



UNITED NATIONS  
SECURITY  
COUNCIL



Distr.  
GENERAL

S/14287  
5 December 1980  
ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

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NOTE VERBALE DATED 4 DECEMBER 1980 FROM THE PERMANENT  
MISSION OF TOGO TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO  
THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

The Permanent Mission of the Togolese Republic to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General and, following the circulation inter alia of the article by Véronique Vucher-Bondet entitled "Benin, dismal failure of a daring raid" as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/14211 dated 8 October 1980, has the honour to request that the attached note be circulated as a document of the Security Council.



Annex

Note from the Permanent Mission of the Togolese Republic  
in response to the circulation of document S/14211 of the  
Security Council, containing, inter alia, an article  
entitled "Benin, dismal failure of a daring raid"

The Permanent Mission of Togo regrets that the Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of Benin saw fit to endorse and to give an official character to a magazine article containing slanderous allegations against sister countries and honourable Heads of State in connexion with the attack carried out by mercenaries on Cotonou on 16 January 1977.

The Permanent Mission of Togo refers to its note verbale No. 240/MPT-ONU/77 of 7 April 1977 in which it made known the position of Togo on the far-fetched accusations contained in the report of the national commission of inquiry (S/12319/Add.1) and reaffirms that Togo did not participate in any way whatsoever, either from nearby or from afar, in the mercenary operations against the sister Republic of Benin. It had no reason to do so.

The ties that bind the peoples of Benin and Togo, two peoples that are destined to live together, are such that any misfortune that strikes one of our countries cannot fail to have repercussions on the other. We are determined advocates of peace in the world and our policy in our international relations and particularly in our relations with our neighbours is that you must not light fires in your neighbour's home. Nor should you rejoice when a fire breaks out in his home. You must help him to put it out acting both in a spirit of solidarity and to prevent the fire from spreading to your own home: that is a wise African saying and it is the political philosophy of the Founder-President of the Rassemblement du Peuple Togolais.

Benin and Togo both fully respect the path the other has freely chosen to promote its social and economic development and, in addition to the bilateral relations they entertain as sister States, they enjoy sound relations of solidarity and fruitful co-operation within the Council of the Entente and the Economic Community of West African States, not to mention the fact that both are members of OAU and of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In our view there is a direct link between security, stability, peace and development. The joint undertaking on which we have embarked to attain our common objectives, namely, economic development and social advancement, would be doomed to failure if we were to do anything which could in any way encourage destabilizing stratagems of which our countries were the target.

We have always strongly condemned the activities of mercenaries and we detest these odious hired assassins, men who have no concept of honour or the law, who in order to earn money transform Africa into an arena for their foul doings, interfere

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with the freedom and sovereignty of our young nations, jeopardize our security, tranquility and development, stab our people in the back, sow desolation in our towns and in our countryside, prevent us from living in peace in our own homes, from mobilizing our resources for development activities and force us to make great sacrifices. Sarakawa was a salutary revelation for us, a revelation of the price which the imperialists seek to make us pay for our will to be independent, our claim to be free, responsible men enjoying full sovereignty on the rich land of our ancestors, masters of our destiny.

How can our Beninese brothers continue to tag us with the horrible label of accomplices of mercenaries?

Why do they insist on seeing Togo's hand behind the raid on Cotonou?

With respect to the accusations which were made by the Beninese and which triggered stormy debates in the Security Council, it should be pointed out that:

(1) These accusations were made by Beninese on the basis of documents which the aggressors are alleged to have abandoned before fleeing when the attack failed, and statements by one Bâ Alpha Oumarou, the only commando who was captured.

(2) The names of localities and people were written in code in those documents. It was the Beninese themselves who deciphered the code and who, in particular, mentioned the names of our country and our President.

(3) In submitting their report, the members of the Security Council mission stated clearly that, owing to lack of time, and in view of their terms of reference, they had been unable to press their inquiry further and to verify the statements of the said Bâ Alpha Oumarou or the authenticity of the proof submitted in the documentation.

(4) As far as we are concerned, the official report of the Security Council Commission now here gives the names of our country and our President as being implicated in the Cotonou coup. Moreover, did not President Kérékou himself say that the Togolese State and its Head had in no way been involved in the affair?

