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Viewing cable 09CONAKRY156, MILITARY JUNTA OPERATES UNDER CHAOS AND DYSFUNCTION

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09CONAKRY156	2009-03-12 10:53	2011-08-30 01:44	SECRET	Embassy Conakry

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SECRET SECTION 01 OF 03 CONAKRY 000156

SIPDIS  
SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/11/2019  
TAGS: PGOV PREL PHUM ASEC GV  
SUBJECT: MILITARY JUNTA OPERATES UNDER CHAOS AND DYSFUNCTION

REF: A. CONAKRY 135  
B. CONAKRY 120  
C. CONAKRY 155

Classified By: POLOFF J.TULLY FOR REASONS 1.4(B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. The chaotic and dysfunctional nature of President Moussa Dadis' government appears to be deepening. Military Camp Alpha Yaya is apparently the President's preferred base of operations where he feels secure surrounded by trusted officers and friends. Most presidential business is conducted at night with the camp full of military officers, visitors, and government ministers until the early morning hours. Drugs, booze, and prostitutes round out camp activities. Dadis seems to be at the center of it all, essentially reinforcing a centralized power structure where he holds ultimate decision-making authority. His erratic and aggressive behavior continues to confound the international community as well as the Guinean public. END SUMMARY.

SOURCES AND ANALYSIS

¶2. (U) Information for this cable was gathered from a variety of sources and included civilian contacts, Embassy LES contacts, senior Embassy staff, and anecdotes recounted by other reliable sources. Press reports, previous reporting cables, and personal observations are also included to create a sense of Camp Alpha Yaya and how business is conducted there.

NIGHT IS DAY AT CAMP ALPHA YAYA

¶3. (C) A conversation with a civilian contact, Mr. Yaya Diallo, who has been living at Camp Alpha Yaya for the past eight years and has provided credible information in the past, described a military barracks that does not sleep and is fueled with booze and testosterone. Most "real" business is reportedly conducted after the sun goes down. Throughout the night and into the early morning hours the camp is full of cars, military officers, ministers, government officials and women. Young prostitutes from surrounding neighborhoods, attracted by the free-flowing money, are brought into the camp. Embassy LES sources report that Dadis often does not sleep until 5 or 6am stating, "Night time is like the day at Alpha Yaya." Some speculate that Dadis' paranoia is increasing and he feels more secure at night with his entourage and trusted military officers surrounding him. Drug abuse could also contribute to unpredictable hours, random spurts of energy, and accentuate his paranoia (reftel A).

¶4. (C) According to Diallo, Dadis is fearful of some type of action against him, is constantly expecting a counter-coup, and is always armed, at a minimum, with a gun in a leg holster. He sleeps in the same building as the Minister of Economy and Finance, while the notorious Claude Pivi (nicknamed "Chef du Village" by Dadis) is in a building directly behind him. Although Diallo stated that most of the military seems to support Dadis, the arrests of prominent drug-traffickers have made elements of the military nervous while other officers are disgruntled over the lack of promotions, reportedly increasing Dadis' feelings of insecurity.

A "TRANSPARENT" GOVERNMENT

¶5. (C) Diallo's description of the camp revealed a frenetic enclave with all of the elements of an action movie: opulent cars, booze, prostitutes, undisciplined military and guns, plotting, and celebrations. He noted that each weekend there are three to four weddings taking place at the camp, which he said was highly irregular. This could be due to an increase in wealth and/or prestige, allowing camp residents to take more wives, or weddings at Camp Alpha Yaya under Dadis' patronage may simply have become status symbols. Unlike the rest of Conakry, the camp also seems to have plenty of meat to eat. Cows from herds that roam the compound are routinely "sacrificed" for various ceremonies or prayers providing ample food for the troops and visitors.

¶6. (C) Diallo wryly described the camp as an example of "transparent government." Everything is out in the open and news and gossip flies quickly across the rundown courtyards, through the buildings, and into the prisons. Cell phones make sure that even the old cook is up to date on the most recent drug-related arrests.

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 "A GROUP OF GANGSTERS"  
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¶7. (C) A Senior Management LES and visitor to Alpha Yaya,

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described the day-to-day functioning of the government as "running a group of gangsters". In Conakry a visible military presence seems to foster an atmosphere of intimidation and latent violence. It is common to see pickup trucks with their lights flashing, full of Red Beret guards bristling with weapons, speeding through Conakry's streets. Frequent appearances of armed motorcades add to the peoples' perceptions of intimidation. Outside of Conakry, new roadblocks and military checkpoints are common. An American from a neighboring country on a road trip through the region, reported being stopped 14 times in Guinea at military and police roadblocks before reaching Conakry.

