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

Letter dated 26 June 1978 from the Permanent Representative of  
the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations  
addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you a statement by the Soviet Government concerning the policy of the Western Powers in Africa.

I request that it be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 24 of the preliminary list.

O. TROYANOVSKY  
Permanent Representative of the USSR  
to the United Nations

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ANNEX

Statement by the Soviet Government

The growth of tension on the African continent resulting from the aggressive actions of a group of leading NATO countries, headed by the United States, is causing legitimate concern to peace-loving States. The armed conflict in the Horn of Africa, the constant military provocations against Angola and interventions in Zaire, the establishment of so-called "inter-African" but in fact anti-African armed forces under the command of NATO officers, and the coup carried out by hirelings of the colonialists in the Comoros Islands are only a few of the acts of imperialism committed in the recent past alone. They show that an attack is being mounted against national liberation forces in Africa. The colonialists wish to reimpose their diktat on the African peoples, although their cause is clearly hopeless.

In the circumstances, the Soviet Government feels it must state its point of view on the current problems concerning the situation in and around Africa.

1. Enormous changes have taken place in Africa over the past quarter century. The colonial empires have collapsed, and the question of eliminating the last enclaves of colonialism and racism on African soil has become a practical one. Substantial political and socio-economic progress is taking place in the liberated African countries, and the new States are steadily getting stronger. A number of African countries have started along the road of progressive social development, choosing a socialist alignment. The role and importance of the countries of Africa in the world arena are growing, and their contribution to the struggle for détente, the strengthening of peace and the confirmation of the principles of equality in political and economic relations between States is becoming ever-more weighty.

The Soviet Union looks on these changes with deep sympathy. The USSR and other countries of the socialist community have spoken out decisively in support of the just struggle of the African peoples, and continue to do so. It was on the initiative of the socialist countries that the General Assembly in 1960 adopted the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. The development of our State's relations with the African countries is determined by a genuine community of interests concerning the basic problems of today. In its relations with the States of Africa, the Soviet Union invariably observes the principles of solidarity with the struggle of peoples for independence and freedom, for national and social progress, genuine equality, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs and mutually beneficial co-operation. This principled basis for relations is of lasting importance.

2. But the forces of imperialism, racism and reaction are loth to reconcile themselves with the positive changes in Africa. They wish to carry on exploiting the African peoples and the natural wealth of the continent; they continue to think, in colonialist terms, of "spheres of influence" and still refuse to see the Africans as equal partners.

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In the past, too, the imperialists and their accomplices have often organized military adventures in Africa, provoked conflicts between States and encouraged the rise of separatism in order to weaken the countries of Africa concerned. They have on their consciences many coups d'état and conspiracies against Governments, notorious "secret operations", acts of physical violence against such famed African sons of freedom as Patrice Lumumba, Mariam Nguabi, Edward Mondlane, Amilcar Cabral, and so on.

Imperialist intervention in African affairs has now taken on a particularly cynical and dangerous character. This is particularly true of the operation in Shaba (Zaire), which was carried out for the sake of maintaining control by the Western monopolies over the copper, cobalt, uranium, diamonds and other natural resources of Zaire and to protect the military, strategic and mercenary interests of the West. The example of Zaire shows that the imperialist Powers will resort to direct military action, using their armed forces against Africans, and thereby reviving the worst periods of colonialist plunder. They clearly want to resume their role as the policemen of Africa and the arbiters of the fate of the African peoples, although no one has chosen them for any such task.

A new and dangerous development in Africa is the move by leading Western Powers towards collective and aggressive military and political activities. The leading role in carrying out these activities belongs to the United States of America, which makes extensive use of the mechanism of NATO for its purposes. The danger lies in the attempt to extend the sphere of influence of this aggressive bloc to Africa. The latest session of the NATO Council in Washington and the meeting of the five leading NATO States in Paris were devoted to precisely this topic. Internal events in Zaire were for the West only a pretext to draw up the plans, which NATO has long been preparing, for creating a "quick reaction mechanism" against changes on the African continent which do not suit the Western imperialist Powers. What threat such actions represent to the African peoples, and not only to them, is clear.

