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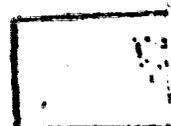
Special Memorandum

**NASSER'S POLICY AND PROSPECTS
IN BLACK AFRICA**

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Office of National Estimates

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

9 January 1964

SPECIAL MEMORANDUM NO. 1-64

SUBJECT: Nasser's Policy and Prospects in Black Africa

SUMMARY

Gamal Nasser is seeking to expand his influence in Black Africa. At the Addis Ababa Conference Nasser recognized that he carried comparatively little weight with his confreres, and he set about expanding and strengthening his African relationships. By playing host to numerous visiting Africans he has sought to improve his diplomatic and political ties. He has also played up his brand of anticolonialism; striving thus to achieve a larger role in the "freedom fight" against the Portuguese and the South African governments. However, Nasser regards his African policies as a means not merely to gain prestige for him on the continent but also to enhance his role on the world scene, particularly among the nonaligned states. The chances are slim, however, that Nasser will achieve the stature and political maneuverability he desires in Black Africa, particularly if strains between the Arab and the African worlds grow.

I. BACKGROUND

A. Nasser's Continental Aims

1. Nasser, himself a fervent revolutionary, wants to prod the African continent into a sharp break with its colonial past.

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He regards his own revolution as a suitable model for all Africa. Stressing Egypt's historical and geographic relationship to the Continent, Nasser holds that Egypt is a technically advanced state capable of offering guidance to the nascent nations of Africa, and a natural leader in the struggle against imperialism and colonialism.

2. In addition, Nasser is conscious of what he regards as an Israeli "threat" to the UAR on the African continent. To his consternation, and to that of much of the Arab World, Israel has established an effective diplomatic presence throughout a major part of newly independent Black Africa. In response, Cairo has developed its own extensive program of cultural, technical, and military assistance. If there were no other motive, Nasser would probably continue his activities in Africa simply out of competition with Israel.

3. By and large, however, his primary interest on the African scene is probably more general. He regards his African policies as a means not only to gain prestige for him on the continent, but also to enhance his role on the world scene, particularly among the nonaligned states. Nasser's pursuit of

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these broad objectives is essentially unplanned, and largely consists of reaction to situations or opportunities that present themselves from time to time.

B. The UAR's African "Establishment" and its Assets

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5. One readily available asset for the UAR is the heterogeneous collection of African exiles and dissidents who have sought refuge in Cairo. Currently, there are more than a dozen African territories

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represented in a government-controlled but loosely knit organization known as the Africa Association. In return for a reasonably generous subsidy, these expatriates provide the UAR with commentary and criticism about the problems in their homelands. They also afford a point of contact with the African nationalist movements throughout the continent.

6. Egypt's Moslem ties also provide valuable openings in sub-Saharan Africa. There is an annual influx of students to Al-Azhar University, and Egyptian religious teachers are found in all parts of Africa's Moslem belt. These provide means of influence Nasser has sought to expand and control.

7. The UAR's African establishment also has at its disposal some useful economic and propaganda tools. Cairo's powerful radio, The Voice of Africa, and its clandestine counterpart, The Voice of Free Africa, flood the continent with a continuous stream of vituperative anticolonialist propaganda. The Presidential Council, which establishes policy for Cairo's entire broadcasting system, has allotted seven hours per day for African broadcasts. Material for these broadcasts is frequently garnered from the subsidized refugees and exiles residing in Cairo.

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C. Cairo's Past Maneuvering in Africa

9. Thus far, Nasser's efforts to gain influence in Africa have proved to be failures. Nasser made an artful debut before the Afro-Asian World at Bandung in 1955, and followed this by hosting a successful first meeting of the Afro-Asian Peoples

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Solidarity Organization (AAO) in December 1957. Subsequently, however, the efforts of both Moscow and Peiping to dominate the organization left little room for Cairo.

10. The UAR was also deeply involved in the intrigues which followed Lumumba's downfall in the Congo in 1960.

11. The UAR's maneuvering in the Congo was also closely related to the establishment of the Casablanca Group in January 1961. Cairo provided much of the initiative for the formation of this organization, but a pro-Lumumba African nationalist policy was the common link between the unlikely political allies included in it. However, the Casablanca Group never became the significant African voice its leaders hoped it would become, and in the long run UAR affiliation with it probably proved more of a liability than an asset.

