

African Front-Line States Prepare For War; Will Europe Intervene?

The presidents of the front-line states facing white-ruled Africa, led by Tanzania's Julius Nyerere, have arrived at the conclusion that unless Britain intervenes to remove Ian Smith, and resolve the Rhodesia crisis, war is inevitable and immediately imminent. In response, the front-line is now making the political and economic preparations for the conflict.

The Tanzanian government arrived at this determination, according to a reliable source, in the aftermath of the African trip of Jimmy Carter's United Nations Representative Andrew Young. Young's statements and actions were designed to undo the Africans' political accomplishments of the last four months, their creation of the Patriotic Front coalition of Rhodesian nationalists and their own commitment to unified action against the Smith regime. Young's proposal to convene a "unity" meeting of the various black Rhodesian nationalist factions — including both agents and honest nationalists — would in effect destroy the Patriotic Front, refactionalizing the Zimbabwe nationalist movement.

The seeming naiveté of Young's proposal has not deceived Tanzanian analysts, who have also determined that Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith is taking his orders directly from the Trilateral Administration and is not the independent lunatic he pretends to be.

African Disruptions

Washington is also attempting to split up the front-line and other African states, such as Nigeria where Young had some small success in peddling his negotiating wares with Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo. Particular emphasis is being placed on isolating Tanzania, both politically and economically.

The government of Kenya has nationalized without compensation assets owned by the East African Community (EAC), of which Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania are the members. This action, peculiar on the part of the capitalist Kenyan government which constantly scorns Tanzania's socialism, deprives Tanzania of airline service and a good part of their railway rolling stock. President Nyerere this week finally retaliated by closing his country's border with Kenya. From Uganda, Idi Amin on Feb. 14 accused Nyerere of "subverting" his dishevelled kingdom and threatened to invade Tanzania. Zambian President Kaunda — whose country's strategy position bordering Rhodesia is crucial to the front-line's success — is showing signs of wavering from the front-line states' solid front. To top it off, the Carter regime has decided to sink to the level of gunboat diplomacy, scheduling a visit to Kenya from the nuclear powered aircraft carrier, USS Enterprise and its accompanying missile-studded flotilla, which are now patrolling the Indian Ocean.

Front-Line Preparations for War

As the Tanzanians see it, they may be able to depend on

the British and the rest of Europe to call Carter's war bluff and resolve this situation by force. Barring that, they know they can depend on the Soviets if they are forced into war. With this much maneuvering room, the five front-line states — Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia — have scheduled a strategy session for later this week to coordinate their preparations. The agenda includes military preparations and the general political and economic coordination of policy. Nigerian External Affairs Commissioner Col. Joseph Garba will also be at the meeting, and it is expected that despite Young's trip, he will reaffirm his government's pledge to dispatch troops from the 150,000-man Nigerian army to help defend the front-line states from Rhodesian attack, already at high levels of combat against neighboring Mozambique.

Tanzania has already undertaken to streamline for war, with a reshuffling of the Cabinet — a reshuffling which extended into the Army as well — to place Nyerere's closest lieutenants in the proverbial battle stations. Prime Minister Rashidi Kawawa, a national *political* organizer, has been appointed Defense Minister; Nyerere's former press secretary Ben Mkapa has been recalled from the Ambassadorship to Nigeria to take over the Foreign Ministry. Mkapa is also a close personal friend of Mozambique's President Samora Machel. Nyerere has also dispatched additional troops to Mozambique to reinforce the Tanzanian units already there trying to prevent the almost daily Rhodesian raids on that country.

A third ministerial shift in Tanzania portends what the *London Observer* Feb. 13 approvingly described as the "beginnings of a new and more powerful economic and political bloc in Central Africa," the appointment of Edwin Mtei as Finance Minister. Until his appointment, Mtei was Secretary-General of the East African Community. With the EAC probably defunct, Mtei is the logical choice to supervise the already begun political-economic integration of the front-line states, a precondition for their success in facing the Rhodesia and South Africa. Tanzania has concluded currency agreements with Mozambique and the nearby island nation of Madagascar whereby they will accept each other's currencies for trade. A similar arrangement is expected soon between Tanzania and Zambia.

The other politically solid front-line presidents, Mozambique and Angola's Agostinho Neto, have paralleled the Tanzanian war preparations in their own countries. The ruling Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) has just completed its third party congress where the party was reorganized as a disciplined cadre organization rather than the politically nebulous united front it had been before independence. Angolan President Neto, immediately after meeting and clashing with Young in Nigeria, met with Patriotic Front leaders Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo, pledging them his support in the Rhodesian armed struggle.