Ominous efforts are also being made by certain NATO countries to patch together pro-imperialist military and political groupings in western Africa and the region of the Red Sea with the clear intention of affiliating these groupings to the NATO bloc.

The dispatch to Zaire of so-called "inter-African forces" on the initiative of those same countries serves to broaden imperialist interference in the affairs of Africa. The façade of "Africanization" given to NATO operations in Zaire by involving military divisions from certain African countries in them can fool no one. The "inter-African forces" act under the control and in the interests of particular NATO Powers, and any attempts to legitimize them may have dangerous consequences for all African countries.

The intervention in Zaire is clearly also intended to exert direct pressure on the patriotic forces of Zimbabwe and Namibia, the so-called "front-line" States of Africa, and to force a neo-colonialist solution to the questions of Rhodesia and Namibia. The debate which has opened in Britain on the possibility of carrying

out similar operations to protect the interests of the West in Rhodesia is very indicative in this respect.

We have, therefore, a new phase in the policy of those Powers for which the colonialist and racist order is, so to speak, "balm to the soul" -- a policy of taking the heat out of the anti-imperialist struggle in Africa by whatever means are necessary, not only maintaining but strengthening their positions there, and directing the development of African States towards a framework of neo-colonialist "partnership" acceptable to them. This is what really lies behind the hypocritical professions by certain high-placed Western figures of their desire to see Africa free from foreign domination and to respect the desires of its peoples.

3. An integral part of these efforts is the unbridled anti-Soviet campaign which has been unleashed in the leading NATO countries. The hope is clearly to disseminate distrust of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, isolate Africa from its natural allies and leave the African countries alone to face the united forces of neo-colonialism and imperialist reaction. During this campaign, the Soviet Union, Cuba and other countries of the socialist community are being subjected to calumny of the most brazen kind.

In a malicious attempt to justify NATO intervention in Zaire, which the Soviet Union decisively condemns, the myth is being spread of the involvement of the USSR, Cuba and a number of African countries in the events in Zaire, although Soviet official statements and statements by the Governments of other countries have already several times demonstrated the blatant untruth of this version.

Claims that assistance from the USSR and Cuba to certain African countries, mainly Angola and Ethiopia, and the national liberation movements in southern Africa constitute a threat to peace and stability on the continent and undermine the process of international détente are entirely without foundation. The legitimacy of such assistance is established by the Charter of the United Nations, and by the decisions of this Organization and other authoritative international forums. There is a fundamental difference between the socialist countries' co-operation with the States and peoples of Africa and the armed intervention in the internal affairs of Africa practised by the Western countries in their own narrow and mercenary interests. Co-operation by the socialist countries serves the just cause of the liberation of peoples from racist and colonialist servitude and the defence of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States from external attack. The Soviet people is rightly proud of the noble aims of such co-operation.

Détente certainly does not presuppose the artificial restraint of the objective processes of historical development. It does not guarantee safety for anti-popular, rotten and venal régimes or for any special rights and privileges inherited from the colonial past or obtained through undercover deals and agreements. Still less does it give any licence to suppress the just struggle of peoples for their national liberation and social progress or meddle in their internal affairs. But the imperialist circles wish to gain just such licence.

While hypocritically referring to the "indivisibility of détente" and the need to extend it to all regions of the globe, the NATO countries, and especially the United States, are working in exactly the opposite direction through their activities in Africa.

Détente could only gain if the last enclaves of racism and colonialism, and the burdensome and loathsome heritage of colonial domination which still dogs the progress of the African peoples and gives rise to international tension, were to be eliminated from the world as quickly as possible.

4. The Western Powers have a direct accomplice in the racist régime of Pretoria, which itself poses a threat to international peace and, with the co-operation of NATO, is strenuously building up its military power and attempting to gain access to nuclear weapons.

The changes which have taken place in Africa are also not to the liking of the leaders in Peking, who, motivated by chauvinistic, hegemonistic and personal interests, would like to see the continent become an arena for serious international complications and conflicts. The Peking leadership, together with NATO and South Africa, is actively stirring up tension in Africa. It has joined forces with imperialism and the forces of aggression and reaction, neo-colonialism and racism, and has at the same time entered the ranks of those who oppose not only the socialist countries but the entire national liberation movement, the unity of the African peoples and the struggle of the African countries for their independence and freedom against imperialist domination. That was the situation during the events in Angola and the Horn of Africa. The treacherous role of Peking was fully revealed also during the NATO intervention in Zaire.