(5) On 2 January 1977, when the President of the Republic supposedly attended a meeting with Omar Bongo and Bob Denard "on the need for preventive action", Army General Gnassingbé Eyadema was in Togo, at Pya, his native village, where he stayed from 31 December 1976 to 3 January 1977 and where, attended by several members of his Government, he received many delegations as part of the year-end festivities. In any case, his many journeys in Africa to make contact with his colleagues are a contribution to efforts to build a united continent, not to undertakings aimed at destabilization.

These accusations, which are exceptionally grave because they are an affront to the dignity of sovereign countries and to the image of honourable Heads of State and because they have disturbing implications for relations between friendly

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nations and fraternal peoples and for solidarity and regional co-operation as well as for international peace, have no serious foundation. No irrefutable evidence aimed at formally establishing their veracity has been offered at any level or at any time. They are nothing but gratuitous and iniquitous affirmations which our brothers of Benin have been harping on, and to bring them up again in the present circumstances, by means of the dissemination of the Vucher-Bondet article, constitutes an act of provocation which astonishes us and arouses our indignation.

It will be recalled that following the deterioration in relations between Gabon and Benin and the tragic confrontations at Libreville in July 1978 between Beninese immigrants and Gabonese nationals in connexion with the accusations made against Gabon in the Cotonou affair, Army General Gnassingbé Eyadema, showing himself to be above the unworthy accusation which had been leveled against him in this affair, and secure in his determination to contribute to the building of a united Africa, to the creation of a climate of co-operation among Africans and to the development of universal brotherhood, as well as in his faith in dialogue as a means of settling international conflicts and establishing lasting peace among peoples and nations, did everything possible to set our brothers of Benin and Gabon on the path of reconciliation. That process of reconciliation is now under way.

It will also be recalled that after the events of Cotonou, thanks to their political will, the sense of responsibility on the part of all concerned, and with African wisdom working, in the interests of our continent and our subregion, for the peace and harmony which would favour fruitful co-operation for the benefit of the peoples of this part of Africa, the Heads of State joined in a reconciliation which filled the hearts of the matter in our subregion with joy. Animosities were dispelled, yielding to fraternity and concord. Togo and Benin, for their part, have continued to develop fraternal relationships.

In particular, Presidents Kérékou and Eyadema have been working actively in the OAU sub-committee on Chad for the restoration of understanding and peace in that sister African country.

Why has the need been felt to revive accusations which have disrupted our relations?

Lastly, it will be recalled that not so long ago Togo itself was threatened with an attack by mercenaries, and everyone, including our Beninese brothers, knows that mercenary activity constitutes a scourge, a calamity, a terrible sword of Damocles hanging over the heads of all small countries which do not have strong defences. It is cynical to persist in publishing slanderous accusations of complicity with mercenaries against a sister country which has not yet recovered from the fear aroused by a threatened attack by mercenaries warded off thanks to the solidarity of friendly countries, and on which these professionals of armed aggression still have their sights trained.

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The pretext for the dissemination of the article in question, namely a request for special economic assistance from the international community on the basis of Security Council resolution 419 (1977), does not justify or even explain Benin's action. This dissemination of an article containing slanderous accusations introduces an element of conflict that can only diminish the interest which should be aroused by Benin's request and by the Security Council's appeal in support of it. Who can claim that the Beninese are not aware of this?

The fact is that our brothers of Benin are using the unsuccessful raid on Cotonou as a weapon against certain countries, notably against Togo, their neighbour.

Our links with Benin are real and our spirit of solidarity is immense, as is our patience, but we will not consent much longer to be subjected to sordid provocations on the part of brothers who want us to be the willing victims of their policy of diversion. We stand shoulder to shoulder with them in the ordeal which they have been undergoing and which has not spared us either, but we will not carry our desire for fraternity, our indulgence and our understanding so far as to give the Beninese limitless permission to keep making slanderous accusations against us in the interests of strengthening their request for assistance and because of the exigencies of their internal policy.

We solemnly call upon our brothers of Benin to give up their *idée fixe* concerning Togolese participation in organizing the attack by mercenaries against Benin, to realize that in persisting in taking advantage of the criminal operation of 16 January 1977, the true facts of which are incontestable, in order capriciously to discredit sister countries on the basis of "found documents", they are playing the game of the mercenaries for whom any means of opposing and destabilizing us are acceptable, and to recognize the grave responsibility which they are incurring before history in obstructing the establishment of a united front for the eradication of the scourge of mercenary activity.

New York, 4 December 1980

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