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REPORT BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL CONCERNING EQUATORIAL GUINEA

This report is based on information received from my Representative to Equatorial Guinea and covers the period since my last report to the Council on this question (S/9053/Add.2) to 23 March 1969. It also contains a record of the actions which I have taken during the period on this question.

1. In view of the lessening of tension which had occurred at the time, the Government of Equatorial Guinea terminated the state of exception (state of emergency) throughout the country as of Friday, 14 March. This measure was received by the people of Equatorial Guinea with relief and satisfaction.

2. The meetings between the authorities of Equatorial Guinea and the Chargé d'affaires of Spain which my Representative was instrumental in arranging led to the arrival in Equatorial Guinea of a special economic mission sent by the Government of Spain for the purpose of discussing a number of economic and financial matters between the Governments of the two countries. The conference took place in Bata on 15 March 1969. Although it was reported that it had not been possible to reach a complete agreement in regard to all issues, the conference was important in that it represented a formal beginning of discussions at different levels between the Governments of Equatorial Guinea and Spain on a number of outstanding problems.

3. During the following days, my Representative was in contact with officials of the Government of Equatorial Guinea and with the Spanish Chargé d'affaires. In his discussions with Equatorial Guinean officials, certain ideas emerged as a framework for a peaceful solution to some of the more pressing difficulties between Equatorial Guinea and Spain. These ideas, which had the approval of President Macías, were conveyed by my Representative, in the exercise of his good offices, to the Spanish Chargé d'affaires. My

Representative also had occasion to discuss them with the representatives sent by the Organization of African Unity to Equatorial Guinea, Mr. Mohammed Sahnoun, Deputy Administrative Secretary-General of the OAU, and Commandant Sliman Hoffman.

The main purpose of the ideas referred to above was to ensure that the withdrawal of the Spanish Civil Guard from Equatorial Guinea should take place without impairing the economic and social situation of the country nor its international policies. With this in view, the following steps were outlined:

(a) Maintenance of the political status quo in view of the initial economic agreements, which had begun under the most auspicious circumstances and had already been approved by His Excellency the President of the Republic (particularly the agreement calling for the establishment of a fund amounting to 100 million pesetas);

(b) A study by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees of the situation which would arise in the event that the withdrawal of the Spanish troops should lead to the departure of Spanish plantation owners and businessmen;

(c) The accelerated dispatch of experts by UNDP;

(d) The definite appointment of the Permanent Representative of Equatorial Guinea to the United Nations;

(e) Consultation with the Secretary-General of the United Nations concerning the possibility of sending a military adviser to supervise the above-mentioned evacuation and also to assess the internal security situation resulting from the withdrawal of the Civil Guard.

The moratorium would last for a period of two months, which could if necessary be reduced to a minimum of one month, while the co-operative arrangements referred to above were set in motion.

The Spanish Chargé d'affaires undertook to convey the above ideas to his Government for consideration.

4. On 21 March, after a Cabinet Meeting, the Government of Equatorial Guinea withdrew its previous agreement to the moratorium outlined above, and President Macías cabled the same day to the Spanish Chief of State requesting the withdrawal of the Spanish troops by 23 March. Also on 21 March, my Representative was informed by the Spanish Chargé d'affaires that in the light of President Macías' telegram to the Spanish Chief of State, the Spanish Government

had decided to withdraw immediately the Spanish Civil Guard from Equatorial Guinea on the understanding that all Spanish citizens who voluntarily wished to leave Equatorial Guinea should be allowed to do so, prior to the withdrawal of the Civil Guard.

5. The letter dated 21 March 1969 from the Permanent Representative of Spain (S/9104) requested me to dispatch to Equatorial Guinea appropriate officials to supervise the evacuation of the Spanish forces and of the Spanish citizens who would voluntarily wish to leave Equatorial Guinea. On 24 March 1969, I informed the Permanent Representative of Spain that, owing to lack of time, it would not be possible to comply with his request.

6. On 22 March, the Secretary-General received the following cable from President Macías:

"Because of evacuation Spanish forces stationed here 23rd instant according to radiogram from Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain request urgent dispatch military observers. This request has also been made to your personal representative Mr. Tamayo. Highest consideration.

Francisco Macías Nguema"

On the same date, the Secretary-General replied as follows:

"I acknowledge receipt your cable of 21 March received today 22 March requesting urgent dispatch military observers because of evacuation Spanish forces on 23 March. As you will surely understand it would be impossible because of lack of time for personnel requested by you to arrive in Equatorial Guinea on the desired date. I therefore regret that I am unable to satisfy your request. Highest consideration.

U Thant  
Secretary-General  
United Nations"

7. In order to assist my Representative in Equatorial Guinea, who up to the present has had only a small administrative staff at his disposal, I have dispatched Mr. Héctor Fernández, a United Nations official who is familiar with Equatorial Guinea. This step has been found necessary owing to the fact that some high officials of the Government of Equatorial Guinea remain most of the time in Bata while others conduct their official functions in Santa Isabel.

8. In the exercise of his good offices and with the concurrence of the parties, my Representative is endeavouring to assist both sides in order that the arrangements for withdrawal are carried out in an orderly and peaceful manner.