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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF
INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

QUESTION OF PALESTINE

POLICIES OF APARTHEID OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION

THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Letter dated 1 December 1975 from the Permanent Representative
of the Ivory Coast to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith excerpts from the address by His Excellency Mr. Félix Houphouët-Boigny, President of the Republic of the Ivory Coast, delivered at Abidjan on 16 October 1975 on the occasion of the Sixth Congress of the Democratic Party of the Ivory Coast, African Democratic Assembly Division (PDCI-RDA).

The excerpts from that address set forth the views of the Ivory Coast on the international political situation. I should be grateful if you would arrange for them to be circulated among Member States as an official document of the General Assembly in connexion with inter alia items 23, 27, 53, 123 and 124 of the agenda of the thirtieth session.

(Signed) Siméon AKE
Ambassador

Excerpts from the address of His Excellency Mr. Félix Houphouët-Boigny, President of the Republic of the Ivory Coast, delivered at Abidjan on 16 October 1975 on the occasion of the Sixth Congress of the Democratic Party of the Ivory Coast, African Democratic Assembly Division (PDCI-RDA)

... In the wake of a frightful conflict which had revealed both the horror of racist ideologies and the fragility of certain empires, the peoples of the third world, from Delhi to Bandung, from Tunis to Rabat and Bamako, were awakening to the first gleams of Liberty.

Gandhi, Habib Bourguiba, Mohamed V. Ouezzin Coulibaly, Mamadou Konaté, Kwame N'Krumah and many others were becoming, in their own way and in their own time, the militant advocates of the same ideal and the witnesses of the same intentions. The sluggish world of the powerful and the rich, entangled in its certitudes, still failed to grasp the full significance and implications for the future balance of political power of the slow and irresistible emergence of the Coloured peoples.

Although much has become evident today and the wind of history is buffeting the last bastions of dependence and racism, we should be mindful of the genius of these men who had the courage to be ahead of their time and thereby changed the world.

For the world has changed, and undoubtedly has changed even more over the past five years than at any other time in the history of the latter half of the twentieth century.

The two-Power condominium which, in the aftermath of the war, seemed destined to determine forever the course of time and the division of the planet, appears to be fading into the background. The five-sided world order, composed of the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Europe, Japan and China, proved unable to deal with the recent energy crisis, and the brutal transformations on the Indo-China peninsula have shattered understandings and certainties in various regions.

Certainly, history had never provoked so many unstable balances of power and precarious situations.

The arrival of the People's Republic of China on the stage of world diplomacy, the confirmation of Japan's astonishing progress and the expansion of the European Economic Community have, in effect, partially challenged the traditional bipolarization of the world and the hegemony of the two super-Powers. At the table of the giants there are now new guests, and at the same time nations which yesterday were still dominated and fragile are appearing or asserting themselves in Latin America, in Africa, in the Middle East, in South-East Asia and on the distant shores of the Pacific.

Brazil, Mexico, Venezuela, the Arab world, the old Persian empire, Indonesia and, closer to home, Nigeria are all emerging from the anonymous shadow of marginal communities to become increasingly important in the world arena, by taking advantage of that most extraordinary economic transformation permitted by their fantastic energy and mineral resources.

If a definitive example of the close intermeshing of politics and economics was needed, it would surely be provided today by those countries which are suddenly emerging on the face of the universe and forcing consideration from the affluent.

Armoured divisions and missiles are indeed no longer adequate to bolster the will to power, and the great Powers are constantly taking stock of the sinews of modern growth represented by petroleum and the minerals which are most essential to the expansion of industrial economies.

The interdependence of societies and peoples in the planetary village which our earth has become (an interdependence which the increasing impact of the written information media, radio and television has already served to confirm) is at the same time linked with these constraints and physical complementarities.

The question still remains whether this interdependence is always translated in terms of co-operation, with its concomitant implications of high ideals, awareness of others and the transcending of immediate interests, and whether the dramatic, persistent and ubiquitous climate of violence is not likely to limit drastically the effects of that interdependence.

