soldiers of the PRC want to see certain objectives—vague and hence probably open-ended—accomplished before they leave office. These are framed in terms of ending corruption and ensuring social gains to the people, but in practice the PRC is probably more interested in the status of the military rank and file it represents. Above all, however, PRC members are probably concerned with their own personal safety, and with the specter of vengeance taken by a renascent Americo-Liberian ruling caste.

90. Civilian leaders, including the representatives of the PPP and MOJA in the cabinet, are all theoretically in favor of civilian rule based on democratic elections. Most appear to favor a multiparty system based on a Western (generally an American) model, though some may advocate an African one-party state as more appropriate to the needs of a poor developing country. But they have little trust in each other, and vivid memories of the ways in which the former True Whig Party effectively dominated a nominally democratic system for over a century. With little indication of how free elections would really come out, and widespread fear of returning chaos, most civilians seem prepared to wait until the situation clarifies. Some, such as the students who have attached themselves to the PRC as advisers, have a vested interest in the status quo.

91. An eventual attempt to restore civilian government through national elections remains quite probable, but it is not realistically possible to suggest a timetable. Prospects for such elections will be improved to the extent that Liberia surmounts its immediate economic difficulties, and that the military's perceived needs for equipment, training, and better working conditions are met. Pressure from the United States, or from other African countries, may also help. But there will be a constant tendency to postpone the transfer to civilian rule so long as the incumbent PRC members feel insecure about their personal futures, and in the interim they may find the pleasures and perquisites of office increasingly enticing.

92. Leaders of both MOJA and the PPP have privately expressed confidence that their organizations could win a free election handily, but there is little evidence to support them. Though the PPP appears to have some grass-roots organization, general popular opinion is likely to support the party that—with a modicum of credibility—promises most. The appeal of

Marxist rhetoric, however, seems limited by Liberia's long tradition of anti-Communism.

93. Though MOJA and the PPP are the only extant political groups, and even they are nominally inactive, it is probable that other competitors will emerge if the opportunity arises. Moderates who had formerly worked for reform within the True Whig Party, for example, are quietly trying to organize. Should the competition get too intense, however, MOJA and the PPP might well try, though with doubtful prospects for success, to form a "national" coalition government that could exclude political newcomers.

94. *Changes in Liberian Foreign Relations.* Since at least 1959, Liberian foreign policy has been in transition, as the old "special relationship" between the United States and the Americo-Liberian elite (directed originally against the "uncivilized" Liberian natives as well as against foreign colonial encroachment) has gradually been replaced by a perception of Liberia as an African country inherently tied to the underdeveloped Third World. Especially since the death of President Tubman in 1971, Liberia has sought to improve its Third World credentials by demonstrating greater independence from the United States. The extent of the transformation was demonstrated by President Tolbert's tenure, until his death on 12 April, as the 1979-80 Chairman of the Organization of African Unity.

95. Since almost any conceivable future Liberian government will, like the present PRC, see itself as based primarily on Liberia's indigenous majority, this trend can only continue. Liberia's leaders in the foreseeable future will see themselves as Africans, and will take pains not to be perceived by others as American surrogates.

96. This by no means rules out close relations with the United States. Liberians of all ethnic origins tend to be linguistically and culturally drawn to Americans. Even when Liberians are sharply critical—as are many intellectuals—their criticism is likely to be based on American traditions of dissent. Some of the members of the PRC, including Sergeant Doe, have shown themselves particularly pro-American; their principal perception of foreigners is based on favorable memories of US military training teams and Peace Corps volunteers. Virtually all Liberians tacitly accept that the United States should and could take primary responsibility for Liberia's welfare during the present economic crisis.

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97. The only alternative poles of attraction for most Liberians are indigenous African radical regimes, such as Libya, Guinea, and Ethiopia, or the Soviet Bloc. West European countries, despite their substantial economic activities in Liberia, are identified politically with the United States. China, though its aid activities in recent years were preferred to those of the Soviets, has exerted little ideological attraction; since 12 April, Chinese diplomats have not been active.

98. Up to now, Liberian acceptance of diplomatic ties with the Soviet Union and its allies, and of the very limited aid they have offered, has been intended primarily to demonstrate Liberian nonalignment and to encourage more aid from the West. Except for a small, but vociferous, group of students in Monrovia, and a few of their teachers, Liberians have remained suspicious of Soviet blandishments.

99. What could tilt this situation in the Soviet direction? The Soviets themselves seem to be counting on time to give them greater opportunities, while offering Liberia scholarships in the hope of enticing a larger nucleus of students for indoctrination. Apparently rebuffed in their initial efforts to establish a foothold through military assistance and political support (though the extent of their offers is uncertain), they may still hope that economic breakdown, or Liberian frustration at obtaining from the United States the level of military assistance the PRC feels it needs, will open new doors. It is also possible, though not likely in the immediate future, that a civilian government dominated by self-proclaimed scientific socialists (as MOJA's leaders purport to be) could come to power and actively seek a new political orientation for Liberia.

100. Efforts by Ethiopia to woo the new Liberian regime have not proved very successful; Sergeant Doe and the PRC seem to recognize that the Mengistu regime is a surrogate for the Soviets. Among radical African regimes, Guinea may be in the best position to influence Liberia. President Sekou Toure has actively sought to mediate between the Doe regime and African governments horrified by the manner of its accession to power. But Guinea's potential for influence is greatly diminished by its own dismal economic performance, of which Liberians are very much aware. Nevertheless, Guinea may in the future serve as an example for political mobilization. Finally, given Liberia's economic problems, Libya might be able to make an impact by a judicious expenditure of hard cash, or gifts of weaponry. But Qadhafi's socio-

religious message is unlikely to make much impression in Liberia, where Islam is limited and organized Christianity remains a strong force.

