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Africa Weekly Review

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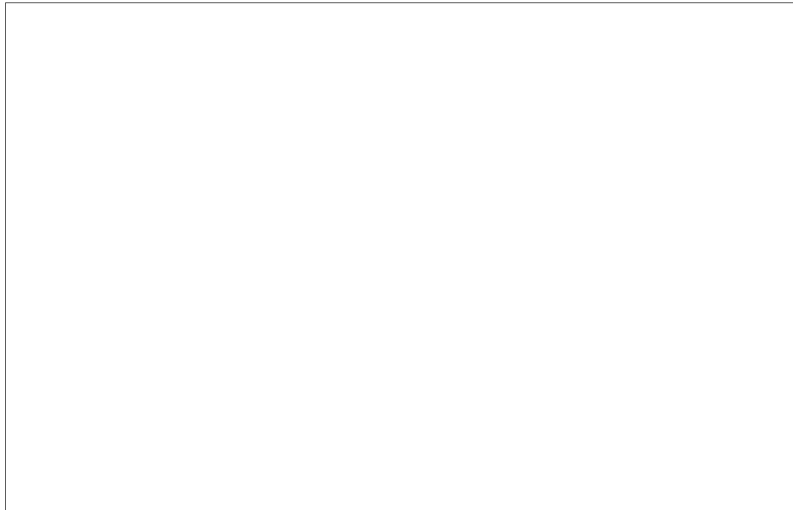
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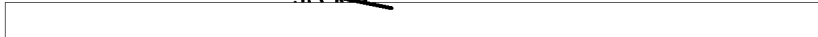
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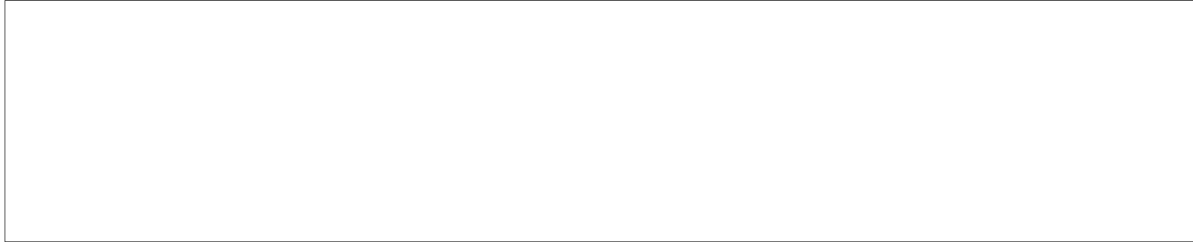


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AFRICA WEEKLY REVIEW

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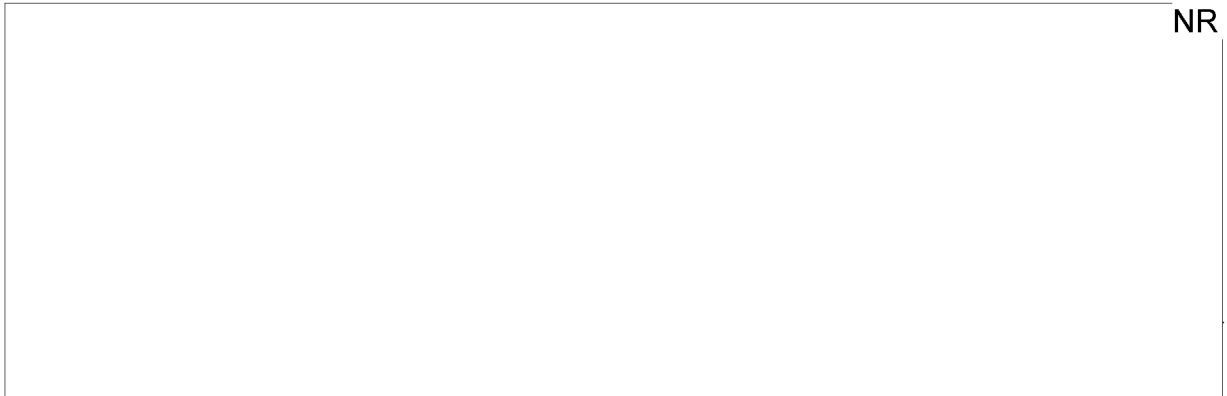
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Long a leader among moderate West African states, Senghor will probably emphasize his concerns about Soviet influence in Africa.



NR Record

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Africa Division, Office of Regional and Political Analysis, with occasional contributions from other offices within the National Foreign Assessment Center. The Africa weekly focuses on major African issues and their implications. We solicit comments on the articles as well as suggestions on topics that might be treated in future issues. Comments and queries can be directed to the authors of the individual articles or to 

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Senegal: President Senghor To Visit US

President Leopold Senghor will make a private visit to the US from 2 to 9 June, including a session with President Carter. The Senegalese President has dominated his country's politics for 28 years and has long been a leader among West Africa's moderate French-speaking states. Senghor is preoccupied with Soviet and Cuban intervention in Africa, and during his talks in Washington he is likely to stress that the US do more to counter this activity.

