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NIE 72-56
14 August 1956

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE
NUMBER 72-56

(Supersedes NIE 03)

CONDITIONS AND TRENDS IN TROPICAL AFRICA

(Advance Conclusions)

Submitted by the

DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and The Joint Staff.

Concurred in by the

INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

on 14 August 1956. Concurring were the Special Assistant, Intelligence, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Army; the Director of Naval Intelligence; the Director of Intelligence, USAF; and the Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff. The Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the IAC, and the Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction.

Approved for Release
Date 6 SEP 1984

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the relationships between most of the remaining colonial territories and the powers that control them. The peoples of Africa will make increasing demands for self-government with little regard for wide differences in their degrees of development. (Para. 57)

D. Particularly in the areas under British control, and to a lesser degree in French Africa, the result is likely to be an increasingly rapid emergence of new native states. In the Belgian and Portuguese areas, self-government will come more slowly. (Paras. 53, 60)

C. Throughout Tropical Africa, regardless of how political demands are handled, interracial tensions between Africans and European settlers, and between natives and Asians, especially Indians, in East Africa, will almost certainly increase. Such demands and tensions are likely to result in sporadic and even sustained violence, particularly in areas of heavy white settlement. (Para. 61)

D. The European powers may still have sufficient time to exert a moderating influence through the implementation of liberal colonial policies, which possibly might avert major hostilities. Should major violence occur, we believe that the European powers will

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retain the military strength to maintain their position for at least the next five years in the most troubled areas. However, the degree of control over the affairs of their territories exercised by metropolitan and colonial governments will continue to decline. (Para. 62)

E. Where self-government is achieved, there will remain formidable political and economic problems. The instability of the transition period of slackening European control probably will be followed by an instability arising from the contest for power between new states which themselves still lack strong internal cohesion. In their relationships with the present colonial powers, new native states are likely to be difficult to deal with. (Paras. 63-65)

F. Meanwhile, the Communists and the Arab-Asian states will be competing with the West for power and influence. Egypt will continue to encourage and support native nationalism and the spread of Islam as part of its effort to become a leader in Africa, particularly at the expense of the colonial powers. India will also continue to give support to African and other movements for independence in a bid for leadership of the Afro-Asian countries. (Paras. 66-67)

G. Despite the present weakness of the Communists, their influence and numerical strength will increase. Recent aid offers and various other moves by the USSR to extend its influence are almost

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certainly a prelude to more extensive efforts. With growing political unrest, some Africans will be disposed to accept assistance from any quarter. Moreover, native governments will become vulnerable to offers of economic assistance and of favorable trading arrangements. (Paras. 21-23, 60-69)

H. During the conflict between the metropoles and their territories which are demanding self-rule, the US will be bombarded by both sides with demands for diplomatic and moral support. Where new African states are established, the US will be increasingly pressed to extend political and economic support. Moreover, the US increasingly will be pressed by rival African states to favor their competing causes. Those which fail to enlist such support would be likely to seek aid from the Arab-Asian countries or from the Soviet Bloc. However, it is unlikely that most Africans will identify themselves closely with either side in the East-West struggle. Very few of the new African states are likely to be prepared to ally themselves formally with the West; in general, new states will seek to avoid any type of agreement that appears to involve any commitment to either side. (Para. 70)

I. Notwithstanding prospective political changes, Western access to strategic and essential raw materials will generally be preserved. Tropical African exports of such materials will increase

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in the short run, but disorder and unrest may impair production and transport over the longer run. Of the important producing areas, the Belgian Congo probably will be one of the most stable, while British West Africa and probably the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland may become less dependable sources of supply. (Para. 71)

J. In the event of another war, Tropical Africa could have substantial military importance. In particular, it could provide essential facilities to support Western lines of communication if the West were denied North African or Near Eastern operating bases or the Mediterranean-Suez line of communication. It could also provide operational staging and supply bases for Western operations elsewhere. The emergence of new native states tending toward a neutral position may result in a denial to the West of present or potential military facilities in their areas. Moreover, growing unrest and disorder would probably hamper, although it would not prevent, Western use of those military facilities available in the event of war. (Paras. 7, 72)

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05 OCT 1984

Brenda S. Reger
Director, Freedom of Information
National Security Council
Room 375, Old Executive Office Building
17th & Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20506

Attention: Leonard Yorke

Dear Mr. Yorke:

This is in response to your memorandum of 20 December 1983 in which you referred to this Agency material as the result of the request of Lloyd Beecher, your F83-1255.

Enclosed, Tab A, is a copy of the NIE 72-56 which had previously been coordinated with the Department of State and declassified during a systematic review examination of the document.

We have examined the remaining materials and interpose no objection to their declassification and release insofar as CIA equities are concerned. We do recommend that these documents be coordinated with the Department of State, if not already done.

Enclosed, Tab B, is a copy of your referral memorandum and attachments.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Larry R. Strawderman
Information and Privacy Coordinator

Enclosure
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