101. The outlook, then, is for a Liberian foreign policy based on pro-African nonalignment, but with a continued slant—political, cultural, and economic—toward the West. A Liberian perception that Western countries are being supportive will tend to strengthen this slant; a decline of Liberian society into chaos could lead to its reversal.

102. *Implications for US Relations and Interests.* The events of 12 April 1980 have altered the "special relationship" between Liberia and the United States, but they have not necessarily ended it. Moreover, the changes are ones that were under way in any case; Sergeant Doe's coup has merely speeded them up. By placing Liberia's destinies clearly in the hands of its indigenous majority, the coup d'état on 12 April put an end to whatever remained of the Americo-Liberians' former role as surrogate Americans in a quasi-colonial setting. But it has not ended the perception, shared by indigenous and settler-descended Liberians, that Liberia should be able to look to the United States as its principal patron as a result of the historical, cultural, and economic relationships between the two nations.

103. There is a chance that this perception could act to the disadvantage of the United States. If Liberia's leaders become extremely disappointed in Washington's aid, or economic conditions continue to worsen, the United States as the dominant economic factor in the country could quickly become identified as the cause of all Liberian ills. If Liberian frustrations are unleashed by making the United States a scapegoat, a rapid anti-US tilt is possible. This would not only threaten US interests in Liberia but create an opening that would surely be exploited by the Soviet Union, its allies, and radical African states.

104. Even if this backlash does not occur, as Liberia moves toward greater nonalignment, and seeks to reinforce its African orientation, it will prove less willing to provide specific assistance to the United States in international forums. In particular, it will no longer be willing (as it has been, though decreasingly so) to take anti-Communist postures on "cold war" issues regardless of prevailing Third World opinion. Instead, Liberia will probably try to stay with the main stream of nonaligned views. Even so, continued and successful close cooperation between the United States and Li-

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beria will tend to insulate Liberia from nations hostile to US interests.

105. Similarly, the value of US treaty rights to use the Port of Monrovia and Roberts International Airfield, dependent as they are on Liberian Government cooperation, has diminished. At best, the present or any possible future Liberian government is likely to permit their implementation only as part of military actions sanctioned by the Organization of African Unity, or which relate directly to Liberian security.

106. US facilities actually in place have not so far been threatened. The new government has expressed no dissatisfaction with [redacted]

[redacted] the Voice of America relay station. However, Liberia may well seek to "raise the rent" by asking the United States to pay some substantial amount for their continued operation. The OMEGA navigation facility may be less controversial, given its international utility, and the fact that the United States pays Liberians to operate it. But it is doubtful whether a Liberian government will, in the future, be willing to agree to additional US installations [redacted] which most African countries today would consider as compromising their sovereignty.

107. American economic interests in Liberia seem, for the time being, threatened more by Liberia's economic weakness than by any deliberate governmental policies. Even MOJA's self-proclaimed socialists agree that Liberia cannot quickly change its capitalist-based economic system in which foreign concessions play so great a part. Nevertheless, the serious fiscal difficulties that Liberia will probably continue to face over the next few years, coupled with public expectations that the new regime will bring economic improvement, will force the government to maximize the economic contributions—whether as sources of revenue or as providers of employment—of foreign investors. Whether it can respect their continued economic viability in practice, as it does in principle, remains to be seen. There is even greater question as to whether Liberia will be able to attract significant new American capital investment.

108. Two developments could drastically change this outlook. The first, and perhaps most dangerous, would be a breakdown in public order, in which mob violence and/or military vigilantes seriously threatened the physical security or property interest of Americans. Under such circumstances, specifically antiwhite sentiment might become a significant factor.

Needless to say, long-term economic interest, as well as the operation of present US facilities, would be seriously jeopardized.

109. A second danger to US interests would be the establishment of an anti-American government—through the victory of radicals at the polls, a new coup d'état, or conceivably the establishment of a Soviet or radical-African military presence. This, too, could destroy most US interests in Liberia, though perhaps more gradually and without violence.

110. There is nothing to suggest that either of these eventualities is imminent, or in any sense inevitable, but both will remain possibilities for some time to come.

111. *Liberia, the United States, and Africa.* Whatever happens in Liberia will be associated, by other Africans, with the United States. Whether the United States wishes it or not, Liberia is an American showcase in Africa, just as European nations are associated with their leading former colonies. Liberian success will redound to US benefit. Catastrophe in Liberia, however caused, will be laid to some extent at Washington's door.

112. The effect of the coup on American prestige in Africa has been mixed. On the one hand, the sudden overthrow of the pro-American Tolbert government suggested American weakness. On the other, however, the existence of the Americo-Liberian-dominated regime had always seemed something of an anomaly, with neocolonialist overtones, to other Africans. The United States' decision to support the Doe regime has escaped criticism, in part, perhaps, because of the continued US concern with human rights in Liberia. With other African nations almost completely reconciled to the new Liberian regime, continued US support of Liberia will not cause difficulties for Washington, indeed such support is generally viewed as necessary to prevent worse things from happening there.

113. Barring further atrocities in Liberia, US failure to support Liberia would be viewed elsewhere in Africa as evidence of American unreliability. If Washington is not prepared to help Liberia, with its longstanding US ties and large-scale American interests, Africans would be uncertain of any US commitments. Indeed, many Africans undoubtedly agree with Liberians that the United States has a positive obligation to ensure that Liberia avoids economic collapse.

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114. African evaluations are, of course, made in context, and attitudes toward the United States involve many factors other than Liberia. But virtually all Af-

rican nations will think the better of the United States if it is seen as supporting Liberia at this juncture.

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