In office since Senegal's independence was declared in 1960, Senghor was recently elected to his fifth consecutive term. An internationally recognized poet and philosopher, the President possesses an impressive blend of intellectual and political skills. His stature as an African elder statesman, his personal diplomacy, and his long-established relationships with world political and intellectual leaders give Senegal more influence than is justified by its limited economic and military resources.

A Roman Catholic in a predominantly Muslim country, Senghor is adept at balancing Senegal's diverse interests and reconciling political foes. He appears to have no significant internal opposition, though he has been occasionally criticized by discontented students and workers for his close ties with France.

Senghor the Man

Senghor is the archetype of the bicultural African: he moves as gracefully and comfortably in French culture as he does in African. Senghor was born into a large and wealthy family of high traditional status. His father was related to a local king. In his early years he lived with his mother's brother, a shepherd, who taught him the cultural traditions of his people. From French Catholic missionaries, who often showed little

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sympathy for his African background, he learned the rudiments of French language and culture. His extraordinary linguistic skills permitted him to penetrate French culture further than any other African: he became the first black African qualified to teach in French lycees; and he was made the official grammarian among the drafters of the 1958 French constitution. His African heritage, however, gave him a strong sense of affinity with other black students in Paris, and together they developed the ethnocentric philosophy of negritude, of which Senghor was to become the most articulate champion. His poetry reflects his hopes for the people of black Africa.

Over the past two years, the 71-year-old Senghor has worked at establishing a three-party democratic system to prepare Senegal for his eventual passing and to strengthen his own party by giving it competition. In the country's first multiparty presidential and parliamentary elections last February, Senghor and his centrist Socialist Party captured 82 percent of the vote.

A Moderate Foreign Policy

Although Senghor has tried to maintain a nonaligned position, he is essentially Western-oriented. His fear that moderate African states are being isolated has prompted such Senegalese initiatives as the 1977 non-aggression and defense pact between members of the francophone West African Economic Community and a resolution at the July 1977 OAU summit condemning foreign interference in Africa.

Concerned about the Soviet presence in Mali and other neighboring countries, Senghor has begun a gradual buildup of his armed forces and will seek US help in his efforts to modernize outdated military equipment. When modernization is completed, Senegal's defensive capability will still be marginal but Senegal can rely on its mutual defense pact with France.

Recently, Senegal and the Ivory Coast reestablished diplomatic relations with the leftist Guinean Government, with which they had been at odds for nearly 20

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years. Senghor is interested in improving and maintaining relations with his country's neighbors to help solve common problems and perhaps develop some sort of defense against further factionalism in West Africa.

Senghor has steadfastly refused to establish diplomatic relations with the Cuban-backed Angolan Government. In collaboration with the French Government, he is a strong supporter of Jonas Savimbi, leader of the principal insurgent group. Senghor may well ask for US assistance for Savimbi.

Senghor considers himself a mediator. He has, for example, persistently tried to promote dialogue between Israel and the Arabs and has maintained contact with both sides. He has also maintained contacts with liberal white South Africans, whom he sees as having the same rights as black Africans.

Senegal's relations with the Soviets, never good, have worsened with the growing Soviet involvement in Africa. Senghor is particularly concerned about the conflict in the Western Sahara, where he believes the Algerians are acting as a Soviet proxy to destabilize West Africa. He is concerned that the Western Sahara conflict might eventually involve Senegal should Mauritania falter. Under the Franco-Senegalese defense pact, French fighter aircraft are currently based near Dakar for use against Algerian-backed Polisario incursions into Mauritania.

US-Senegalese relations are good. US trade, assistance, and investments have gradually expanded since 1970, making the US Senegal's second largest trade partner, after France. Trade is likely to grow due to Senegal's decision to increase import duties on goods originating within the European Community, with which Senegal is associated. Senegal has received US assistance to combat the drought problem in the Sahel, and last year an \$8 million US loan was approved to refurbish outdated engineering equipment. Senegal's expanding relations with the US stem in part from a desire not to be wholly dependent on any one country, in this case France. Senegal supports US-backed settlement initiatives in Rhodesia and Namibia.

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~~SECRET~~Unpromising Economic Picture

Senegal's biggest problems are economic. The drought in the Sahel and depressed markets for Senegal's major exports, peanuts and phosphates, have slowed the economic growth rate. Senegal takes an active role in regional economic groups aimed at developing common water resources, but such efforts cannot soon reverse longstanding economic problems and recurring periods of severe drought.

Succession

There is widespread speculation in Senegal that Senghor intends to retire before his latest five-term expires in 1983. Senghor has spoken of the need to have a trained team to take over before he steps aside, and the constitution was revised in 1976 to provide for an interim successor in the event he cannot complete his term. Prime Minister and Head of Government Abdou Diouf, a Muslim with apparently good connections to Senegal's powerful Muslim brotherhoods, is Senghor's constitutional successor. Although Diouf has a reputation as an able administrator, he lacks Senghor's broad popular support, particularly among the military. Should Senghor retire in the next year or two, he may hope to give Diouf, as interim president, enough time to prepare for the 1983 elections. Senghor is going to be a hard act to follow, however, and other senior members of his party may well challenge Diouf in the period ahead.

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