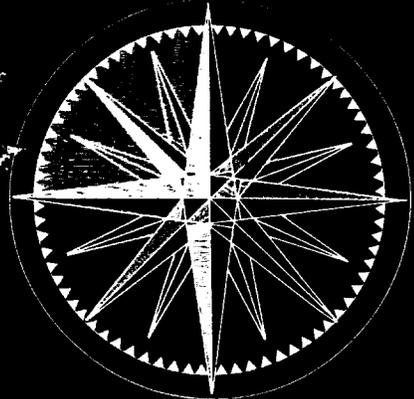


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SPECIAL REPORT

BRAZZAVILLE'S MOVE TO THE LEFT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

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30 October 1964

BRAZZAVILLE'S MOVE TO THE LEFT

In the 14 months since the overthrow of conservative pro-French president Youlou, Congo (Brazzaville) has become one of the most stridently radical of the young African states. The new regime inclines sharply toward the Communist world in foreign affairs and espouses "scientific socialism" as its domestic goal. Leftists and pro-Communists have moved into major positions in the regime and now exercise the greatest influence over the unruly National Assembly. President Massamba-Debat, originally considered a moderate, has joined their ranks. While virtually eliminating French influence and showing hostility toward the US, the government has turned increasingly to Communist and radical African states--especially China and Ghana--for economic, technical and military assistance. A continuing economic deterioration promises to worsen. Although certain domestic groups oppose the government's policies and may even at some point attempt a coup to reverse them, it now appears highly unlikely that they would succeed.

Background

The August 1963 revolution was spawned by discontent over the meager fruits of independence granted by Paris three years earlier. Congo (Brazzaville) is a sparsely populated country stretching about 700 miles along the west bank of the Congo and Ubangi rivers. It has few natural resources for raising the welfare of its 800,000 inhabitants above the subsistence level. Before the revolution, France supplied aid, trade remained oriented to France, and Frenchmen occupied most of the key positions in the modern segment of the economy.

Dissatisfaction with the Youlou government's corruption, incompetence, and failure to

alleviate large-scale unemployment reached explosive proportions by mid-1963. Youlou himself provided the spark for the revolution when he rode roughshod over labor leaders' efforts to block a merger of all political components into a single party, which he would control.

