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LETTER DATED 21 MAY 1979 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
BENIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith, for circulation as a Security Council document, in connexion with the complaint of Benin regarding the mercenary aggression of Sunday, 16 January 1977, the text of a statement made by the Head of State during the audience granted to Mr. Robert Galley, the French Minister of Co-operation, during his official visit to Benin.

(Signed) Thomas S. BOYA
Ambassador

Annex

STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT KEREKOU TO MR. ROBERT GALLEY,
THE FRENCH MINISTER OF CO-OPERATION, DURING HIS
OFFICIAL VISIT TO BENIN

COTONOU, 8 MAY 1979

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On behalf of the militant people of Benin, the National Council of the Revolution and the Revolutionary Military Government, we welcome you to the free land of the People's Republic of Benin.

We hope that you will enjoy your stay here in Benin, among the militant men and women of the Beninese Revolution.

Through your current official visit, we are expressing our keen desire to see a frank and sincere dialogue initiated between you and ourselves at all levels and in all fields.

In fact, there is no doubt that the relations of friendship and co-operation between our two peoples and our two States have existed for a very long time and sometimes are even tinged with a certain degree of paternalism which is unacceptable between two sovereign and independent peoples. It is the existence and erroneous interpretation of that paternalism which created a situation of economic instability and socio-cultural alienation in Benin after its accession to nominal independence on 1 August 1960.

Thus our country, the People's Republic of Benin, was pompously and ironically called "the Latin Quarter of Africa" during the colonial period and "the sick child of Africa" during the neo-colonial period.

In these circumstances, you will readily understand that the militant people of Benin, rich in and proud of the glorious age-old traditions of their ancestors, could not resign themselves to vegetating in national indignity and being subjected to political, economic and socio-cultural pressures, whatever their source.

It was therefore to put an end to that abnormal situation once and for all that our National Armed Forces decided to assume their full responsibility in the view of the world and of history by proclaiming the Revolution on 26 October 1972 on behalf of the Beninese people as a whole. That highly patriotic act of our National Armed Forces was warmly welcomed and vigorously applauded by all the dynamic elements of the Beninese nation.

It was that same inflexible determination to achieve national liberation which led us to issue, on 30 November 1972, in the view of the world and of history, our Proclamation-Programme on nation-building, the fundamental basis of which is our new policy of national independence.

On 30 November 1972 we recognized and denounced all the causes and defects of our political instability, our economic stagnation and our socio-cultural alienation. Without any ambiguity, we cited alien domination as the primary source of those causes and defects.

It was for that reason that on 30 November 1972 we also decided to break radically and definitively with our sad and shameful colonial and neo-colonial past by defining clearly our future relations of brotherhood, friendship and co-operation with all peoples and all foreign countries in these terms:

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"The relations of the People's Republic of Benin with foreign countries must henceforth be based on the principles of non-alignment, equality, mutual respect for sovereignty, reciprocal benefits and national dignity".

THE DEFEAT OF THE MERCENARIES OF SUNDAY 16 JANUARY 1977

By means of this clear definition of our relations with fraternal and friendly countries throughout the world, we Beninese intended henceforth to assume full responsibility for our own future in all fields.

But so just and noble a mission of national liberation could not be carried out if confusion existed at the national or international levels. It is for that reason that on 30 November 1974, at Goho, we definitively chose the socialist road to development, based on Marxism-Leninism.

And that is also the reason why on 30 November 1975 we created our avant-garde Party, a new type of party, the Party of the exploited social classes and strata in Benin, the Party of the People's Revolution of Benin, and established the People's Republic of Benin.

Since then, all the objective conditions have been created to enable all Beninese people to regain confidence in themselves and give free rein to their creative genius and all their energy so as to tackle all the tasks of nation-building with courage and determination.

At a time when our militant people expected all their friends to give them firm political, economic and socio-cultural support with a view to the accomplishment of the huge task of nation-building which they had just assumed freely in full exercise of their sovereignty, they were basely and treacherously made the victims of an armed imperialist aggression aimed at colonial reconquest on 16 January 1977, regrettably with the guilty complicity of certain countries which according to the dictates of history and reason should have been included among their best friends.

You will readily understand that the relations of brotherhood, friendship and co-operation between the People's Republic of Benin and the countries whose citizens had taken an active part in the ignoble and barbarous aggression of Sunday 16 January 1977 were seriously impaired.

As you are now fully aware, the horde of mercenaries recruited, financed and armed by the enemies of the Beninese people and their Democratic People's Revolution included a large number of French citizens. What is even more serious and unacceptable is the fact that the leader of that horde of mercenaries is a French colonel called Bourgeaud, alias Colonel Maurin, alias Bob Denard, an international mercenary who is constantly boasting to the press that he has given our people a slap and is actively preparing to give them a punch on the next occasion, on express instructions from his masters.

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In view of the silence of the competent French authorities regarding such statements by a French citizen, internationally known as a mercenary, we in Benin wonder whether the armed aggression aimed at the colonial reconquest of our country did not have the moral and material support of certain French authorities occupying a high place in the French State hierarchy.

Moreover, all the official representations by the Beninese Government vis-à-vis the French Government aimed at arranging for the extradition of the French mercenaries so that they may be judged by the competent Beninese courts have thus far elicited no favourable reaction.

For that reason, we hope that your current visit will enable us to understand the point of view of the French Government regarding these serious events, which caused our people to mourn and resulted in enormous human and material damage to our country, the People's Republic of Benin.

In any event, the Revolutionary Military Government, on behalf of the militant revolutionary people of our country, the People's Republic of Benin, has not failed to denounce publicly and condemn firmly in international forums, such as the Security Council, the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and the movement of non-aligned countries, all countries, no matter how friendly, whose citizens basely, treacherously and ignobly participated in the imperialist armed aggression aimed at the colonial reconquest of our country, Benin, on Sunday 16 January 1977.

We must, however, acknowledge that despite the deterioration in the political climate between your country, the French Republic, and our country, the People's Republic of Benin, our relations of co-operation have not been interrupted, although they have suffered from a certain marked stagnation.

We therefore sincerely hope that your present visit to our country is a sign of the French Government's desire to see our relations of friendship and co-operation in all fields return to normal, on new, sound and solid foundations. Those are the wishes we express on behalf of the militant Beninese people as a whole and their Democratic People's Revolution.

Once again, we welcome you to the free land of Benin.

Ready for the Revolution!

The struggle continues.