Undoubtedly, these five years have seen, and are continuing to see, one of the most amazing spates of diplomatic activity in the history of this century: bilateral contacts, international gatherings, and summit conferences follow one another at an unusual pace. They are on various topics and levels, but all have the same purpose, namely, to promote and consolidate world peace.

East-West détente, through the relationships which have been established, for instance, between the two great Powers, between China and the United States of America, between the two Germanys or between countries at the recent Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, has become a reality which should no longer be seriously questioned.

In Asia, the advancement of non-alignment - a natural corollary of the end of the war in Viet-Nam and Cambodia and the United States withdrawal from the Indo-China peninsula - is helping to establish, in that part of the universe, a new world.

With the definitive effacement of the West and the establishment of a balance of power which will perhaps spell doom for the Sino-Soviet dispute and a number of long-standing rivalries, this world has rediscovered peace - a peace won at the cost of the most unbearable atrocities, which for a long time made us doubt the wisdom of man.

American-Cuban relations are another subject of tension which has now become history. The Organization of American States has just sanctioned the normalization of those relations, and it may be hoped, for the future of a Latin America which has traditionally been restless and unstable, that more serene conditions of coexistence and development will result.

To those ancient ghosts, the product of an interminable cold war, there have been added, in Bangladesh, the usual commotion of the Indian peninsula and its all too familiar procession of misery and tragedy.

Old Europe itself, which might have been assumed to have finally exhausted all its opportunities for disjunction, is not only failing to find a peaceful settlement to the Northern Ireland question, but has witnessed, with the resurgence of the Cyprus conflict, one of those brutal crises where intolerance and guns are vocal, as if the Mediterranean area were fated never to recover permanently its tranquillity and confirm its vocation as a lake of peace and as a natural cross-roads for understanding between three continents.

But it is surely on the eastern shores of the same Mediterranean that the most serious hotbeds of insecurity and the strongest reasons for concern still exist. Because of all the potential for violence and hatred which it contains, the tense situation which continues to prevail between the Arab world and the State of Israel still constitutes the most worrying threat to peace in the Middle East, Africa and the world.

The solution to this conflict, which has now lasted for almost 30 years, is obviously not the final capitulation of either of the two camps. As can be seen from the successive wars which have afflicted them, such an outcome would be impossible and horrifying.

In our opinion, the solution lies in the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, which is so dear to the hearts of believers.

We are not underestimating the praiseworthy efforts which have led to the evacuation of part of the Egyptian territory occupied by Israel. That is a noteworthy step towards peace. We therefore warmly salute those responsible for that important achievement.

But, being deeply devoted to peace, we must reaffirm that, as long as the problem of Palestine has not been solved, the Middle East will not know true peace, the true peace which we so earnestly desire.

The national rights of the Palestinian people constitute - please forgive me this image! - the thorn in the wound of the Middle East. This thorn must be removed, no matter how much pain that causes, if this serious wound whose continued existence jeopardizes the health of the world is to be cured once and for all.

Everything must be done to reconcile in peace and justice Israelis and Palestinian Arabs, who are both Palestinians by origin.

The ideal solution would be to group together in one large State Jews, Palestinians, Moslems and Christians, who have together been subjected to successive occupations by Arabs, Turks and British and who have been separated only since the partition of Palestine.

But let us be realistic: there is an Israeli State.

In this conflict which divides Americans and Russians, there is at least one point on which the two camps are unanimous: the Big Four recognize the existence of Israel and are prepared to safeguard it.

However, let us have the courage to recognize that this is the first time that a divided country consists of only one State. There are two Germanys, two Viet-Nams and two Koreas.

Part of Palestine was given to the Israelis, who are Palestinians like the others. But the others do not have a State and do not have a country, since their share was given to non-Palestinians.

That is the heart of the problem and it pre-dates the six-day war. The recovery of the territories now occupied by Israel can solve the problem only if it leads to formal recognition of the national rights of the Palestinians who have been deprived of a homeland since the partition.