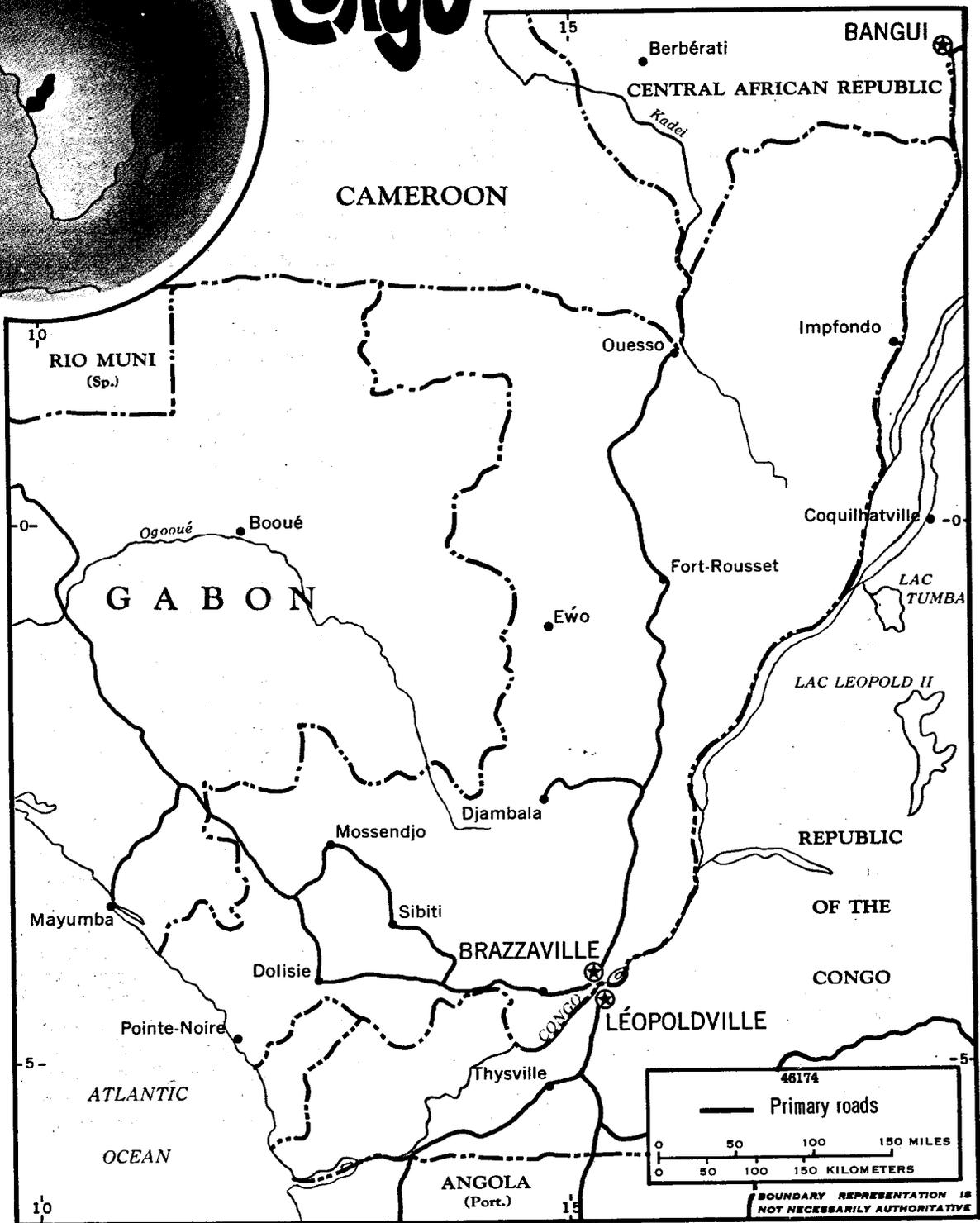
The New Regime

After Youlou's resignation, leaders of the 700-man army transferred power to a moderate civilian team composed mainly of politically inexperienced "technicians" led by Alphonse Massamba-Debat, an ex-school teacher who had once been a cabinet minister under Youlou. None of the trade unionists who had played prominent roles in the revolution held a formal position in the



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provisional government, but they exerted influence behind the scenes through their presence on revolutionary committees.

Four months later a constitutional referendum held simultaneously with legislative elections established a permanent government structure. The constitution divided executive power between an independent president and a premier responsible to the National Assembly. It also provided for a "National Revolutionary Council" (CNR), to "elaborate the general policy of the nation" while the revolution was being "consolidated." A single slate of Assembly candidates ran unopposed as members of a "National Movement for the Revolution" (MNR).

Massamba-Debat was installed as president of the Second Republic and Pascal Lissouba, one of the neophyte provisional ministers, became premier. The new cabinet also included one of the leading extremists, Aime Matsika, a former World Federation of Trade Unions official. Another extreme leftist and former WFTU leader, Julien Boukambou, moved into a position of power in the assembly, which has since generally reflected his views.

Acceleration of Leftward Drift

For a while, Massamba appeared to have established a working balance of forces and to be moving along the moderate course charted by the provisional government. As early as September, however, Massamba had begun to suspect the existence of for-

eign-backed counterrevolutionaries. In February, members of the Lari tribe, Congo's largest and most advanced ethnic group who predominate around the capital, demonstrated in favor of the ousted Youlou, a Lari chief. Massamba and his moderate associates were shaken, and the extremists' position greatly strengthened. The regime veered sharply to the left. At this point Massamba probably became convinced that the US and other Western countries were aiding elements hostile to his regime.

The government quickly made its first positive move toward closer ties with Communist countries by withdrawing recognition from Taipei, which had a resident diplomatic mission in Brazzaville, and turning to Peiping. Within a short time, the government also announced decisions to establish diplomatic relations with the USSR, Czechoslovakia, Cuba, and North Vietnam.

In March and April signs of a power struggle between moderate and leftist factions of the regime became increasingly evident. As leader of the moderates, Massamba steadily lost ground to the more dynamic and ambitious premier, Lissouba, whom the radicals evidently considered acceptable despite a pragmatic hue to his radicalism. Massamba's realization that Lissouba's star was on the rise probably influenced him to throw in his lot with the extremists.

