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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence Memorandum

THE CURRENT DISARRAY IN ZANZIBAR

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
2 December 1968

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Current Disarray in Zanzibar

Summary

Since the formation of the United Republic of Tanzania in 1964, the island of Zanzibar has been a thorny problem for President Nyerere.

On 20 November, an unprecedented, surprise military exercise on Zanzibar spawned rumors of another coup on that trouble-riddled island. Mainland Tanzanian police quietly and efficiently seized control of the town of Zanzibar and were soon reinforced by Zanzibar Army units. Although it was only a practice alert, President Nyerere may have approved it as a show of force to bolster the position of Abeid Karume, Zanzibar's uneducated, nationalist President, against the island's perennial plotters and pro-Communist hoodlums.

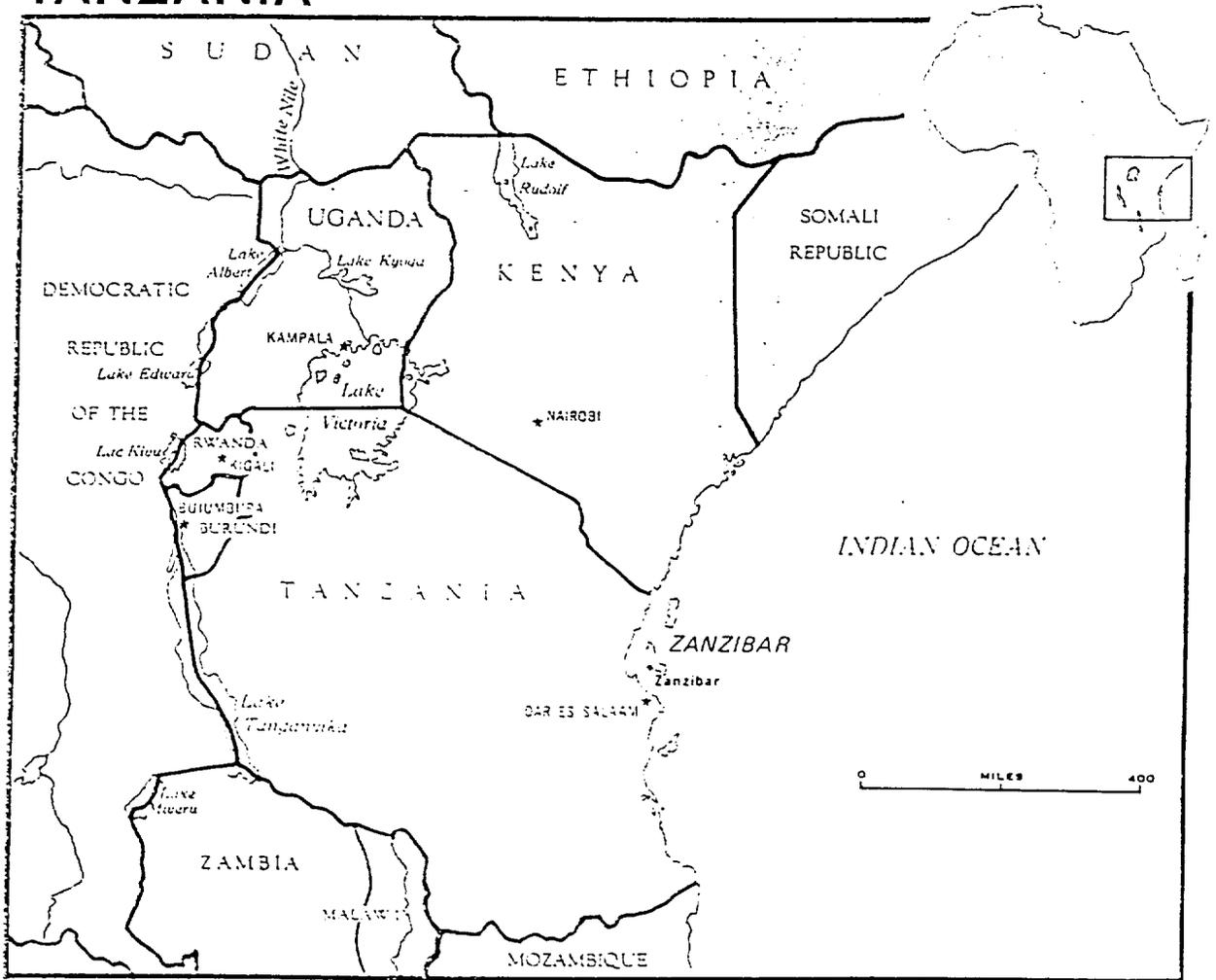
Nyerere has been gradually gaining control over the island's foreign affairs and--only recently--over the Communist-trained army, but he has always been reluctant to intervene in Zanzibar's internal affairs. In the past year, however, the economic situation there has deteriorated further because of corruption and gross mismanagement. Karume has reacted to rising discontent by tightening security,