Much blood has been shed, and ruins and hatred have accumulated. In the interests of peace both sides must be helped to surpass themselves to bring about a truly peaceful coexistence which can lead to trusting and fraternal co-operation. The example of Germany and France, which were long considered to be traditional enemies, should encourage all those who are honestly and persistently seeking a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Violence is not unfortunately limited to war and in our recent past we have had the sad privilege of seeing a great increase in all sorts of threats to the human person.

Kidnappings, attacks, torture, arbitrary arrests, whether occurring in isolation or carried out as a method of government, whether they are a reply to the "institutional violence" caused by extreme poverty and social imbalances, which is so often spoken of, or an opportunity for some people to quench their thirst for power at any cost, are now a feature of our daily lives and are becoming one of the constant factors in relations between men, as if the waves and promises of material progress must inevitably entail, as if by some fatal law, a regression of democracy, morals and the spirit.

For the few countries which have emerged from the darkness of partisan ideologies and oppression, there are so many communities, so many minorities and so many men and women who continue to suffer, morally and often physically, in order to be able to identify themselves with the most universal values of mankind!

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For a few tireless devotees of peace and human fraternity, there are so many theorists and advocates of racial superiority, regressive fanaticism and brutal regression!

During the last five years, Africa has certainly been one of the most disturbing meeting places of those contradictory currents of wisdom and hatred and of understanding and intolerance which constitute the thread of relations between countries and between men.

In this regard, hope and bitterness both exist in our hearts and we have known the greatest anguish and the greatest joys.

Although the fratricidal struggles which long devastated Nigeria and the Sudan are a thing of the past, the bitter conflict which divides Ethiopia and, more generally, the tension which exists in southern Africa are still of great concern.

Although the difficulties which, for a moment, threatened the good-neighbourly relations between Gabon and Equatorial Guinea and, closer to us, between Mali and the Upper Volta have fortunately receded without irreparable harm, and although our Guinean brothers have now resumed their traditional friendships, southern Africa does not seem to have returned to harmony.

But it is in the context of the black world's great political emancipation movement that we find our most tangible causes for satisfaction and also our most serious reasons for concern.

Spain and Portugal seem to have put a final end to the colonial period, convinced after other empires that history marches on and that the time has come for new relations based on recognition of the interests or national identities of Territories and peoples who only yesterday were oppressed.

While the decolonization of the Sahara under Spanish administration appears near, our brothers of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, Mozambique and Sao Tome and Principe have finally joined the great family of sovereign African nations.

As to the destiny of Angola, which is now racked by division and chaos, we must, on the eve of the independence of this new State, make every effort to contribute, by means of peaceful joint action, to paving the way to the reconciliation and unification of a community whose tranquillity is essential to the future of Africa.

We must likewise follow with increased vigilance the development (much slower than we should wish) of Rhodesia, Namibia and South Africa towards a style of intercommunity relations which take full account of the aspirations of our brothers and do not reduce the future of the peoples of Zimbabwe and Namibia to a purely formal independence.

It is unthinkable that these obsolete situations, in which honour and equity, reason and dignity are all flouted, could be allowed to exist much longer.

Our entire foreign policy has long been designed to accelerate such changes.

Based on a constant desire to substitute true solidarity for cold egoism, dialogue among peoples for the intransigence of blocs and to demonstrate, on all fronts of peaceful concertation, Africa's tolerance but also its determination, awareness and sovereignty, that policy in the last five years has resulted in numerous overtures and initiatives in favour of a juster distribution of the wealth of this world, of unity and peace on our continent and brotherly co-operation among men.

Desirous to respect the commitments of all and to see its own choices respected, the Ivory Coast has extended and diversified its circle of friends, with a view to extending it still further in future to all States who wish to stretch out their hands towards us, overlooking our current divergencies and the different concepts we sometimes have of the rules of democracy and economics.

Not to interfere in the affairs of others, to try to understand prior to passing judgement, to use responsible rather than extreme language, to opt for constructive patience rather than superficial unity, to use our very differences and complementarities in order to lay the basis for fruitful relations based on esteem, trust, friendship and the clear interest of each party: these are all features of Ivory Coast policy which we should like to be better understood and more broadly shared in future.