In July the regime moved to consolidate power by establishing the formal structure for the National Movement of the Revolution

(MNR), its long-planned single monolithic party. The extremists dominated the MNR's constitutive congress and emerged with a solid position within its 10-member political bureau which became the regime's top-level directorate. The congress endorsed "democratic centralism" as a guiding principle, repudiated "liberal capitalism" and embraced--without definition--"scientific socialism" as its domestic goal.

Since the establishment of the MNR, relations with Communist countries, especially China, have expanded and the leftward movement in foreign policy has been greatly accelerated. This has been accompanied by a sharp deterioration in relations with Congo (Leopoldville) and with the US.

Relations with Communist China

Brazzaville's dominant leaders have come to regard Peiping as their principal foreign benefactor. Since July the Chinese have provided \$25 million in interest-free cash and commodity credits. This is an impressive figure in a country with an annual budget of only about \$39 million, and contrasts with approximately \$9 million annually in aid from France. On returning from his recent trip to Peiping, Massamba said that the \$20 million which he had acquired there would be used to promote a small industry manufacturing consumer goods. He also said that he had secured an unspecified number of Chinese scholarships to train pilots, engineers, and "others." Several

ships laden with a wide variety of Chinese-supplied items, possibly including some arms, began arriving this fall at Pointe Noire, Congo's chief port.

The Chinese have acquired a large, centrally located, three-story building in Brazzaville to house their growing corps of diplomats, which last month numbered some 36, including 16 "technicians." [redacted] reports indicate that the "technicians" are training Congolese youth in a camp outside the capital. Since their arrival in Brazzaville the Chinese have been in contact with exiled dissidents from the neighboring Leopoldville Congo. However, reports about extensive Chinese involvement in training the dissidents in guerrilla techniques remain substantially unconfirmed.

Chinese cultivation of the Brazzaville regime has recently led to a spate of visits to Peiping by influential Congolese who received special red carpet treatment. Massamba and Boukam-bou were both in Peiping in late September, the President's first state visit outside Africa. In addition, five high-ranking Congolese military officers and the commanders of the gendarmerie and the paramilitary "civic service" arrived in China on 18 September originally slated for a six-week tour. However, recent reports indicate that some may have decided to stay longer.

The USSR, in contrast, arrived later and to date has only six diplomats in Brazzaville. Moscow did not take its first

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concrete step until 28 September when it signed a civil air agreement and a still undefined cooperation accord between Aeroflot and the nearly bankrupt Air Congo. The Soviets have also sent a commercial aid study mission to Brazzaville, but no large aid offer has as yet been made. No other Communist country has a diplomatic mission in Brazzaville.

Relations with the French

The once-powerful political position of the French has been almost eliminated. Practical indicators of lessening French influence are many. Most French advisers formerly found at all levels of the government have departed, and those few who remain find their advice is not followed. In line with its military cutback throughout Africa, Paris has announced its intention to withdraw all of its troops from Brazzaville by the end of this year. This will not only have a direct adverse effect on the Brazzaville economy, but may bring about the mass exodus of French businessmen and precipitate the collapse of the fragile modern sector of Congo's economy. The business community has already evidenced concern over how and when "scientific socialism" will be implemented. The National Assembly, the radical press, and youth groups have mounted a barrage of invectives against France. The youth groups periodically harass the Western community in Brazzaville.

On 1 October, Brazzaville took its first formal step away

from its traditional monetary relations with Paris when it put its own treasury into operation, even though this will curb, if not eliminate, its privilege of drawing quite freely on the French treasury. French sources maintain that the Brazzaville treasury is already \$4 million in debt.

Leopoldville and the US

The accelerating leftward slippage in Brazzaville in recent months is at least partly a by-product of the intense hostility which has developed between the two neighboring Congos since October 1963, when the Massamba regime provided safe haven to a group of Lumumbists who crossed the river from Leopoldville. At least some leftist members of the regime, notably surété chief Bindi, have unofficially befriended the exiles and Brazzaville has steadfastly refused to oust them. Tshombé's return to power last summer, US support of him, the capture in August of arms his government evidently had sent to Lari dissidents, and the expulsion from Leopoldville the same month of all Brazzaville nationals all seemed to heighten the Massamba regime's fear and hatred of the other Congo.

