

For Immediate Release

Contact: Nimmi Singh, OPB, 503-244-9900 ext.2096 / nimmi\_singh@opb.org

**Oregon Public Broadcasting Presents THE WIND OF CHANGE: THE END OF COLONIALISM IN AFRICA Airing on PBS August 25, 2003 at 10 p.m.**

**“There is a new African in the world ready to fight his own battles and show that after all the black man is capable of managing his own affairs.” – Dr. Kwame Nkrumah**

March 18, 2003 – At the end of World War II, the United States had emerged as a new world power. For Europe, this was the beginning of the end of their colonial rule. Between 1958 and 1964, 26 African nations gained their freedom from colonial rule. A new group of empowered men were leading the way – Dr. Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, Ahmed Sekou Toure in Guinea and Patrice Lumumba in the Belgian Congo. But the rising optimism would soon fade, as Cold War rivalries erupted throughout the Continent. THE WIND OF CHANGE: THE END OF COLONIALISM IN AFRICA chronicles the chaotic impact of decolonization in Ghana, Guinea and the Congo. Produced by Electric Pictures and Wildfilm Australia in association with Oregon Public Broadcasting, THE WIND OF CHANGE is airing on PBS August 25, 2003 at 10 p.m. (check local listings).

On March 6, 1957, Ghana became the first country to challenge the colonial order by gaining independence from Britain. Vice-President Richard Nixon and Dr. Martin Luther King attended the independence celebrations. Emboldened by Ghana's success, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first leader, announced his campaign for the complete independence of the African Continent. He dreamed of a United States of Africa – where all of Africa would be united under a single flag. Nkrumah's popularity soared, as his successes inspired nationalist leaders across Africa.

In a blunt address to Charles de Gaulle of France, Ahmed Sekou Toure of Guinea declared, “We would prefer Liberty in poverty to opulence in slavery!” One month later, on September 28, 1958, the citizens of Guinea voted for complete political and economic independence from France. With the departure of the French, however, Guinea was faced with a financial crisis.

Monitoring the departure of the British in Ghana and the French in Guinea, the Belgians became increasingly alarmed. In 1959, without any preparations, the Belgians announced that their colony of the Congo would be granted independence. Within one week of independence, the country spiraled out of control. An army mutiny threw out the white officers, leaving no one in place to train the Africans. Violence spread through the streets, forcing the white citizens to flee. As Sir Brian Urquhart (United Nations, Congo 1960-1964) observed, “It was a huge country the size of the whole of Western Europe with a very complicated kind of infrastructure, completely without anyone at the switch.”

Events in West and Central Africa did not go unnoticed in other parts of the continent. When British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan arrived in South Africa, the atmosphere was tense. In a carefully worded speech, MacMillan informed the South African Parliament that a “wind of change” was sweeping the African continent, and this would have to be accommodated.

The road to independence for these African countries, however, would not be smooth. Faced with a struggle of world powers, the African leaders and their people would witness years of violence and bloodshed, as their dreams of a united Africa dissipated. THE WIND OF CHANGE: THE END OF COLONIALISM IN AFRICA is the tragic story of a continent wrapped in optimism, conspiracies and Cold War entanglements.

Credits:

Written and Directed by Peter Du Cane

Producer: Andrew Ogilvie

Producer: Peter Du Cane

Executive Producer: Daryl Karp

Executives in Charge of Production: David Davis and John Lindsay

Funders:

The Australian Film Finance Corporation

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Screenwest

Lotteries Commission of Western Australia

Public Television Viewers and PBS

Video Information:

\$24.95 + \$4.95 shipping and handling

Oregon Public Broadcasting

P.O. Box 2284

South Burlington, VT 05407-2284

1-800-440-2651

For photos of THE WIND OF CHANGE, please visit [www.promotion.opb.org](http://www.promotion.opb.org).