

Fidel, USSR Seek To Counter French-U.S. Aggression Tactics

Ethiopian Head of State Mengistu Haile Mariam and Soviet leaders discussed a comprehensive plan for settling tensions on the Horn of northeast Africa, during a visit to Moscow by the Ethiopian leader. Ethiopia and the Soviet Union also signed an "agreement of friendship" during Mengistu's visit.

In opening an initiative to cool hot-spots in Africa, the Soviet Union is warning the Carter Administration and its French adjunct under President Giscard d'Estaing that the continuous destabilization of Africa in search of a showdown with the Soviet Union will not be tolerated.

In an interview in the French magazine *Afrique-Asie*, to appear May 13, Cuban President Fidel Castro denounced U.S. and French-sponsored plans underway in Zaire for aggression against Angola. Dr. Castro maintained that if these aggressive forces try to attack Angola, under whatever pretext, they will "receive a lesson which they will never forget."

Podgorny Hits Divide and Conquer

In a May 4 speech during Mengistu's visit, Soviet President Nikolai Podgorny charged that "imperialism is heating up national hatred, provocations and blackmail and setting countries against each other to divide and conquer. But this is playing with fire. It leads to dangerous conflicts and is therefore a serious threat to peace and security." He called the creation of hot spots "one of the links in general imperialist strategy to strangle the African people's aspirations to unity and social and economic progress."

Podgorny specifically denounced the deliberate exacerbation of that problem of the secessionist movement in Ethiopia's coastal province of Eritrea: the national question is "a complex problem which the enemies of Ethiopia want to use for their purposes..." Podgorny charged that "the imperialists are using certain Arab countries — notably Saudi Arabia," to heat up the already bloody war in Eritrea making a negotiated solution impossible, and to create a "closed military-political bloc in the Red Sea."

Podgorny's charge was repeated in the London *Observer* May 8, which noted that the Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt are openly backing the Eritrean secessionists, "possibly backed by the NATO countries."

The Soviet President also denounced the "conduct of naval maneuvers near the Ethiopian coast..." referring to the presence of the French aircraft carrier *Clemenceau* accompanied, according to some reports, by 18 other French warships. This fleet, and 6,000 extra troops, were dispatched recently to the French colony-naval base of Djibouti, at the mouth of the Red Sea between Ethiopia and Somalia, by French president Giscard d'Estaing.

France's gunboat diplomacy can only increase the tensions between Ethiopia and Somalia surrounding the

June 27 independence of the colony. The Ethiopians fear that Somalia will annex Djibouti because of the large number of ethnic Somalis living there. Somalia fears the same from Ethiopia because the latter country's only railroad line to the sea runs through Djibouti.

Both countries, however, have long foresworn annexation. The French military presence is in line with France's intervention in Zaire last month and Giscard's proposal for the creation of an anti-communist "intervention force" made up of units from various African right-wing states and backed by France.

Ethiopia's Peace Plan

In his discussions with the Soviets, according to the British newspapers the *Observer* and the *Sunday Times* May 8, Mengistu offered sovereignty to the province of Eritrea, provided they maintain specified federal links with Ethiopia and guaranteed access to the sea. He also asked for Soviet backing to open negotiations with the Eritrean liberation movements. The Ethiopian leader offered to conduct a referendum in the Ogaden desert provinces between Ethiopia and Somalia, over which both countries claim sovereignty, although it is juridically part of Ethiopia, and offered further guarantees to respect the independence of Djibouti.

The successful resolution of these initiatives would wipe out differences between Somalia and Ethiopia, both pro-socialist countries with good relations with the Soviet Union, opening the way for economic cooperation between the two and strengthening the progressive bloc in Africa.

It is likely that in pursuing this strategy, Ethiopia, Somalia and the Soviets will appeal to African and other non-aligned countries for help in the settlement, particularly Tanzania and Yugoslavia, both of which have already made efforts to solve the Somali-Ethiopian tensions. Yugoslavian President Tito met with the Yugoslav Praesidium last week to discuss Africa in general after the return of a deputy foreign minister from Ethiopia. Tito issued a statement afterward attacking "foreign influences... directed toward breaking up the unity of the African nations and the non-aligned movement as a whole," according to the Yugoslav daily *Vjesnik* May 6.

Fidel: We Will Defend Angola With All Our Means

Following are excerpts of an interview with Cuban President Fidel Castro with the Paris-based magazine Afrique-Asie. The excerpts were released by the Cuban news agency Prensa Latina.