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II. CURRENT SITUATION

A. The Addis Ababa Conference of African Heads of State, June 1963

12. At the outset, the Addis Conference convened to establish an all-African political organization, flatly rejected the Egyptian suggestion to use Arabic as one of the assembly's official languages. Although some prominent Black African leaders personally urged Nasser to attend the Conference in support of "African Unity," this setback served as a timely reminder to Nasser of the division between the Arab and African worlds. Thereafter, he conducted himself quietly and circumspectly and succeeded in making a generally favorable impression on his fellow chief executives. Nevertheless, he commented privately that he was disappointed with the meeting; in part because the conference failed to take strong action against remaining colonial territories. Whatever the overall impression Nasser gained from close association with fellow chief executives at Addis, he returned determined to revitalize his African relations. He summoned his African envoys to Cairo and exhorted them to pursue a more vigorous African policy.

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B. Revived African Endeavors

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The first response to Nasser's new look in things African, was a surge of African visitors to Cairo. In the month of July alone, Nasser played host to four African heads of state, plus two important parliamentary delegations. Houphouet-Boigny, probably the most notable visitor of the month, was given royal treatment. The Presidents of Niger and Mauritania, both states of strong Moslem persuasion, were also warmly welcomed. This same trend continued, at a slightly slower pace, through the summer and fall. Cairo, with its sub rosa coffers, has always been a popular stop for travelling Africans, but even for Cairo this was heavy traffic.

14. Nasser's principal aim in extending invitations to these African leaders was to encourage the establishment of diplomatic ties. Currently, the UAR has ambassadors in only 12 of the 30 Black African states, and only seven of these states have reciprocated by sending their emissaries to Cairo. The attention Nasser has paid to the UAM* states also suggests that he hopes to establish

* UAM - The African and Malagasy Union is the association of the former French Territories of moderate or conservative persuasion which have in the past revealed little interest in closer ties with the "radically" oriented UAR.

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bridgeheads in the so-called "neocolonialist" former French territories. His efforts to influence the course of events in the UAM region will be pragmatic. He will conduct normal diplomatic relations with those states which respond to his overtures but he will also employ clandestine measures against those states which remain wary of the UAR.

15. Nasser's deep interest in the newly established Organization for African Unity (OAU) is another manifestation of his interest in enhancing his influence in Africa. At the Addis Conference, the Egyptian delegation maneuvered its way on to the two main bodies within the fledgling OAU -- the Secretariat and the African Liberation Committee (ALC). Significantly Mohammed Faïq was selected as Egypt's representative to the ALC, and the UAR made a £ 100,000 donation to finance the Committee's activities. Although this sizeable contribution may mean nothing more than that Egypt is following the OAU suggested guidelines for contributions, i.e., one percent of each state's national income, this still represents roughly one-fifth of the total that the ALC has thus far collected. Moreover, insofar as it is able, the UAR has moved to expand its influence in the functioning of these organizations and to steer their policies into line with those backed by Cairo.

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16. Elsewhere in Africa, the UAR has recently taken other new initiatives. In a step calculated to improve the UAR's posture among most African states, Cairo reluctantly granted formal recognition to Holden Roberto's Angolan government-in-exile. Somalia, where Nasser has long sought to obtain a position of influence, was given four Vampire jets and was promised additional military and technical assistance. Nasser is one of the few African leaders to take sides in the split of the Southern Rhodesian nationalist movement. Publicly, via Radio Free Africa, and privately with financial support, Cairo has thrown its weight behind the front-running faction of Joshua Nkomo. Elsewhere, Egypt seems to have responded to the initiatives of Zanzibar Prime Minister, Mohamed Sheme. Unhappy with the prospects of limited UK development assistance, Zanzibar sent a delegation to Cairo where it was warmly received and given assurances of economic aid, trade agreements, and technical assistance. Such assistance would give the UAR an excellent opening in a state which is considered African but is ruled by an Arab minority.

C. New Opportunities for the UAR

17. African enmity toward the Portuguese and the southern African territories provides Egypt with a tailor-made opportunity



to gain new credit in Tropical Africa. In accordance with the Addis Conference resolution, Egypt moved quickly to proclaim publicly a total boycott of both South Africa and Portugal. Concurrently, the UAR delegation to the June ILO Conference in Geneva took the lead in a violent attack on South Africa, and helped guide the African caucus which attempted unsuccessfully to expel South Africa from the ILO. Subsequently, Cairo hosted a conference of African Labor Ministers to plan a new effort to achieve this end. In another move against Portugal, in October Cairo's rabble rousing Voice of Africa began a 45-minute daily broadcast beamed in Portuguese "to our brothers in Angola and Mozambique."

