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THE SITUATION IN AFRICA

Note by the Chairman of the Expert Working Group

Experts from Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States met at NATO Headquarters from 7th to 10th May, 1968, to prepare the attached report.

2. This report, covering the period from 27th October, 1967 to 10th May, 1968, is divided into two parts:

- Part I: Policy Implications
- Part II: General Assessment

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THE SITUATION IN AFRICA

PART I - POLICY IMPLICATIONS

1. The Group of Experts on Africa considers that member countries of the Alliance should:

- (a) encourage the Nigerians and the "Biafrans" to settle their differences by negotiations within a single entity, and continue to consult together with regard to the supply of arms to Nigeria;
- (b) continue to support efforts to bring about a return to constitutional rule in Rhodesia, especially by supporting the policy of sanctions as called for by the United Kingdom Security Council on 16th December, 1966, the strengthening of which is now under consideration by the Security Council(1);
- (c) encourage attempts by the Somali Government to achieve détente and co-operation with neighbouring countries;
- (d) encourage the nascent movement towards an understanding between the countries of the Maghreb;
- (e) continue in the Experts' meetings to examine problems of arms supply and arms limitation in Africa.

2. The increased efforts of African states to create or reinforce regional organizations give hope for eventual solutions of such problems as the boundary disputes, tribal struggles and access to the sea of land-locked countries. At the same time, regional co-operation can help to overcome the economic imbalances among the African states and open up new possibilities for a closer economic co-operation with members of the Alliance and Europe as a whole. While duplication and competition among such organizations should be avoided, the trend towards closer co-operation within Africa as such should be encouraged.

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- (1) The Portuguese Expert could not associate himself with the parts of this report concerning Rhodesia, including paragraphs 19-21, in view of the policy of neutrality of Portugal on this question. He reminded the Experts that the United Nations failed so far to give the Portuguese Government the clarifications requested several times about the legal aspects of the Security Council resolutions of 9th April and 16th December, 1966 on Rhodesia.

3. The Experts also recognize the long-term and serious nature of the economic problems facing the African nations. As the UNCTAD II meeting in New Delhi showed, these states are undergoing increasing frustration in matters of trade and external assistance. The members of the Alliance should not only adopt a sympathetic attitude towards efforts to solve these problems but also support African activities designed to strengthen political stability and constructive non-alignment.

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PART II - GENERAL ASSESSMENT

INTER-~~AFRICAN~~ RELATIONS

4. In a bilateral context, there has been evidence, over the past six months, of a détente in inter-African relations. This trend is particularly apparent in the climate of relations between the countries of the Maghreb, in the improved situation between Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia and in the confirmation of the rapprochement between Guinea and the States bordering on the Senegal River.

5. Mention must be made however of the difficulties which have arisen between the Cameroons and the Congo Brazzaville as a consequence of the activities of foreign elements operating on Congolese territory and of frontier incidents between the Sudan and Chad following the action of rebel bands. There has been no significant change in the inter-State implications of the Eritrea problem.

6. In a multilateral context, the 10th ordinary session of the OAU Council of Ministers took place in Addis-Ababa from 19th to 22nd February. The meeting approved the Organization's budget and devoted its attention particularly to administrative problems. No agreement was reached on the appointment of the new Secretary-General. The tone of the political resolutions, adopted in the confused atmosphere of the final session, was in sharp contrast with the moderation which had been noted throughout the discussions.

7. The third conference of heads of state of the Common Organization of African and Malagasy States (OCAM) in Niamey on 22nd and 23rd January, highlighted the cohesion, moderation and realism of that Organization and afforded the opportunity of establishing useful contacts.

8. The Heads of State of Senegal, Mauritania, Mali and Guinea, after a first meeting at Bamako last autumn conferred together again in Labé, Guinea, on 21st and 22nd March and decided to set up a new grouping, the "Organization of the Riparian States of the Senegal River" (OERS) which can hardly fail to have significant implications.

9. Partly at their instigation, several Heads of West African States met in Monrovia on 24th April to consider the possibility of creating a West African community. This first meeting, at which four of the countries concerned were not represented, is to be followed by other meetings scheduled to take place shortly in Monrovia and Ouagadougou.

10. There is likewise a trend towards the strengthening of existing links in East Africa. Meeting in Arusha on 1st December, 1967, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania agreed on a

series of financial and customs measures based on the former "Common Services Organization" which could in the long run contribute to the establishment of their common market. Ethiopia, Somaliland and Zambia have already expressed a desire to join these countries.

11. Lastly, the Republics of the Chad, Central Africa and the Congo-Kinshasa signed the charter of the Union of Central African States (UEAC) at Fort-Lamy on 2nd April. The creation of this organization in the present circumstances puts a stamp on the withdrawal of the Chad and the Central African Republic from the Customs Union of Central African States (UDEAC).

