

Carter Goes For Showdown With USSR In Africa

ZAIRE

The Carter Administration is rapidly completing arrangements for a Vietnam-style confrontation with the Soviet Union in central Africa. The spreading and ongoing internal revolt in Zaire which began in Shaba province (formerly Katanga) is to be the pretext for the showdown. The generally detested Zairean regime under Mobutu is asking Carter for more and more military aid to stop the rebellion, according to U.S. State Dept. spokesman Fred Brown and officials of the Carter Administration, "spurning formal consultation with Congress, have already made a tentative decision to send fresh 'non-lethal' military supplies to Zaire." according to press reports. The aid is called essential to deal with what Mobutu and the Carter Administration call an invasion from Angola by Katangan gendarmes, former members of Moise Tshombe's army who have been in exile in Angola since 1963. And the essential element in the scenario: Carter and Mobutu both claim that the Soviet Union and Cuba are behind the long-standing unrest in Shaba.

Laying out the Carter policy, a prominent Washington-based thinktanker said March 22 that "the Soviet Union is making strategic inroads in Africa, which has priority over the Mideast for the Carter Administration. If Carter does not take an unambiguous line on Africa," he continued, "Carter will be faced with another Angola crisis." He went on to predict an "explosion" in Africa.

The goal of this new Vietnam is to toss the Soviets and Cubans out of Africa. In a just-released report by Nelson Rockefeller's Commission on Critical Choices, the policy is made plain: "The U.S. should do everything to back the Cubans down by forcing the Soviets to withdraw their support for Cuban actions in southern Africa." The report saw a crisis as the only way to accomplish this: "The Soviet Union and Cubans won't change until confronted by the U.S."

By alleging that the internal disturbances are the result of a so-called invasion from Angola, backed by the Soviets and Cubans, the report made Angola the centerpiece of the confrontation.

That Zaire's internal rebellion is being deliberately made into a superpower confrontation was made clear by a major New York bank's Zaire desk officer who last week said that not only was confrontation inevitable, but it would happen quickly: "There are a number of people who want to force this confrontation. It may be a good

time for Carter to show his decision-making powers. It is a test of U.S. will."

Indicative of the tack taken by Cyrus Vance and Zbigniew Brzezinski, syndicated columnists Evans and Novak March 21 predicted "the fall from power of Zaire President Mobutu Sese Seko whose hapless 'army' cannot begin to turn back the Soviet-armed, Soviet-supplied Katangan troops." Without outside intervention "...Zaire, or at least its vital copper-rich heartland, seems doomed to go the way of Angola..."

Carter Begins Military Buildup

While Carter is already sending in military equipment and arranging for other countries to send in arms, he has reportedly told the Pentagon to prepare for many more airlifts. According to a senior White House official: "We are explaining the gravity of the situation to leaders of Congress. We are telling them why there will have to be an air armada for an operation to lift war materials from France, Belgium and America into a friendly African nation threatened with economic ruin by a Kremlin-sponsored adventure." The official was explicit — the crisis is intended to restore the flagging ability of the Carter Administration to impose policy on Africa: "If we roll over and play dead in Zaire it must destroy our prestige from the Horn to the Cape of Africa."

France and Belgium have already sent planeloads of arms and military equipment to Zaire, and the French have rushed in Mirage jets that were ordered by Zaire previously. Denials of having sent aid by the French government have been dismissed by the French press as *pro forma* and due to a desire to maintain diplomatic relations with the Angolan government.

However, since direct U.S. intervention to prop up long-time U.S. puppet Mobutu would be so clearly an "imperialist" move that it would cause most African countries to line up on the Soviet side of a confrontation, that approach is highly unlikely. Rather, Vance and Brzezinski are priming the abjectly servile Nigerian government to intervene into what it calls a "Zaire-Angola dispute," to carry out the wishes of the Carter Administration under the guise of African unity.

Nigerian External Affairs Minister Joseph Garba said March 22 that "We and other African countries are trying to see if we cannot get Angola and Zaire to straighten things out among themselves." Garba, reportedly eager to intervene, met with Secretary Vance and Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, William Schaufele a day earlier, and with U.S. United Nations Ambassador Andrew Young on the day he made the statement.

The *Washington Post* of March 24 described the Nigerian intervention as designed to get the Cubans out of Angola: "If Nigeria is successful in mediating the conflict, Angola in turn would expect the U.S. to move toward normalizing relations with it," which the U.S. has so far refused to do explicitly because of the Cuban presence. Adopting an air of impartiality, Garba has already asked both the U.S. and the Soviet Union not to provide arms that could lead to a spread in the fighting in Zaire. Garba said this week that Nigeria does not want to see a super-power confrontation in Africa, thus opening the way for Nigeria, which has the largest army in Africa, to send a so-called peace-keeping force in to prevent a super-power confrontation. Nigeria would be policing southern Africa for the Carter Administration.