Our policy of dialogue merely reflects these features. In reaffirming that the independent countries of Africa are ready to utilize peaceful means to bring about the elimination of racism and apartheid in South Africa, did the recent Conference on southern Africa held in Dar es Salaam do more than recall the necessity and benefits of dialogue and show that that policy is the only one which can hasten the resolution of a situation that is intolerable for Africans and democrats throughout the world.

It is fitting to pay a tribute to the courageous efforts of heads of State such as President Kaunda who, like us, believes in the merits of dialogue as a means of settling differences or conflicts on our continent. The Ivory Coast, despite the sarcasm and the malicious insinuations, will pursue its policy of dialogue parallel to its comprehensive aid to the liberation movements.

It is fitting to inform those who believe they are authorized to teach others lessons in African nationalism, those whose dialogue is limited to bloody repression and arbitrary measures, that the dialogue which we uphold and which we shall defend, heart and soul, without allowing anything to distract us, is part of our over-all policy of peace within our country, peace between our country and the other brother African States and between our continent and the rest of the world and does not stem from any desire for material gain or glory. The happiness of mankind in freedom, peace and justice alone guides our actions.

Whether it be with the former colonial Power to which we are bound by special ties, with the other major industrial democracies of Europe, America or Japan or

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with certain Eastern and Latin American countries, this policy has always proved fruitful - to differing degrees, of course, and in differing forms - and contributed to increasing the confidence which our foreign friends have always placed in us.

Our co-operation with our Arab brothers, specifically those from the Maghreb, and with our French-speaking and English-speaking brother Africans also operates steadily and dynamically, both in a bilateral framework and within continental or regional organizations.

How can we fail to be particularly pleased in this second half of the twentieth century, marked by the acceleration of rapprochements and community groupings, at the active and positive participation of our Governments and experts in such diverse and complementary bodies as the Organization of African Unity, OCAM, the Council of the Entente, the West African Economic Community, ECOWAS, the Central Bank of West African States and the Air Afrique airline.

Whatever the problems, the difficulties and occasional disappointments which we have naturally experienced during the establishment or evolution of these different organizations, let us admit that they exist and that they demonstrate to the world that our continent is capable beyond the barriers of religion, race, language and life styles of meeting the political as well as the economic and technical challenges of a universe in which the only thing that counts any more is the major groupings and their ability to co-operate, to organize themselves, to move forward and to speak out in the major forums of the history of nations.

Many lessons can be drawn in that connexion from what the two super-Powers succeeded in doing on the occasion of the rendezvous in space of the Apollo and Soyuz capsules.

What that technical feat involved in terms of work and pooling of resources by Powers whose ideologies and methods are so different is too remarkable not to encourage us to create more opportunities for us to pool, at our level, all that can be pooled, to quell our divergencies, to emphasize those things that draw us together and thus to increase our credibility and strength.

Nevertheless, we should like to be sure that, on the occasion of this unusual political demonstration of the reality of détente between East and West, the two super-Powers have also indicated that they no longer intend to govern the affairs of the world on their own.

We should also like to be convinced that the fact that the cosmos has been transformed for a while into an arena for international co-operation will not cause us to lose sight of the much more pressing need for co-operation on the earth in which we live.

Although it is true that a new wind is blowing in relations which until now were all too often characterized by invective and monologue, we should like to

be sure that in this gigantic game of chess in which our planet is engaged the poor countries have at last become something more than pawns or the preferred theatres of the most tragic conflicts.

We should like to be certain that these spectacular summits and rendezvous will lead, not to skilful reversals in alliances but, for example, to the more equitable transfer of the riches of the universe to the third world.

Unfortunately there have been many events and reactions which give us cause to fear the painful and continuing realities which persist behind the facade.

How can we retain our faith in the justice and common sense of men when we know that military expenditure throughout the world is 30 times greater than the aid given to the third world, that a third of the world population accounts for more than 80 per cent of the gross national product of mankind, while the remaining two thirds must make do with what is left over, and that malnutrition, hunger, poverty and illiteracy are all that the majority of our brothers can expect from life?