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making arbitrary arrests, and issuing decrees that impinge on Dar es Salaam's prerogatives. Nyerere, increasingly critical of Karume's leadership, may have decided that he must soon assert his constitutional authority to bring the situation under control.

Zanzibar's close ties with Peking are growing more extensive as the Chinese become increasingly involved in the island's economy, public services, and military affairs. There has been a correspondingly sharp decline in the East Germans' influence in all areas except in the security police, while their mentors, the Soviets, have remained relatively inactive except for military advice and support.

TANZANIA



Background

1. The union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar--known as Tanzania--hastily arranged in April 1964, has never been consummated. The Zanzibaris have stubbornly resisted any real integration of the island's administration with that of the mainland, and for President Nyerere this uphill struggle has been a continual source of personal frustration. Far from coming under control of the more moderate Tanganyikans, Zanzibar has continued to be a center from which radical, pro-Communist influences radiate.

2. In Zanzibar itself, the union has never been popular, and it was only Tanganyika's steam-roller tactics that forced the issue. Mainland leaders convinced Zanzibar's President Karume, now also first vice president of Tanzania, that union with Tanganyika was the only way to prevent the then foreign minister A. M. Babu and his pro-Chinese Arabs from gaining complete control of the new African government. Karume, despite strong opposition from radical labor and youth elements, obtained Zanzibar's ratification of the agreement even though only one third of the island's governing Revolutionary Council voted in its favor. Karume and the council had earlier come to power in the aftermath of the bloody revolution of January 1964 that overthrew the sultan's Arab government. The council has never sought a formal mandate, and indeed, few of the 32 members would be returned in a popular election.

3. It soon became evident that Karume had viewed the union as a marriage of equals, whereas the mainlanders thought that Zanzibar, with its 300,000 people, would become an integral part of Tanzania, which has a population of some 12 million. During the ensuing years, the Zanzibaris have remained uncooperative, making it quite clear that they intend to run their own affairs. Nyerere has gradually gained control over most of the island's foreign relations, although in some dealings, such as those with East Germany, Dar es Salaam appears to have little say. The islanders still control their own entry and exit procedures. Since December

1967, when Zanzibar reluctantly joined the East African Community, services such as income tax collection, post, and telegraph have been integrated with the rest of East Africa. At that time, disagreement over import procedures kept the island's customs house closed for several months, while goods awaiting clearance piled up.

4. Karume allows Dar es Salaam just enough authority on Zanzibar--particularly through the mainland police unit--to ensure that the "wild men" of the Revolutionary Council do not get the upper hand completely. Most council members are either rabid radicals--some Communist-trained--or uneducated gun-slingers who roam the island arresting "plotters" and confiscating property at random. Virtually all of them are in the pay of one of more Communist countries. Karume has never really come to grips with the long-term problem of what to do with these men. In his relations with the council he seems to have been following a policy of proceeding slowly and avoiding trouble at almost any cost. He may also see in the council a useful defense against the "imperialist" ambitions of the mainland Africans.