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 SEVERAL HOURS LATER(  
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¶8. (S) It is not unusual for appointments with the President to begin several hours later than scheduled. Contacts routinely report being made to wait for hours for Dadis. For example, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Regional Director, Mohammed Beagovui (a senior Guinean international civil servant who in early 2007 had been considered for Prime Minister following the violence that year), now working in Rome, described to the USAID Guinea Mission Director a recent visit to Camp Alpha Yaya to pay a courtesy call on President Dadis. While waiting five hours, Mr. Beagovui was approached by a beleaguered government official who had been sent to secure the President's signature on the payment authorization for the World Bank loan urgently due in the next few days. Becoming unnerved by the wait and the prospect of getting the signature from the President, the official, moaning that this signature was very, very important, turned to Mr. Beagovui and asked him to take the documents into his meeting to be signed. Mr. Beagovui declined.

¶9. (S) Later, Mr. Beagovui's meeting was interrupted when a General barged into the room leading a group of Lebanese businessmen who needed to speak immediately with the President, leaving Mr. Beagovui to wait ) once again. Mr. Beagovui described the Presidential scene as very chaotic and believes that President Dadis is surrounded by incompetent advisors.

¶10. (S) A senior executive with Rio Tinto revealed at a private dinner party attended by PolOff that he also waited five hours at Camp Alpha Yaya to see the President. Mis-identifying the Rio Tinto executive as a disreputable diamond dealer, Dadis proceeded to upbraid the executive for 20 minutes, shouting that he was a "traitor" while standing just a few inches from his face, surrounded by guards with machine guns. The six or seven ministers, including the Prime Minister who were standing next to the Rio Tinto executive, never attempted to inform the President of his mistake. Dadis finished his outburst and stormed away. Immediately after, all of the ministers and government officials in attendance reportedly laughed heartily about the incident, but the executive did not share their amusement.

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 ERRATIC BEHAVIOR  
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¶11. (C) Many sources are appalled at the government's chaotic functioning; others focus on the President's disturbing behavior. Dadis is often illogical and suspected of substance abuse. His appalling public behavior at this month's ICG-Guinea meetings reinforced these observations (reftel B)

¶12. (C) Dadis' frequent appearances on national television suggest deliberate public grandstanding. Dadis is a volatile public speaker: often angry, sometimes intimidating, and fond of wild gestures and theatrics. His public discourses lack coherence as he is quick to go off on tangents. He interrupts others and generally uses the microphone as an opportunity to expound at length about unrelated topics. People on the street are often bewildered by Dadis' unpredictable style. Guineans frequently comment on the fact that he smokes on television, emphatically gesticulating with his cigarette. They also comment negatively on his tendency

to wear sunglasses at public and private events.

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 Corruption, Drugs and Missing Monies  
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¶13. (C) Operating within this chaotic atmosphere, the Guinean Government is now determinedly focused on three principal activities: fighting corruption; recovering monies stolen from government coffers; and reducing the illegal drug trade. Relationships with the international community, crucial debt payments, shrinking foreign aid, and a timetable for elections appear to be taking a backseat for the CNDD in terms of priorities.

¶14. (C) Contributing to the chaos is the fact that most

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ministries are located downtown, requiring a minimum 30-minute commute to Alpha Yaya. Almost all government business must therefore make its way through Conakry's congested downtown streets and then out to the camp. Serious traffic delays and accidents are common. Once government officials arrive at the camp, they may wait hours before completing their business - if they are fortunate enough to do so at all.

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 Team of Rivals  
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¶15. (C) Dadis's immediate circle of advisors is composed of First Vice-President and Minister of Security Brigadier General Mamadou "Toto" Camara, and the Second Vice-President and Minister of Defense Lt. Colonel Sekouba Konate (nicknamed "le Tigre" by Dadis). All three men are potential rivals, and are commonly believed to have been the three candidates for president before Dadis was selected. Toto and Konate's prominence fluctuate. Toto is often isolated by Dadis and Konate who reportedly perceive Toto at cross-purposes with their own agenda. A member of the press reportedly saw Tot wait hours to see Dadis over the weekend, and was ultimately turned away (reftel C). Konate is perceived to hold significant influence over Dadis. Many believe Prime Minister Komara is merely a figurehead, while some continue to believe there is meaningful communication between him and Dadis.

¶16. (S) Another member of the inner circle is Lt. Celestine Billivogui, who accompanies Dadis day and night and wields significant influence. Both men were trained as accountants, are from Guinea's Forest region, and have known each other for more than fifteen years. Lt. Billivogui reportedly advocates for elections and is seen as a pro-democratic force in the inner circle.

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 COMMENT  
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¶17. (C) Information gathered from multiple sources suggests a chaotic and highly dysfunctional government. Dadis' erratic behavior and paranoia, coupled with the camp's undisciplined environment will likely pose significant challenges in the months ahead. The absence of any short or long-term planning, a lack of daily scheduling, and no established management structures reinforce this impression. It is also increasingly clear that Dadis is at the center of it all, essentially reinforcing a centralized power structure where he holds ultimate decision-making authority. However, unlike during the Conte regime, there is not even the veneer of a constitution, a legislature, or a Supreme Court to balance presidential power. As economic and political pressures mount, the likelihood of a counter-coup and/or civil unrest increases. END COMMENT.

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