Even the ray of hope engendered by the innovatory convention signed recently at Lomé by the Asian, Caribbean and Pacific countries and the European Economic Community cannot alleviate the depressing and real effects of the deteriorating terms of trade.

Indeed, since the meeting of UNCTAD at Santiago, Chile, and the various conferences which have gone on until the present day, despite the reassuring statements made by certain spokesmen of affluent countries we have not witnessed any improvement in terms of trade. On the contrary, the gulf between the rich and poor countries has continued to widen.

Of course, our European partners cannot by themselves alter the world economic situation which is crushing us at the present time, but they could nevertheless demonstrate their goodwill by undertaking to pay realistic prices for the raw materials which they import from our countries.

As far as trade is concerned, Europe, our partner, owes it to itself to pursue policies more suited to its fundamental interests. Europe can survive as an industrial Power only by turning resolutely to the third world, and in particular to Africa, that vast reservoir of raw materials.

Europe finds itself in a situation which differs in important aspects from that of certain industrial States, particularly the United States and the USSR, which, within their own territory, are endowed with a major part, if not all, of the raw materials essential to their industries, and in particular oil.

In addition to certain important agricultural resources, such as cotton, the United States has at its disposal a large and prosperous internal market. Consequently, in the event of an extremely serious crisis, it could hope to survive while exporting very little, a luxury which neither Europe nor Japan could afford.

The duty of Europe is therefore quite clear: it must co-operate closely and openly with Africa.

In 25 or 50 years from now, Europe and Africa together could form a market of more than 400 million consumers, whose potential wealth would be incalculable. Helping Africa more than it does at present is, for Europe, the only policy which will guarantee results in the long run in view of the complementary human and material resources which the two continents possess.

Far from creating unwelcome competition for the United States (undoubtedly the most powerful industrial nation in the world today and a vital factor in maintaining peace), such a policy would help that great nation to understand that it is by paying realistic prices for raw materials and by helping the poor countries financially that it will do most to guarantee the well-being of their people, and thereby forestall disorders and disruptions in the only effective way possible.

However strenuous the efforts which some of our closest friends have made and are still making, far too often the privileged nations prevail in the global confrontation between North and South which has become the greatest single problem of our time.

As if that was not enough, these privileged countries have derived further benefits from the existence of certain divisions.

As with a divergence of interests and unequal development, ideological, geographical and historical differences often endanger united fronts formed at the inter-State level. Solidarity is difficult to achieve and maintain, and egoism knows no frontiers.

Yet most of the great Powers in the world cannot be expected to go beyond fine words and hypocritical resolutions if the weakest countries fail to acquire the habit of thinking, believing and working together, and to agree, in a more concrete and conscious manner, on joint action that is well chosen, concerted and rigorously carried out.

In this vital search for a new world economic order, Africa expects to be rid of the problems of under-development, and we can only satisfy that expectation by taking more concerted action, making more co-ordinated demands and by overcoming our anachronistic little quarrels and wounded self-esteem.

Political isolation is harmful, but economic isolation is worse. There will be no genuine unity or lasting peace in Africa, or in the world as a whole, unless development benefits all States equally and all persons within each State, who will thus in a general movement of solidarity lead our peoples to progress and well-being.

Today national unity is stronger. It will be able to withstand any attempted divisions, whatever their source.

Therefore, while remaining vigilant, we can henceforth extend our co-operation to all States regardless of political systems, provided those States undertake to respect our sovereignty and not to interfere in our internal affairs.

Since we faithfully respect the rights of others, we are entitled to expect the same treatment for ourselves.

The months and years ahead will therefore see a widening of the circle of our friendships.

