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INTELLIGENCE NOTE

BUREAU OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

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STOCKHOLM ENVIRONMENT CONFERENCE: AFRICAN POSITION

Within the past few months there have been indications that some African representatives may strongly challenge developed countries' "doctrine" on environmental matters at the upcoming Stockholm Conference -- perhaps as strongly as Brazil has done on previous occasions. While they may be overridden by more moderate views of other African representatives, their views linking environment and development will be with us in the years to come.

ECA Versus OAU. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is attempting to disassociate itself from the guidelines adopted at an April meeting in Dakar at the UN's Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP). The representatives of eight African nations concluded that meeting with a proposed "joint African stand" which was sent to the members of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The meeting also called for a caucus of African nations in Stockholm, two days prior to the opening of the UN Conference on the Human Environment on June 5, to discuss and adopt common African positions on agenda items. (The OAU will be having its annual summit June 5-15 in Rabat.) The USG has taken a hands-off approach to these deliberations for fear that any efforts on our part would be counter-productive and in the

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hope that the more moderate African states will modify the proposed position.*

Africans Suspicious of Developed Countries' Motives. The Dakar group of experts take the position that the documents prepared for the Stockholm Conference "give far more weight to the preoccupations of the industrialized countries than to the more serious ones of the developing countries." The group also states that the problems to be discussed at Stockholm are of a political nature and urges representation there by African cabinet ministers backed by experts. The group recommends that "all African countries should demand a reappraisal of all the regulations, methods and models, imposed from abroad which have so far governed the economic decision of some African countries and which have led to a ruinous exploitation and waste of their natural resources."

Dakar Group Proposes Reparations. The group contends that African nations have a "right to reparation by countries which have partially based (and continue to base) their growth on this exploitation." The talk of reparations does not appear to mean actual reparations,

*The drafters of the Dakar guidelines were Messrs. Humbaraci and Ben Salah of the Environmental Secretariat in Geneva and Samir Amin of IDEP. Dr. Amin is Director of this UN Institute in Dakar, stays in the favor of Senegal's President Senghor, is a Marxist, and is no longer considered a citizen of his country of birth, Egypt. Dr. Amin was one of the two major forces behind controversial papers distributed at the African Population Conference in Ghana during December 1971.

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but rather compensation in the form of increased foreign aid. The "polluters-must-pay" principle for ongoing activities is endorsed. The proposed strategy is to attempt to split the Americans from the Europeans at the Stockholm Conference by saddling the Europeans with the onus of colonial exploitation in Africa through talk of reparations.

A Self-Centered Development Model? The Dakar group does not see any conflict between development and environment, provided development is "within the framework of a model specifically designed to serve the interests of Africa's population." Although the model is not spelled out, there is a hint of it in the group's call for an examination of all mining and power projects "in the perspective of long-term self-centered development." The group also calls for regional cooperation, particularly with regard to river basins and coastal areas.

On population growth and labor the group proposes stating that:

They reject the argument according to which a halt to population growth, advocated in certain quarters as a way of halting the advance of the "colored peril", is one of the preconditions for development and for safeguarding the human environment in Africa.

They reject the idea of African people being simply considered as a factor of production, as cheap labour, which only worsens inequalities in the international division of labour or the use of Africans to feed the growth of the advanced industrialised countries.

The Ideas Will Linger After the Rhetoric Dies. It is doubtful that such polemic language will end up in the proposed "joint African stand," if one is adopted, but this direction of thinking may well surface.

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The Dakar group's proposals reflect not only an increasing African militancy on development matters, but an attempt to link a series of development-related issues. Thus, the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment is seen as a forum for going beyond purely environmental matters into political, social, trade, and economic questions. The basic position worked out in Dakar in April 1972 likely will reappear in some form at the UN Conferences on the Law of the Sea in 1973 and on World Population in 1974 as well as in other forums.

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