III. PROSPECTS

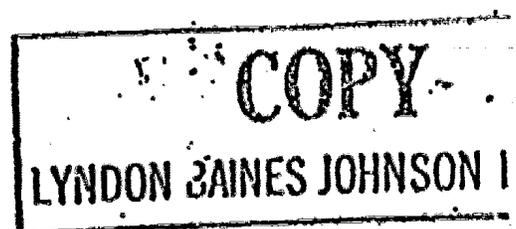
18. In its efforts to achieve greater influence on the African scene, the UAR will almost certainly continue the array of approaches discussed above. Recent Egyptian activities have given considerable emphasis to diplomatic relationships. In recent months there has been some reduction in the anti-Israeli line, thus allowing African visitors with well established Israeli ties to be welcomed cordially in Cairo. Thus, from time to time there are likely to be changes in nuances or approaches in the UAR's African policy.

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19. Egyptian policy will strive to appear more African than the Africans themselves; more zealous, more militantly nationalist, and more anti-imperialist. By these means Cairo hopes to obtain a leading role in the inner councils of African liberation movements, and eventually on the continent as a whole. From time to time, such a policy could place Egypt at odds with the US preference for peaceful and more gradual change.

A. Continuing Impediments

20. At the same time, several factors will work to impede Nasser's efforts to enhance his position in Africa. In general, Arabs remain somewhat suspect in the eyes of Black Africans, who still remember them as the slave traders of past generations. In the case of the UAR, that fear is increased even more because of an awareness that Egypt is seeking to extend its political influence in Africa. In these circumstances, Israel often appears to be a safer source of aid and technical assistance to many African states. This, in turn, has in the past tended to counteract Egyptian propaganda about Israeli imperialist designs. Moreover, Cairo's Moslem ties are currently a liability in parts of East Africa where considerable unfavorable attention has been given to the persecution of the Christian minority by Sudanese Moslems. In many



West African states, too, a major division exists between the Moslem population in the northern sectors and the Christian and pagan elements in the south. Hence, major segments of the population continue to be wary of the UAR's Moslem influences.

21. Nasser's own interests will, at times, conflict with the pursuit of his African policy. Commitments to Algerian Prime Minister Ben Bella recently necessitated Egyptian involvement in the Algerian/Moroccan border dispute. Heavyhanded Egyptian activities on behalf of the Algerians in this crisis provoked much unfavorable comment in Black Africa. Finally, Nasser has frequently made unwise choices in those individuals he has backed to achieve external political objectives even in the Middle East. In the shifting political tides of Black Africa, there are few familiar guideposts.

B. Small Dividends Likely

22. Nasser has equated the problem of the whites in South Africa with that which the Arab world faces in Israel. He considers both groups alien intruders with no rights to the land they occupy. Such a militant line is a popular one in Africa, and the UAR will trumpet this line in hopes of exalting its leadership role there.

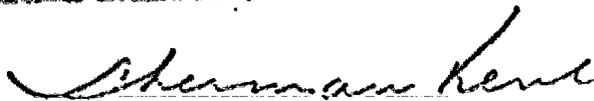
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Nasser may begin to back up his words with deeds by shipping small quantities of arms to the nationalist movements in southern Africa. Training for rebel forces, which is already occurring on a minor scale, will probably increase but is unlikely to reach the proportions of, say, Ben Bella's or Nkrumah's efforts. Most guerrilla training will fall under the tacit sponsorship of the ALC, but Nasser will almost certainly sponsor some of his own chosen nationalists.

23. It is difficult to judge whether or not Nasser's many ventures in Africa amount to much. For example, it is virtually impossible to measure the impact of the Voice of Free Africa or the lasting effect of the Egyptian religious teachers abroad. To the extent that Nasser continues to subsidize these activities, at least he is apparently convinced of their effectiveness. On balance, we believe that Nasser is unlikely to achieve a high degree of political influence in Black Africa. Indeed, should strains between the Arab and African worlds grow over the next few years, such influence as Nasser now has in Tropical Africa would also wane.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:



SHERMAN KENT
Chairman

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