Secretary Vance may have difficulty, however, in lining up other African countries behind the Nigerian effort. Everybody in Africa knows that Mobutu has always functioned as a direct extension of the U.S. State Department. This raises the possibility that it may be necessary to sacrifice Mobutu for someone who appears to be more acceptable to Zaireans, a move reminiscent of the Diem assassination in Vietnam.

Today's *Washington Post* goes out of its way to describe how much the Shaba population loves the Tshombe family, while they hate Mobutu, who persecutes the Tshombe family. Moise Tshombe led the Katangan secessionist movement in the early 1960s. By describing the rebellion in Shaba as based on personality preferences, instead of politics, the option is left open for the imposition of a new puppet, possibly with connections to the Shaba region.

The Swedish connection, which played an important role for Wall Street interests in the Belgian-Congo crisis of the early 1960s, is being activated through Second International member and Wall Street agent Olof Palme, who is popping up in Africa more often. Nigerian Ambassador to the U.N., Leslie Harriman, has invited Palme to address the Security Council on the subject of South Africa.

On March 22, Garba delivered a blistering attack on South Africa in an address to the Security Council which called for immediate action. Now, Young is attempting to negotiate a watered-down "declaration of principles" which has no teeth, in return for stronger action later. Whatever the final resolution, the glaring contrast between Garba's speech and Young's proposal is calculated. It will provide Garba with a militant image to pursue his Vance-defined role as mediator in Angola.

Military "experts" associated with Henry Kissinger have called for the inclusion of Nigeria in the proposed extension of NATO, known as the South Atlantic Treaty Organization (SATO). Such a connection would back up Nigeria's anti-socialist intervention in Angola with Latin American military power.

Even now, the Vance Administration is trying to open up the possibility for Brazil to intervene into Angola by pushing the fascist Medicista faction in Brazil to attack Cuban solidarity with socialist Africa. *Estado de Sao Paulo*, mouthpiece of the Medici, this week editorially called for "something to be done" about Castro's present tour in Africa, since it "threatens south Atlantic trade routes." *Estado's* call for some version of Kissinger's still-born SATO was echoed by the head of the Brazilian

Navy Chiefs of Staff, who warned that Brazilian sea routes in the Atlantic would be endangered by any war in southern Africa. On March 21, the Cuban press agency *Prensa Latina* announced that Brazilian ships will shortly carry out joint maneuvers with the French Navy off the South Atlantic coast of Brazil, described by *Prensa Latina* as an increase in Brazilian participation in NATO operations.

Nigerian integration into some kind of informal SATO structure, while it is also connected with France, would make Nigeria part of a formidable military bloc and give it access to a major supplier of military equipment. Of course, this power Cyrus Vance and Zbigniew Brzezinski will pretend to have no control over as they deploy it into southern Africa.

Angolan Army commander Dibala has already targetted the Carter Administration's attempts to internationalize the Zairean crisis: "Angola hopes that the foreign powers from whom Zaire asked for aid do not intervene in problems which concern only the Zairean people." He added that "If foreign news agency reports are correct, it seems these countries are preparing to create the conditions for a new Vietnam in Zaire, in the heart of Africa."

Already Zaire has conducted air raids into Angola; on March 15 and 16 three Angolan towns near the Zaire border were bombed by Zairean planes, according to an Angolan Defense Ministry communique. Angola "will not tolerate for very long attacks on its populations," the communique warned. Mercenaries based in Zaire have also increased their attacks on the oil producing Angolan province of Cabinda; last week another village was attacked, killing 31 civilians.

Mobutu, meanwhile, in the face of a spreading rebellion, is trying desperately to hang on. A New York banker reports that "The problem is that Mobutu is very weak, and he may not be able to motivate the Kinshasans to defend his regime. There is a bad situation in the capital, there's no food and rampant demoralization. People are ready to turn against Mobutu."

Mobutu's attempt to reassert control over the areas in rebellion in Shaba is meeting with no success. He has not dared to send in very many troops because he is afraid of subsequent unrest in areas from which the troops are removed. Of the troops that have been sent, numbers are deserting, while the local population is fleeing as the troops appropriate food and goods for their own use. This activity, in light of the critical food shortages throughout the area, has resulted in the population siding with the rebels.

The rebels have been distributing food to the population, and according to African sources, the first planeload of arms flown in by Belgium has already fallen into the hands of the resistance. But despite claims by Mobutu that he has launched a counteroffensive against "invading mercenaries," sources in European capitals are reporting that there have not even been any shots fired. Mobutu's claim of a bombing and strafing campaign is exaggerated, according to the same sources. And the March 23 French daily, *Le Figaro* reports that the village of Kisengi, which Mobutu loudly proclaimed his forces had retaken, was empty when the loyalist forces arrived.