NIGERIA

12. The Federal forces have now succeeded in taking something like two-thirds of the area of the former Eastern Region which declared its independence in May 1967 under the name of Biafra. Federal progress in the non-Ibo areas has been rapid but in the Ibo areas it has been slow and tough. The Federal superiority in numbers and arms is beginning to tell and their supply routes to the fighting fronts are becoming shorter and easier. No longer protected by the Niger and Cross Rivers, the "Biafrans" now have a much longer fighting front to defend. Retention of the airfield at Port Harcourt is of vital importance to the Ibos for supply purposes. Malnutrition and overcrowding in the Ibo heartland is already serious and possibly poses even more serious humanitarian problems than the fighting itself.

13. Hoping to bring about political penetration of Nigeria, the Russians and the Czechs have supplied the Federal forces with sophisticated weapons such as military aircraft and bombs which were not forthcoming from Western sources. However, the continuation of supplies of conventional arms to the Federal government by some Western countries has made it unnecessary for the Federal authorities to rely exclusively on Communist sources.

14. Since a successful secession in Nigeria might have dangerous implications for other African countries which have similar tribal problems, it is to be hoped that a solution will be found which will enable all the peoples of Nigeria, including the Ibos, to remain within a single entity. At the same time, it is highly desirable that such a solution should be reached by negotiation so as to reduce the risks of unnecessary civilian bloodshed or even of guerilla warfare. Efforts to bring the two sides to the conference table have continued and although the gap remains wide, it is encouraging that representatives of both eventually met in London, if only for the limited purpose of agreeing upon a site for substantive talks. As of 10th May, Tanzania and the Gabon have recognized Biafra.

CONGO-KINSHASA

15. President Mobutu is holding the balance between the different political groups and is strengthening his régime without any need to defend himself against an organized opposition.

16. With the ending on 24th April, 1968 of the episode of the mercenaries, it is to be hoped that relations between the African and European communities will return to normal in a peaceful and calm atmosphere and that reconciliation with Rwanda will soon be achieved. Moreover, Belgian-Congolese relations which have recently shown some improvement cannot fail to benefit from this détente.

17. Although the economic situation in the Congo-Kinshasa has benefitted from the June 1967 monetary reform, it continues to provide cause for concern. A reorganization of the country's financial and economic structures is urgently called for.

18. The Eastern countries seem to have realized that pure ideology can make no headway in the RDC. After a long pause, they are showing a renewed interest in the Congo, mainly in the field of technical co-operation.

RHODESIA

19. Although sanctions have continued to exert pressures on the Rhodesian economy during the past six months, especially in the agricultural sector, these were not causing sufficient damage to have a decisive effect on the régime's policies.

20. The British Government have continued, so far as possible, to leave the door open for discussions which could lead to an honourable settlement, based on the pledges and principles already laid down. However, when the British Commonwealth Secretary visited Salisbury in November, he found that Mr. Smith had departed from certain safeguards against retrogressive amendment of the Constitution which he had appeared to accept at the time of the "Tiger" discussions. Mr. Smith has also allowed the publication of a "Constitutional Commission" report which proposes a distribution of power which, even in the longest term, could give the Africans no more than parity in representation. The unlawful hangings in Salisbury in March have further outraged world opinion and particularly Afro-Asian opinion. Recently "freedom fighters" have penetrated more deeply into Rhodesia and in larger numbers than previously; this has not so far posed a serious internal threat to the Smith régime but it has somewhat increased tension between Rhodesia and Zambia.

21. The Afro-Asian countries have requested a meeting of the Security Council where the strengthening of sanctions by the imposition, among other things, of a total ban on trade with Rhodesia is under discussion. The material and psychological effects of these new measures could become an important factor in making the Smith régime more prepared to negotiate an acceptable settlement.

SOUTH AFRICAN AND SOUTH WEST AFRICA

22. In South Africa, there is no sign of any major change in the basic character of the country's internal policies. Mr. Vorster has shown every intention of pressing forward with his policy of "separate development". By prohibiting multi-racial membership of any political party in South Africa, the Government has obliged the Liberal Party to dissolve itself. There have been minor moves in external affairs. As a result of the establishment of relations with Malawi, the South African Government has received the first black African diplomat in Pretoria. It also offered to field an inter-racial team at the Olympic games, thereby exhibiting a certain tactical flexibility.

23. In South West Africa, the trial of 37 Africans under the South African Terrorism Act focused international attention on South Africa's continued administration of the territory in spite of the United Nations General Assembly's termination of the mandate. South Africa's insistence on forging ahead with legislation which seeks to extend her own system of apartheid into South West Africa plays into the hands of the African countries who wish to force the United Nations into a confrontation with South Africa on this issue.

SOMALILAND

24. The developments of recent months, which followed the constitution last July of the Government headed by Mr. Mohamed Egal, would seem to point to an attempt to overhaul Somali policy and this could have major implications for the whole of the Horn of Africa.

25. The Government could not risk too blatant a renunciation of the nationalist claims on which Somali policy has been built without provoking reactions which would endanger its stability.

