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STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Thirty-third year

Letter dated 8 June 1978 from the Permanent Representative of the
United Republic of Tanzania to the United Nations addressed to
the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a special message by the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, His Excellency Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere, delivered to foreign envoys accredited to Tanzania, at State House, Dar es Salaam, on 8 June 1978, concerning recent events in Africa.

I should be grateful if you would circulate this special message as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 50 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Salim Ahmed SALIM
Permanent Representative

* A/33/50/Rev.1.

ANNEX

Special message by the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, His Excellency Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere, delivered to foreign envoys accredited to Tanzania, at State House, Dar es Salaam, on 8 June 1978, concerning recent events in Africa

I have been very concerned indeed about world reactions to recent events in Africa, and it seems to me to be necessary that I should make Tanzania's position clear, for the events of the past few weeks have once again demonstrated that, although our legal independence is officially recognized, our need and our right to develop our countries and our continent in our own interests has not yet been conceded in practice. The habit of regarding Africa as an appendage of Western Europe has not yet been broken.

Soviet forces in Africa

In Angola the MPLA did almost all the fighting against the Portuguese colonialists. As independence approached after the revolution in Portugal, various Western countries - led by the United States of America - decided to try to prevent the establishment of an MPLA Government in that country. They conspired with South Africa, and gave undercover finance and arms to rival nationalist movements which had previously been almost inactive. Faced with this conspiracy and the consequent attacks on Angola from South Africa and across the Zaire border, the MPLA Government sought help from those who had given support to the movement during the independence struggle. Cuba and the Soviet Union responded to those requests. With their help, the Angolan Government overcame the immediate military threat to its existence, pushed South African troops back across the border into Namibia, and pushed the FNLA troops back to where they had come from - Zaire.

Cuban troops are still in Angola, and the Soviet Union continues to give military assistance to Angola. The Angolan Government is forced to ask for this assistance to be continued because the threat to the integrity of Angola still exists. Only last month South African troops entered southern Angola again and inflicted heavy casualties upon Namibian refugees. UNLTA continues to get outside support. There have been continual attacks made across the Angolan/Zaire border by FNLA troops, who are financed and supplied with weapons by external forces and who operate with the active or tacit support of the Zaire Government. That all this is happening, and how it is happening, is known to the Secret Services of South Africa, and of the United States of America, France and some other Western countries. It would not be happening without their connivance and their involvement. It would be incredible if the Governments of those countries did not know what their agencies were doing.

The history of the ex-Katangese gendarmes pre-dates the independence of Angola. It was not actions of the MPLA which took them to Angola, nor were they trained by MPLA. They are a living reminder to Africa of the determined and shameless attempt

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by the West to dismember the former Congo (Léopoldville) in their own economic interests. When that attempt was defeated, some of these gendarmes moved into Angola and remained there as refugees. Now things have changed, the West has a different view of Zaire and is using it to destabilize Angola. It would therefore not be surprising if Angola, on its part, felt forced to withdraw the restraints it had been imposing on those Zairian refugees in northern Angola.

Whether such a policy of retaliation is correct or wise is a matter of judgement; it is nevertheless understandable. But one thing is clear. There is no evidence of Cuban or Soviet involvement in this retaliation. The United States' State Department was at one time reported to have said as much. The Cubans have persistently and convincingly repudiated such allegations.

So Cuba and the Soviet Union went into Angola and are still in Angola for understandable reasons, at the request of the Angolan Government. There is no evidence at all that they have been involved, directly or indirectly, in any fighting within Zaire.

Cuban and Soviet forces are also in Ethiopia, at the request of the Ethiopian Government. The reasons for their presence are well known. They have helped the Ethiopians to defend their country against external aggression. They have not - and nor has the Ethiopian Government - engaged in any fighting outside Ethiopia's borders. And there is some evidence to suggest that the Cuban Government, at any rate, makes a distinction between the fighting in the Ogaden and the fighting in Eritrea.

Apart from those two countries, where else in Africa are there Soviet or Cuban forces? There are a few Cuban and Soviet nationals, and a few Chinese nationals, helping to train the freedom fighters of southern Africa in the use of weapons. Africa gets from communist countries for the liberation struggle in Rhodesia and Namibia. Apart from vague generalities and rumours based on the jackets people wear, there is no serious suggestion that these forces are operating or stationed anywhere else in Africa.

It is, then, on the basis of Soviet and Cuban forces in two African countries that there is a great furore in the West about a so-called Soviet penetration of Africa. And those forces are in those two countries at the request of the legitimate and recognized Governments of the countries concerned, and for reasons which are well known and completely understandable to all reasonable people. Yet Western countries are objecting, and are holding meetings ostensibly about how to defend the freedom of Africa against what they call Soviet penetration.