Angola is also in the middle of a political tightening-up process similar to Mozambique's, exemplified by the founding of a national cadre school early this month.

It is now assured that the southern African delegations to the first Afro-Arab summit meeting in Cairo March 7 will go there as a united body. This will enable them to lay out one political strategy for the liberation of southern Africa and demand support on that basis.

Unconditional political, military, and economic support is already forthcoming from several key non-aligned countries and the socialist bloc. Soviet President Podgorny has scheduled a tour of the region for the second week in March, during which he will be briefed on the front-line strategy and their aid requirements to carry it out. Podgorny's visit follows visits by Yugoslavian Politburo member and Foreign Minister Mil Minić and East German SED politburo member Werner Lamberz, who reiterated the "unbreakable alliance" between the SED and FRELIMO. Cuban Premier Fidel Castro has increased military support to the Namibian liberation movement SWAPO and has offered to send troops to defend Mozambique if this becomes necessary.

The European Factor

The determining variable in the situation is the political will of Britain — and other European countries. If they decide to move, then a catastrophic war, probably leading to World War III, can be avoided. If they don't, then the Africans will be forced into a war which they must fight, not over the moral issue alone, but because they cannot survive if they continue to tolerate the

constant military threat and economic domination by South Africa.

This realization appears to have sunk in in Europe, which can afford the war no more than the Africans. The British have, according to an informed source, drastically increased their pressure on South African Prime Minister Vorster to the point where observers feel he is no longer willing to support Rhodesia all the way. Discussions have also quietly been resumed on the possibility of sending in Commonwealth troops to remove the Smith clique. Britons are apologetic about their failure to defy Carter so far and will certainly refuse to be a party to any red baiting crisis-mongering if the front-line is forced to call on the socialist bloc for assistance. Reporting on the incessant Rhodesian raids on Mozambique, the *London Times* Feb. 10 almost encouraged the Cubans to intervene. "No country can allow itself to go on being raped like this," said the *Times*. "Eventually Mozambique will have to seek outside help."

Important political forces in the rest of Europe are lining up solidly behind the front-line states, in defiance of the U.S. The West German daily *Suddeutsche Zeitung* Feb. 15 charged that South Africa is preparing a blitzkrieg into neighboring Mozambique and stated that European intervention in southern Africa as in the Middle East is "crucial." Going one step further, Italian Deputy Foreign Minister Ratti met with Joshua Nkomo Feb. 16 and in a communiqué endorsed the Patriotic Front and called for a *rapid* peaceful installment of majority rule in Rhodesia.

Europeans Maintain Dangerous Silence On Mideast

The European Economic Community group failed to assert a political policy independent of the U.S. Carter Administration at the conclusion of the Euro-Arab dialogue meeting in Tunisia Feb. 14. The final EEC communiqué neglected any mention of the Geneva Peace Conference, the Palestine Liberation Organization's (PLO) legitimacy to represent the Palestinians' right to statehood. The EEC statement also refrained from endorsing broader Arab political positions, including Arab-sector representation at this year's Belgrade Mediterranean Security Conference, the setting of a date for a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of both sides, and the establishment of a "Euro-Arab institution" at the United Nations.

The EEC statement only went so far as to recognize the "danger resulting from persistence of the present impasse" in the Middle East and the "legitimate rights" of the Palestinians to "express their national identity." As expected, it called for the establishment of institutions to study the "transfer of technology" to the Arab sector, and for the establishment of large-scale agricultural development projects in Somalia and Sudan with European technological assistance.

According to a highly-placed banking source in Vienna, the Arab states were "deeply-disappointed" by the European lack of resolve in Tunisia and are increasingly convinced that the Middle East is a consequence plunging unavoidably toward war. The source warned, for example, that from here on, the Saudi Arabians will use the oil weapon in a limited way, "tailoring oil price rise decisions to European political decisions in respect to the Mideast — a "nice warning to Europe." In interviews, with the Saudi press last weekend, Saudi Foreign Minister Saud el-Faisal affirmed this intention, declaring that the Saudis intend to use oil "in the service of the Arab cause."

In its government newspaper *El Moudjahid* Feb. 14-15, Algeria castigated "certain European countries" for refusing to do anything that would "indispose or upset" the U.S.

A related PLO document, issued immediately prior to the Tunisia meeting, which called upon Western Europe to play an independent, constructive role in the Middle East situation, was published by Austria's *Arbeiter Zeitung* newspaper.

Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, otherwise at the