Paris, May 6 (PL) — Any aggression against Angola will

receive an energetic response, warned the President of the Council of State of Cuba, Fidel Castro, in a long interview given to the review *Afrique-Asie*.

The Cuban leader said that he is not ignorant of the fact that plans exist for aggression against Angola under the pretext of the so-called "right of pursuit."

"If these aggressive forces dare to attack Angola, under whatever pretext they use, they will learn a lesson they will never forget. We will defend Angola with all the means at our disposal," he said.

"We understand perfectly," said Castro, "that Mobutu repeats that Cubans are participating in these confrontations because his regime is faced with a desperate political, economic and social situation. He is forced to do this in order to justify his appeal for aid from the imperialists.

"The struggle developing in Zaire," the Cuban President reaffirmed, "constitutes a purely internal question of that country. We do not practice the politics of lies, duplicity and deceit.

"The strict and rigorous truth," said Fidel Castro, "is

that we have not participated neither in the training nor in the organization of cadre of the revolutionary forces which started the struggle in Shaba."...

Referring to the general situation in Africa, Fidel Castro said that excellent opportunities exist to be able to pass from tribalism to socialism.

He said he considered it necessary and indispensable to create an anti-imperialist front in the continent, which would group the most progressive governments....

"We also feel," he said, "that the success and consolidation of the Ethiopian revolution have an enormous importance for Africa...."

Speaking of the present contradictions between capitalism and socialism, Fidel Castro specified that these conflicts could not be resolved by way of war.

"We don't live in the era of the bow and arrow," he said, "but in a nuclear era, when a war could wipe out the entire world.

"In one way or another, the regimes with different social systems must learn to coexist," declared the President of the Council of State of Cuba.

Mondale And Young Play Amos 'n Andy In Africa

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations and Trilateral Commission member Andrew Young arrived in Abidjan, Ivory Coast this week on the first stop of an African tour in which Young will peddle from one country to the next the Carter Administration "soft line" to Africa. Young's particular target is Nigeria, the most powerful African state.

With support work from the U.S. East Coast press which claims that the Administration is still figuring out its African policy, Young asserted in Abidjan: "As we attempt to put together an African policy, the State Department felt it was important for the policy not only to come from Washington but to come from Africa itself."

Young has further earned his "soft" credentials by the impolite threats from the Republic of South Africa government that he may not be permitted to visit there. Young wants to meet with black leaders in South Africa. The UN Ambassador had been invited to South Africa by Wall Street-associated mining magnate Harry Oppenheimer. Prior to his arrival, Young will attend a conference in Mozambique which will also be attended by southern African liberation movements.

While Young appears as Jimmy Carter's nice guy, the hawkish looking Walter Mondale, also a member of the Trilateral Commission, has declared that he is "enraged" over Young's activities in Africa. Mondale claims that Young's actions will make it more difficult for Mondale to get South Africa to make concessions and support a Rhodesia settlement, implying that if Young keeps it up South Africa's war party will go out of control. Mondale will meet with South African Prime Minister Vorster in Vienna May 19.

The Carter Administration hopes that the frontline African states will splinter in the face of the threat of

military invasion from South Africa on the one hand (Mondale), and friendly protection from the U.S. on the other (Young). The pro-Soviet MPLA government of Angola would thus be isolated and primed for attack.

The South Africans have not hesitated to foster the idea that they are fully prepared for war.

South African Foreign Minister Roelof Botha declared this week: "I am prepared to die for our right to exist," and urged the population to stop bickering about apartheid rules and face up to the threat of a race war. "if American demands from us majority rule in South Africa, then in my opinion it is misleading itself. We are not Mississippi, Georgia or Alabama. We can make changes to eliminate racial friction, but not in a hundred years will we negotiate our own destruction." Threatening to break away from the West, he said if majority rule is demanded by the U.S., "then there is no hope of success in our negotiations with them — we go it alone and we will stand alone."

Further indication of South African intentions to seemingly break with the West and go to war are reliable reports that there have been high level talks between South Africa and the People's Republic of China. Linked by their common anti-Moscow paranoia, a turn toward Peking is considered to be a desperation move in anticipation of an imminent break with the west.

Anglo-American Plan for Rhodesia Announced

British Foreign Secretary David Owen announced on May 11 the Anglo-American plan for achieving a settlement in Rhodesia, going out of his way to emphasize that he and U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance were in