5. Heretofore, Karume's popularity with local Africans and the backing of the security forces have enabled him to balance the various factions within the council and to maintain his own position. In the past year, however, his grip has appeared to be slipping in the face of rising popular discontent. The military exercise of 20 November may have been designed to bolster his position against would-be plotters. His power is still very much dependent on the support of the council, which is itself divided by personal rivalries and foreign subsidies. Karume has exhibited a growing sense of insecurity and has been appealing to the council for unity. Recent reports that arms and explosives have been stolen from government storehouses have undoubtedly added to his uneasiness. He apparently suspects the East Germans of supporting plots against his rule, a factor that would help explain their tenuous position on Zanzibar at present.

Communist Economic Aid

6. The Communists got a fast start on Zanzibar. Prior to independence, both Moscow and Peking had been cultivating and training Zanzibaris, many of whom later gained influential positions in the revolutionary government. While London and Washington were holding back recognition of the new African government in early 1964, the Soviets, Chinese, and East Germans were quick to offer aid and moral support. A grateful Karume welcomed them warmly. Western influence fell rapidly as British civil servants left the island and their places were filled with Zanzibaris and Communist advisers. The recent closing of the Israeli and Ghanaian consulates has further reduced the non-Communist presence. Today, only a handful of Westerners remain, including those in the small US and French consulates. The sole US aid project involves the construction and equipping of a small, but effective, technical school.

7. The \$21 million in economic aid offered by Communist countries to Zanzibar is relatively high on a per capita basis. Communist China and East Germany have been the major donors, both vying for a leading role. The Chinese aid program has been somewhat more successful than the East German one, but neither has had much impact on the Zanzibar economy. This is mainly attributable to the severely limited human and natural resources of the islands, rather than to the nature of the Communist aid.

8. Most Chinese economic development assistance was provided for under a \$14 million, interest-free loan offered in June 1964, of which some \$6 million has been drawn down. Chinese projects include construction of a state farm, a leather and shoe factory, an agricultural implement repair facility, a small pharmaceutical plant, a sports stadium, an expansion of the Zanzibar airport, and a planned hospital on the neighboring island of Pemba. The Chinese have also undertaken well-drilling projects and irrigation and rice-growing schemes, and have provided commodities whose sale covers the local costs of Chinese development projects. Within the framework of technical assistance, Peking has supplied some 25 doctors and medical assistants, five or six technician/

instructors for the government printing facility and broadcasting station, as well as mechanics and engineers. There are approximately 400 Chinese on the islands.

9. East German aid promised to Zanzibar totals \$7 million, of which about \$5 million has been drawn down. The principal projects involve a \$1.4-million housing scheme, an ill-fated fisheries program, and the construction of two dairies. East Germany has extended more technical assistance to Zanzibar than to any other country. This includes some 45 teachers, nine medical personnel, and various advisers to government ministries. As of April 1968, there were 206 East Germans on the islands, but their total has probably fallen to about 150. As far as Zanzibar's economic development is concerned, Moscow has seemed content to let the East Germans carry the ball. The Soviets have provided no significant economic aid, although they have begun to work slowly on a few feasibility studies such as a railroad requested by the Zanzibaris. There are about 85 Soviets in Zanzibar, including three teachers, 19 military-associated personnel, and the officers who man the island's two coastal steamers--both of which ran aground last year.

10. The Chinese have worked assiduously at undercutting the East Germans, and over the past year senior Zanzibari officials, including Karume, have become increasingly dissatisfied and disillusioned with East German aid projects. The officials complain that German equipment is overpriced and not suited to Zanzibar's needs; some materials have been returned. Most of the projects financed by East Germany have been plagued with difficulties because of poor planning, and progress has been very slow. Only in the special security detachment have the East Germans built themselves a relatively sure position of influence. The Chinese have gradually become the dominant force because of their well-managed, relatively-inexpensive aid, their ability to live frugally and work hard, and their extensive and well-financed contacts--both overt and covert--with many influential Zanzibaris. The East Germans are handicapped by their higher living standards and a greater racial identity with European colonialists.

11. The record of the Chinese is not completely untarnished, however, despite their impressive progress. The shoe factory is operating well below capacity because of a shortage of hides, and the rice-planting scheme seems to be faring poorly. Their trade goods often have been ill chosen, and are generally of inferior quality. Nevertheless, the Chinese are likely to continue successfully to play the part of effective, disinterested participants in Zanzibar's development, and the East Germans will probably continue to suffer by comparison.