A deterioration in relations with the US has paralleled that between the two Congos. The US had long been suspect as the last of the great powers to recognize the new regime. Massamba and his foreign minister have repeatedly voiced their conviction that certain "foreign powers" are working

through Tshombé to undermine their regime. In August, Massamba implied that the US was ultimately responsible for Tshombé's alleged attempt to infiltrate arms into Brazzaville, and the foreign minister told the US ambassador that his government might soon publicly charge the US with "aggression." The regime has also contrasted Peiping's swift response in providing economic aid with the comparatively slow process and low level of US aid. Brazzaville has expressed its displeasure by cutting off all contact with US Embassy personnel; it has also threatened to close the USIS installation and now maintains that US aid is not wanted.

Relations With Other African States

In Africa, Brazzaville has turned to the radical states--especially Ghana--for assistance. During a visit there last May, Massamba appealed to Ghana's President Nkrumah for aid in the retraining and reorganization of his army; in September, Lissouba returned from Accra reportedly with a promise of a \$4 million Ghanaian loan and a proposal to form a military alliance. Massamba has also visited Ben Bella and in early September an Algerian vessel delivered arms apparently supplied by the USSR. There is considerable evidence that these arms were intended for the Communist-supported faction of the Angolan rebels, which is based in Brazzaville, where it has ac-

cess to the government's radio station. It now appears that Brazzaville's military is in possession of the arms, however. The French military attaché in Brazzaville claims that Egypt has offered to train five Congolese pilots and to give two reconnaissance aircraft to the regime.

Although Brazzaville has sought assistance from the radical African states it has maintained its membership in two regional groupings of moderate French-speaking states. This probably reflects Massamba's awareness of Brazzaville's extremely poor economic condition and his fear of the drastic consequences of a complete severance of ties with moderate African states and France.

Domestic Opposition

Considerable opposition to the current trend persists. The regime's earliest and most implacable foes have been the evidently large numbers of Lari tribesmen who have remained unreconciled to the overthrow and confinement of Youlou. Although the suppression of their demonstrations last February chastened these Lari militants, reports have indicated that some of them continue to plot on Youlou's behalf.

Meaningful resistance to the leftward evolution in Brazzaville is found primarily among important Catholic labor and youth groups which still have

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spokesmen within the regime, including the politburo. Despite the fact that it was essentially these moderates who brought about the August 1963 revolution, they have seen their revolution preempted by extremists and themselves increasingly branded as counterrevolutionaries. Because of their relative cohesion and considerable mass support, they have so far been able to fend off leftist pressures to force them into national organizations controlled by the MNR.

The opposition may not be able to hold out much longer. A politburo member, who is also secretary general of the government-sponsored union, told the US ambassador recently that a labor congress in November will provide the last chance for the "uncooperative unions" to fall in line. The government has also begun a crackdown on the Catholic press for criticizing the regime and has passed a press censorship law which threatens to make the Peiping-supported weekly, Dipanda, the principal news outlet.

On 28 October Massamba removed the two leading moderates from his cabinet, Economics Minister Kaya and Justice Minister Okiemba. Prior to their removal these two had voiced opposition to the regime's leftist policies and recently in Paris, Kaya reportedly voiced a desire to see a reconciliation between the moderates and Youlou to create a popular movement to unseat the regime.

Although resistance to the government's leftist policies

is high among these groups, their chances of overthrowing the regime or arresting the trend are slim. They lack organization, and security forces seem to be firmly committed to the revolution. These elements are all naturally suspect to the regime leaders who would not hesitate to crack down should any of them begin to coalesce.

Outlook

Although the present regime remains more chaotic than monolithic in character, Brazzaville is clearly well along the road to the development of an authoritarian, radical, anti-Western state whose foreign and domestic policies closely parallel those of the radical African states. There appears to be little likelihood that this trend will be arrested in the near future. Relations with Paris will probably depend most on the degree to which "scientific socialism" is implemented. While there is certainly a point beyond which Brazzaville cannot go without losing French economic and technical assistance, Paris has thus far shown no inclination to use its considerable economic leverage to bring about political changes favorable to the West. Peiping's apparent willingness to make a strong effort in Brazzaville suggests that the Chinese might be willing to try to fill the gap if the French economic presence is removed. Relations with the US could scarcely worsen, but will probably improve only if relations between the two Congos become better.

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