5. The efforts of the former colonizers to return to Africa with weapons in hand under the pretence of defending Africa from the Soviet and Cuban "threat" has aroused the concern of everyone, principally the African peoples. The latter rightly see in this action the real danger of a restoration of the colonial order, the pitting of the punitive forces of imperialism against the forces of social progress, the establishment on the continent of neo-colonialist conditions based on exploitation and pillage and attempts to undermine progressive régimes. All this is aimed at undermining the political and economic independence of African States.

The African peoples see in the actions of Western imperialist circles an attempt to weaken at all costs and, if possible, even destroy the unity of the African countries and thus divide them under pressure. Similarly, the very existence of the Organization of African Unity is threatened, an organization which is an important instrument in the struggle to achieve the common interests of the African Governments. It is no coincidence that many African leaders have decisively condemned the imperialist military intervention in Zaire and the attempts to establish on the continent groups which are directly or indirectly linked to NATO.

The attempt to solve African problems behind the backs of Africans is rightly seen as an insult to Africa and as a sign of unwillingness to take into account Africa's increasing role in the international arena.

It can be said with assurance that the peoples of Africa will not allow themselves to be misled by colonizers who, speculating hypocritically on the slogan of "African solidarity", are in fact frantically enlisting accomplices and supporters of their policies among the puppet and anti-popular régimes.

In opposition to these intrigues, independent Africa calls upon genuine African solidarity, the united will of freedom-loving peoples, their determination to defend their countries' independence and untrammelled internal development.

6. The policy of the Soviet Union as regards Africa is clear and consistent. In the developing countries, as everywhere else, the Soviet Union supports forces defending the cause of national independence, social progress and democracy. The Soviet Union regards these forces as its allies in the struggle. It does not thereby seek any advantage for itself, nor is it striving to gain any concessions, achieve political domination or solicit military bases.

The Soviet Union is completely on the side of the African peoples in their struggle against the preservation in any form of the vestiges of colonialism and racism in Africa and against neo-colonialism. It is therefore natural that the Soviet Union has consistently called for and continues to call for the elimination of the racist régime in Rhodesia and the transfer of full power to the people of Zimbabwe represented by the Patriotic Front, for the immediate and complete withdrawal of South Africa from Namibia and the transfer of power to SWAPO, the genuine representative of the people of the country, and for the elimination of the system of apartheid in South Africa.

Basing its position on the respect of the right of all peoples to determine their course of development independently, the Soviet Union decisively condemns the military and political interference of imperialism in the internal affairs of independent African States, whose sovereignty and territorial integrity is thereby impaired. The military, interventionist activities of the imperialist Powers in various parts of the African continent are a challenge to all of independent Africa, to the goals of the Organization of African Unity and the principles of its charter, and a challenge to the United Nations. Such actions, together with the formation of so-called "inter-African forces" by the NATO bloc, serve merely to set Africans against Africans as a means of using Africans themselves as an instrument of reprisal against the African liberation movements.

The Soviet Union consistently calls for the speedy elimination of hotbeds of tension on the African continent and the settlement of existing differences between African States. It is against attempts to set African countries against each other and to incite fratricidal conflicts and wars.

The aggressive circles of the West must bear full responsibility for the possible consequences of whipping up tension on the African continent. The provocative actions of Western circles and their accomplices have been condemned by the world opinion and the Soviet people. The independent African States and the progressive and peace-loving forces of the entire world must maintain vigilance and vigorously resist such activities.

In the interests of peace and development in Africa, an immediate halt must be brought to imperialist interference in the affairs of African countries and respect must be accorded to their rights to free and independent existence and the maintenance of relations on an equal footing with all States in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

The Soviet Union, for its part, will, as before, do everything in its power to ensure that the situation develops precisely in this direction and it is ready to join forces with all who share the same noble aims.

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