Let me make it quite clear. Tanzania does not want anyone from outside Africa to govern Africa. We regret, even while we recognize, the occasional necessity for an African Government to ask for military assistance from a non-African country when it is faced with an external threat to its national integrity. We know that a response to such a request by any of the big Powers is determined by what that big Power sees as its own interests. We have been forced to recognize that most of the countries acknowledged as world Powers do not find it beneath their dignity to

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exacerbate existing and genuine African problems and conflicts when they believe they can benefit by doing so. We in Tanzania believe that African countries, separately and through the Organization of African Unity, need to guard against such actions. But we need to guard Africa against being used by any other nation or group of nations. The danger to Africa does not come just from nations in the Eastern bloc. The West still considers Africa to be within its sphere of influence and acts accordingly. Current developments show that greater immediate danger to Africa's freedom comes from nations in that Western bloc.

A Pan-African security force

It might be a good thing if the Organization of African Unity was sufficiently united to establish an African High Command and a Pan-African security force. If having done so, the Organization of African Unity then decided to ask for external support for this force, no one could legitimately object. But the Organization of African Unity has made no such decision. It is highly unlikely that the Organization of African Unity meeting at Khartoum will be able to agree unanimously on the creation of such a military force, or if it did, that it would be able to agree unanimously on which countries to ask for support if that was needed.

Yet, until Africa at the Organization of African Unity has made such a decision, there can be no Pan-African security force which will uphold the freedom of Africa. It is the height of arrogance for anyone else to talk of establishing a Pan-African force to defend Africa. It is quite obvious, moreover, that those who have put forward this idea, and those who seek to initiate such a force, are not interested in the freedom of Africa. They are interested in the domination of Africa.

It was from Paris that this talk of a Pan-African security force has emanated. It is in Paris, and later in Brussels, that there is to be a meeting to discuss this and related matters pertaining to the "freedom" of Africa. The Organization of African Unity meets in Khartoum in July, but we are told that African freedom and its defence is being discussed in Paris and Brussels in June.

There is only one reason why the idea of Europe setting up or initiating a Pan-African security force or an African peace force does not meet with immediate and world-wide amazement and consternation. It is the continuing assumption that Africa is, and must always remain, part of the West European "sphere of influence". This assumption is hardly being questioned yet. Even some African States take it for granted.

We all know the facts of power in the world. But we cannot all be expected to accept without question this new insult to Africa and to Africans. We may be weak, but we are human, we do know when we are being deliberately provoked and insulted.

The French have troops in many countries of Africa. In Chad, in Western Sahara, in Mauritania and now also in Zaire, French forces are engaged in combat against Africans. France continues to occupy Mayotte. But there are no meetings in Washington, or even in Moscow to discuss the threat to Africa's freedom by the

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French penetration of Africa. Nor should there be. But not even Africa, in Africa, discusses the question.

The reason is very simple. It is the continued assumption that it is natural for French troops or Belgian troops or British troops to be in Africa, but it is a threat for troops from any non-member of the Western bloc to be in Africa. A threat to whom? To African freedom or to the domination of Africa by ex-colonial Powers and their allies operated now through more subtle means and with the help of an Africa fifth column? The answers to those questions are very obvious. There have been continued incursions by South Africans and Rhodesia into Angola, Botswana, Zambia and Mozambique. The West has not shown much concern about these; nor have their new-found surrogates in Africa.

When the USSR sent its troops into Czechoslovakia in 1968, Tanzania was one of the many countries which protested. Is it expected that we should not protest when Western Powers send their troops into an African country? These "rescue operations" almost always result in the death of a great number of innocent people and the rescue of a Government. But that is apparently not regarded in Europe as interference in African affairs. Instead, the same country which initiated the military expedition then calls a meeting to discuss, they say, the freedom of Africa.

There should be no mistake. Whatever the official agenda, the Paris or Brussels meetings are not discussing the freedom of Africa. They are discussing the continued domination of Africa and the continued use of Africa by Western Powers. They are intended to be, taken together, a second Berlin Conference.

The real agenda, inside and outside the formal sessions of these meetings, will be concerned with two things. It will be concerned with neo-colonialism in Africa for economic purposes - the real control of Africa and African States. That will be led by the French. It will be concerned also with the use of Africa in the East-West conflict. That will be led by the Americans. These two purposes will be co-ordinated so that they are mutually supportive and the apportionment of the expected benefits - and costs - will be worked out. It is at that point - the division of the spoils - that disputes are most likely to occur.

But the costs may also be higher than the participants anticipate. Tanzania is not the only nationalist country in Africa. There are nationalists everywhere. Sooner or later, and for as long as necessary, Africa will fight against neo-colonialism as it has fought against colonialism. And eventually it will win. Western bloc countries which try to resist the struggle against neo-colonialism need to recognize that it will not be African countries only which will suffer in the process.