We are also pursuing unashamedly our policy of dialogue with South Africa. In that connexion, in order to avoid any misunderstanding, I should like to state the following:

In my April 1971 press conference on peace in Africa through neutrality, I condemned apartheid and racial discrimination in South Africa. I have never failed to repeat this to the envoys of the South African Government and to Mr. Vorster himself at Yamoussoukro. Our Minister of Information, Mr. Dona-Fologo, has just reaffirmed the unalterable position of the Ivory Coast to the press, the blacks and the South African authorities in Pretoria and Johannesburg:

"As men and especially as blacks, we can only be revolted by racial discrimination and apartheid."

We all agree on that.

But it is not sufficient to condemn an evil. The problem is to find a solution to this dispute, which is similar to so many other disputes which have divided, and unfortunately continue to divide, mankind throughout the world.

Let us be honest and admit that there are not three methods of solving these problems but only two: the method of force, or war, and that of dialogue.

I am a citizen of the world, a free citizen. I believe in the virtue of dialogue and shall persist in that belief so long as no proof is produced to show that I am wrong. Who can honestly prefer war to peace? Who can show me that it is preferable to resort to war, when I maintain that only dialogue, resolutely pursued, can prevent war?

Africa needs a long period of peace if it wants to play the role which it can rightfully claim as a result of its vast discovered or potential wealth.

Vorster and his associates must be helped if they are to commit themselves firmly to the method of dialogue with the blacks, the Coloureds and the Indians of South Africa.

It is to this difficult but noble, inspiring and positive task that we dedicate ourselves, solely out of devotion to the cause of peace and the happiness of mankind.

This attitude does not seem to please those who devote their time to futile verbal threats, uttered with an insistence and emphasis directly proportional to their distance from the potential theatres of war, since they are sure that none of their soldiers would be involved.

The whites, blacks, Coloureds and Indians of South Africa are free to visit the Ivory Coast to learn about the realities of the life there, and to see the people of the country working in peace and stability.

The people of the Ivory Coast, for their part, will seize any opportunity to confirm on the spot the progress of the policy of dialogue in South Africa.

The admittedly modest but encouraging results communicated to us by Mr. Vorster and confirmed by our Minister, Mr. Dona-Fologo, strengthen our conviction that the method which we advocate for the solution of the painful problem of apartheid is the best.

Malawi has an ambassador in Pretoria. He lives there with his family in the white city, and his children attend the same schools as white children. Mr. Dona-Fologo was able to observe that on the spot.

It is therefore not one ambassador but 46 ambassadors who should represent our continent in Pretoria. Their presence would contribute more effectively to promoting racial equality than all the ineffective resolutions adopted by the United Nations over the past 30 years.

Let us look further! Let us have faith in the glorious future of Africa! Let us seriously prepare this future by hard work and in peace! Our advantages are enormous: the incalculable wealth of our continent, the natural intelligence of its men, all those material and human resources are there to be developed through a more realistic policy.

In 20 years, or at most 50 years - what is 50 years in the life of peoples? - if we seriously apply ourselves to work, there will be over 400 million Africans in the world, and they will have reached a level of development comparable to that of the most developed nations on earth.

All Africans, both black and white, will consider themselves brothers and will live in perfect harmony.

In 1947 I wrote that Africa will one day be a land of reconciliation of peoples.

Today I am more than ever convinced that such will be the future of our dear Africa, from which all forms of racial, religious or social discrimination will be for ever banished.

Then it will speak and propose to the world, as we said in Addis Ababa in 1963, a new humanism imbued with true brotherhood and active solidarity,

qualities which have been its peculiar features for thousands of years, and a message which it is still unable to impose because of its present circumstances.

We have also asked Mr. Vorster to speed up the decolonization process in Namibia, formally German South West Africa.

On that subject also we think our appeal will be heard.

We do not believe in miracles, but what should be expected from us is effort and not success: we shall steadfastly persist in our endeavour, and God will take care of the rest.

In any case, let us avoid war with South Africa if we want to avoid the disastrous intervention of blocs in Africa.

Over the past 15 years we have formally recommended a policy adapted to the resources at our disposal, recognizing that the desirable must be reconciled with the possible.

It is to the application of this wise concept of action that we owe the relative progress that our country is experiencing today.