26. Nevertheless, as a result of the more realistic policy adopted by the new Somali Government there has been a change in atmosphere which is reflected by a perceptible decrease in tension in the Horn of Africa.

NORTH AFRICA

27. From the standpoint of internal stability, the position in North Africa is in certain respects encouraging.

28. In Morocco, the King appears to have consolidated his control of the situation. His preference for bodies with a corporate representation highlights his determination to base political stability on an economic revival which should be helped this year by the prospect of an abundant harvest.

29. Despite some conflict between opposing tendencies, Algeria has pursued its efforts to strengthen the country's structures and to build a modern economy. While the after-effects of the uprising of Colonel Zbiri, student unrest and popular discontent provoked by the rise in the cost of living are still major obstacles, the realistic steps taken to keep a check on worker control and to stimulate savings as well as a vigorous drive towards industrialisation are contributing towards the improvement of the situation.

30. The financial difficulties encountered by Tunisia, liberal opposition to the policy of collectivisation and the deterioration of relations between the Party and university circles have led President Bourguiba to take steps to restore order and this has proved possible without any alarming consequences.

31. The attitude of Algeria to Morocco and Tunisia has been somewhat conciliatory. Despite the relative détente between the countries of the Maghreb which has set in since the conference of 77 in Algiers last October, the awareness of Maghreb solidarity has not grown sufficiently to break the bonds of national sentiment.

32. There appears to be no possibility as yet of a concerted approach by the three countries in their relations with the outside world, whether it be a question of the Common Market, their attitude towards the Western Powers including the United States, or questions arising inside the Arab world. Diplomatic relations have been restored between the United Kingdom and Algeria and a certain number of African countries.

COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES

33. The general pattern of Communist activity in Africa continued without major variation during the past six months. Based on a growing understanding of Africa and perhaps learning from setbacks of recent years, the Communists may be improving their tactical approach to the Continent. The trend toward "respectability" - without necessarily lessening subversion - has been pursued in the sub-Sahara through

expansion of diplomatic relations by the USSR and Eastern Europe; arrival of representatives in Upper Volta, Ivory Coast and Botswana; and establishment of relations between certain Eastern European nations and Senegal, the CAR and Ivory Coast.

34. Arab Africa continued to be the principal scene of Soviet activity. This included close (although not always cordial) relations with Algeria; replacement of equipment to both Algeria and the UAR; sale of Czech tanks and artillery to Morocco; and the signing of agreements of over \$80 million with the Sudan on the part of the USSR, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. This last series of agreements marks further expansion of Communist influence, although the Sudanese military leadership remains friendly to the West.

35. South of the Sahara, the Soviets have sought to capitalize on their sale of arms to Nigeria by increasing the tempo of their political and propaganda activity and offers of economic assistance. The arms sale, at the same time, has evoked criticism from other African nations. In Congo-Brazzaville, President Massamba-Debat increased his manoeuvrability at the expense of the influence of the Cubans, Soviets and Chinese Communists.

36. Chinese Communist activity continued to be somewhat more doctrinaire and was still concentrated in Guinea, Mali, Congo (B), and Tanzania, with an extension to Mauretania, where an economic and technical agreement was signed in February. A loan agreement was also recently implemented with Zambia. Following the agreement in principle to construct the Tan-Zam railroad, and more immediately the undertaking to make the engineering study, some 150 Chinese surveyors and technicians arrived in Dar es Salaam in April to begin their work. Meanwhile, other projects, notably the textile mill, were being completed. The training of liberation movements by the Communists continued, with some indication of greater efficiency as a result.

MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND ARMS LIMITATION

37. The principal purpose of any arms supply to Africa should be to strengthen the internal cohesion and stability of the African countries concerned, rather than to encourage any aggressive possibilities.

38. Within this general objective, it is nevertheless extremely difficult to recommend specific policies. Certain general principles may be noted, however, as a basis for further consideration:

- (a) It is important to avoid escalation of arms in Africa, if at all possible, thus averting competition among African nations and among suppliers;

- (b) It is preferable that the limited resources of both African countries and external donor nations be devoted to economic development: arms should not become an excessive burden to the recipient nation;
- (c) The above principles underline the desirability of limiting assistance to technical training and relatively simple equipment needed for internal order and for defensive purposes;
- (d) It is also recognized that African nations will be most reluctant to accept restraints on their arms until they have a greater sense of internal and external security. It is therefore desirable to promote an atmosphere of political co-operation as a pre-condition for any arms regulation;
- (e) As long as Communist countries are guided by other principles, however, there will be special cases which cannot be met by the moderation and restraint advocated above. At the same time, efforts should be made - preferably by traditional suppliers - to head off such Communist manoeuvres or to fill such gaps as are necessary to avoid this danger.

39. The Experts recognize that the entire problem requires considerable further study and that progress may be very hard to achieve.