Disaffection with Mobutu is so strong that even the

Catholic Church is opposing him. This was strongly expressed in a recent pastoral letter by Catholic Archbishop Kabanga in Lumbumbashi which criticized the exploitation of the people by those in power. Mobutu called in the Catholic bishops and demanded that they repudiate the letter, but they refused.

The murder of Congolese Cardinal Biayenda on March 22 is being said by observers to be a result of his links to the Catholic resistance to Mobutu in neighboring Zaire.

However, Cardinal Biayenda was a close political ally of Congo President Marien Ngouabi, himself assassinated on March 19 in Brazzaville. According to highly placed sources in Washington, the assassination of Ngouabi is a pre-planned part of the overall Vance operation to plunge central Africa into chaos, laying the

basis for a show of force by the Carter Administration against the Soviets. The assassination of Ngouabi, according to the sources, was carried out under private contract by David Stirling, former head of the British Special Air Services (SAS) who now operates his own private intelligence operation separate and counter to the British government's.

Cardinal Biayenda was the last person to meet with Ngouabi just 30 minutes before his death. The elimination of Ngouabi and the abortive associated attempt to topple his pro-Soviet government appear to have been intended to clear the way for an escalation of attack on the enclave of Cabinda, surrounded by the Congo on two sides.

Castro In Africa: Economic Progress Defines Your Political Struggles

In a March 24 speech of welcome to visiting Soviet President Podgorny, Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere told him that the socialist countries are not assuming the leadership they must in the movement for a new world economic order, according to the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. American newsmen crowed over Nyerere's remarks in their reports, thereby demonstrating their failure to understand their import.

Nyerere's speech reflects the vigorous organizing tour through Africa undertaken in the last few weeks by Cuban President Fidel Castro. While the U.S. news media tries in every imaginable way to portray Castro as a stalking horse for the Soviets, Castro is touring the continent to organize the leaders of non-aligned Africans to apply the kind of pressure on the Soviets to lead which Nyerere applied to Podgorny. In this context, Castro is dealing with the region's political and military problems as properly subsumed aspects of the question of economic development: the liberation of southern Africa; the politico-military defense of the front line states facing Rhodesia and South Africa; the eradication of destabilizing tensions on the Horn of Africa and so forth.

Speaking March 21 at a press conference in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, Castro told reporters that socialism — economic development — is a question of "life or death" for the underdeveloped countries, adding "the peoples (of the underdeveloped sector) are not going to resign themselves to die, they will struggle for progress, and for their lives." These comments were consistent with the tone he set at the beginning of his tour in Libya, where he and Libyan Premier Muammar al-Qaddafi issued a Mar. 10 joint communique calling for the implementation of the resolutions of Last September's Conference of Non-Aligned Nations in Colombo, Sri Lanka. That Conference defined the new world economic order, specifying declaration of debt moratoria by the Third World and creation of a new monetary system to finance vastly accelerated high-technology development in the Third World.

A statement March 23 by Cuban Foreign Minister Isodoro Malmierca demonstrated that Castro's remarks were not *pro forma* diplomatic comments. "The econo-

mic crisis affecting the developed capitalist world...has not diminished," said Malmierca, "and one can affirm that it is being aggravated. This crisis has been accompanied by a growing financial and monetary disorder, while the monetary system imposed on the postwar world destroys itself and absorbs the scarce financial resources of the developing world..." Malmierca commented that despite the good intentions of the developed world to negotiate a new world economic order and a Charter of the Rights and Duties of Nations issued by former Mexican President Luis Echeverria.

The same theme was reaffirmed in a joint communique of Mozambique and Cuba issued today. It called for the independence of the five former Portuguese colonies in Africa — all of which are pro-socialist — as a bloc "reinforcing the fight for peace, progress, democracy and the new world economic order."

After emphasizing economic development as the foundation of liberation, Castro elaborated a strategy transition to majority rule in Rhodesia which will not internationalize the conflict. "It is not Cuba's intention to send soldiers to free any part of southern Africa," he said in his March 20 news conference, dismissing contrary implications in the American press. "Independence is never delivered from abroad; the people concerned must fight for their independence." He added, however, that the Cuban military would be at the disposal of the front line states to defend their own territory against any Rhodesian or South African aggression.

This strategy coincides with the ideas expressed by now-British Foreign Secretary David Owen in a 1972 book. Owen wrote that a socialist country's military presence in black Africa would serve as a deterrent to any South African military adventures designed to stop the liberation of Rhodesia or Namibia.

Castro's offer to the front line states, in which he specifically said that Cuban initiatives would follow policy set by them, helps to free those states from fear of attack by armies vastly superior to any they can field, enabling them to take a determined politico-military offensive against the Ian Smith regime in Rhodesia.

Castro's attitude stands in stark contrast to that of