Communist Military Aid

12. In the field of military aid, both Moscow and Peking have been active since 1964. They each operate separate training camps in the outskirts of the town of Zanzibar, and each provides arms for the ever-expanding, 3,000-man army. There appears to be some division of responsibility, with the 17 Chinese advisers teaching small arms and guerrilla warfare and the Soviets dealing with the heavier weapons such as antiaircraft and field pieces. The Zanzibaris recently refused a shipment of Soviet arms and armored personnel carriers because they were reconditioned, unlike the new Chinese material. The Soviets are building a new military base on the site of an abandoned British airstrip at Ubago in the center of Zanzibar Island. The Chinese have taken over the former US Project Mercury tracking station at Tunguu, where they are training 800 new Zanzibari recruits. In the past, some Zanzibari military men have gone to China for training or for short visits, but most seem to go to the USSR when extensive training is required. East Germany has provided six patrol boats and is building naval barracks.

13. Ever since 1964, island military units have remained independent of mainland control, even though Dar es Salaam pays their salaries and expenses. The first attempt at integration in 1964 resulted in the recall of the island soldiers after they looted the mainland town in which they had been stationed. Their discipline and capabilities have improved considerably since then, however, and within the past year mainland commanders have begun to gain some influence. The

Zanzibar forces are now being reorganized according to a table of organization drawn up in Dar es Salaam with the aid of Canadian advisers. The military exercise of 20 November was the first joint operation involving both mainlanders and islanders, but more are planned.

14. Camps on Zanzibar have been used occasionally for training Mozambique nationalists and other "freedom fighters," but this activity is believed to have been small by comparison with similar programs on the mainland. A number of Cuban instructors involved briefly at one of the island camps were withdrawn at Zanzibar's request, and the only Cubans now remaining are two doctors on Pemba.

Economic Chaos

15. Four years of Communist aid and economic advice, combined with Zanzibari mismanagement, have brought economic stagnation and financial chaos. The People's Bank of Zanzibar has defaulted on payments due to the Bank of Tanzania, and the government-owned export-import corporation has run out of funds. The island's basic problems stem from government efforts to control all aspects of the economy and to replace Asian workers and merchants with less-experienced Africans. For example, the take-over of the retail-trade network has led to chaotic conditions with shortages in many basic consumer goods.

16. Agricultural production declined when formerly Arab-owned clove estates were parceled out among Africans in three-acre lots. Cloves account for 75 percent of Zanzibar's export earnings and about 25 percent of government revenues. Government diversification efforts have encountered resistance from farmers, who prefer the easy task of picking cloves from established trees rather than the more arduous work associated with planting new crops.

Popular Unrest

17. For the Arabs and Asians, life has been made miserable since the revolution, but in the past year discontent has also risen among the Africans

as the economy has deteriorated. Unrest has been further stimulated in rural areas by heavy-handed implementation of land distribution, resettlement, and forced-labor schemes. Zanzibaris increasingly blame Karume for the extensive corruption and rising unemployment. He has reacted to the growing dissidence by tightening security and railing about "plotters" who are sabotaging the economy. His latest scapegoat is the long-established community of Comorians from the French Comoro Islands, which he has labeled a security threat. Karume announced earlier this month that most of the more than 3,000 Comorians have ceased to be citizens of Tanzania, and those with important positions would lose their jobs immediately. Nyerere has subsequently dismissed one union minister of Comorian descent. Karume has employed similar trumped-up charges in the past to dispose of his political rivals.

Outlook

18. Nyerere has become increasingly critical of Karume's leadership, but still appears to support him for lack of a reasonable alternative. He has always been reluctant to intervene in the island's internal affairs for fear of jeopardizing the tenuous ties that bind the union. Sooner or later he will probably have to do something about Zanzibar, however. The speed and tight security of last week's show of force must certainly have impressed the island's unruly elements and may have given Nyerere confidence that he can eventually assert his constitutional authority. Even if he does decide to move in this direction, however, the Chinese are likely to remain influential in Zanzibar for the foreseeable future.