Nor will the whole of Africa acquiesce in being used in the East-West confrontation. We are weak, but weak countries have before now caused a great deal of embarrassment and some difficulty for big Powers. If the West wants to prove either to the Russians or to their own people that they are not soft on communism, they should direct their attention to where the Soviet tanks are and the Soviet

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front-lines. They should not invent an excuse to bring the East-West conflict into Africa. For if they succeed in doing that, Africa will suffer and African freedom will suffer. But it may also turn out to be very expensive for those who chose Africa as another site for East-West confrontation.

The African people have the same desire as every other people to be free and to use their freedom for their own benefit. They have the same determination to work and to struggle to that end. They know that no one else is interested in their freedom. This talk in Europe about a Pan-African security force is an insult to Africa and a derogation of African freedom.

It makes little difference if the European initiators of this plan find Africans to do their fighting for them. There were Africans who assisted in the enslavement of fellow Africans and there were Africans who fought against the freedom movements. But we ask those African Governments which may have agreed to participate in this plan to consider well before they go further. We have the Organization of African Unity with all its faults and its incapacities. It is the only Pan-African organization which exists and which is concerned with African freedom. Do not let us split it - and Africa - between those who are militarily allied with the West and those who may in consequence find themselves forced to seek assistance from elsewhere against the African assisted neo-colonialism.

The right to request assistance

We do not deny the principle that any African State has the right to ask for assistance, either military or economic from the country of its choice. On the contrary, we assert that right. Angola, Ethiopia, Chad, Zaire and all of us have that right. It is not for the West to object when Angola asks assistance from the USSR. It is not for the East to object when Djibouti asks for assistance from France. And the requested country always has the right to decide whether to give that assistance.

We do not deny either that all African Governments can be threatened by a few malcontents, possibly financed by external elements, even while they are fully supported by the mass of their people. In such circumstances a Government is surely justified in seeking assistance to overcome a temporary crisis, and the donor country should not be accused of neo-colonialism for responding. Other Governments in Africa have inherited chaotic situations and need somewhat longer-term support while genuinely they try to bring peace to their people and to develop their country in the interests of those people.

But we must reject the principle that external Powers have the right to maintain in power African Governments which are universally recognized to be corrupt or incompetent or a bunch of murderers, when their peoples try to make a change. Africa cannot have its present Governments frozen into position for all time by neo-colonialism or because there are cold wars or ideological conflicts between big Powers. The peoples of an individual African country have as much right to change their corrupt Government in the last half of the twentieth century as in the past,

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the British, the French and Russian peoples had to overthrow their own rotten régimes. The peoples of China waged a long, historic and exemplary struggle against the lackeys and running dogs of imperialism in so-called independent China. Are African peoples to be denied that same right?

Under which category any particular African Government crisis falls may be a matter of genuine difference of opinion. But when the same Government constantly needs to make recourse to external assistance to maintain its control over the country, most people would begin to question whether it really has the backing of its citizens. Those foreign Powers which are really interested in the freedom of Africa and not dominating it will then decide that the time has come to call a halt. And if they do not do so they must not be surprised if the rest of Africa interprets their intervention as an expression of neo-colonialist domination, and as being intended to maintain their control over that part of Africa.

Western Europe and the United States of America are interested in having continued access to the minerals of Africa to sustain their own economies. But that access is not ensured by corruption or support for that corruption. It is endangered by such support. That access is not dependent either upon the ideology espoused by particular African Governments. The present realities of African politics and economics force all African countries to sell their minerals where they can get the best price for them and where they can get in exchange the goods which they themselves need. There is much evidence for both those propositions.

Conclusion

The purpose of this statement is to make it clear that we reject the right of West European countries to dominate Africa, just as much as we would reject attempts by Eastern bloc countries to dominate Africa. In particular, we want it to be clear that Tanzania resents the arrogance and the contempt of those who purport to set up a Pan-African security force or an African peace force on behalf of Africa. Either Africa will do that for itself, or there will be no Pan-African force defending the freedom of Africans, only something calling itself by some name which is an instrument for renewed foreign domination of this continent.

Tanzania repudiates the claim that African freedom can be defended by a security force organized or initiated by European Powers. We shall regard such a force as an instrument of neo-colonialism in our continent.

The purpose of Africa's independence struggles was the freedom of Africa and of Africans. Our independent Governments must not become the instruments through which foreign domination is maintained in a new form. Rather, they must be the instruments through which the peoples of Africa develop themselves and their countries and enlarge their freedom until it means a life of dignity for every individual African. We have a long way to go - all of us - in every African nation. But Tanzania will resist every attempt to circumscribe our development and to prevent it moving in that direction. It will resist any attempt to reassert and strengthen the domination of Africa under cover of a pretence to defend Africa.
