

AFRICA NEWS

A WEEKLY DIGEST OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS

Poet's Perspective

Editor's Note: This is the beginning of a series of weekly poems by John A. Dennis, Jr., a Ph.D. candidate in African history at Stanford University.

By JOHN A. DENNIS, JR.

TOO WHITE

She said I was too white --
A dash of pepper
In a galaxy of salt crystals.
But I ask,
"Is it white to thing,
To reason, to challenge,
To arouse the minds of black
Folks caught up in
Ghettoes of self-
Despair and indifference?
To combat years of
surrender and abandonment
With the gleeful cheer:
"You can, young man."
To stand tall before the
Babel-like buildings,
Crawling freeways,
Avalanche of miracle drugs
And overbearing bureaucrats
Who don't give a damn?
To push and pull my brothers
Beyond the limits of cheap
Mediocrity
Into the arena of
Genius.
Never losing
That cherished gift
To feel . . .

CHAD REBELS OPPOSE LIBYAN EXPANSION

[AN] A leader of the Chad National Liberation Front (FROLINAT) has disclosed that the rebel group is receiving military assistance from Libya, but opposes the Libyan occupation of the Aouzou strip in northern Chad.

In an interview with Le Monde, rebel chief Goukouni, the top man in FROLINAT's northern army, says that Libya has given food, medicine and arms to the rebel force that recently captured four government garrisons in the region. But since Libya four years ago began moving troops into territory traditionally claimed by Chad, "serious differences" have divided FROLINAT and Libya - differences that at one time nearly brought about a FROLINAT alliance with the Chad government to fight off the Libyans.

When that conciliation effort failed, says Goukouni, FROLINAT decided that it could not afford the "luxury of fighting two enemies at once," and so drew closer to Libya. Goukouni maintains, however, that the rebel movement will "never agree to the Libyans remaining in the (Aouzou) district."

"After the final victory of the revolution," says Goukouni, "Libya and the Chad revolutionaries will try to find a better solution."

According to unconfirmed reports, the Libyans first moved into the contested area of northern Chad in 1973 after closing a deal with Chad's former president, N'Garta Tombalbaye. The alleged pact ceded some 100,000 square miles of Chadian desert to Libya, which was to pay \$140 million for the land by 1976.

A military coup ousted Tombalbaye in 1975, and officials of the Chad government now assert that the Aouzou strip is rich in minerals, possibly uranium, wolfram, tungsten, copper, tin and zinc. Chad has launched diplomatic action against Libya at the Organization of African Unity, and neighboring Niger and Nigeria are attempting to arbitrate.

FROLINAT commander Goukouni insists that there are no proven mineral deposits in the area.

Libya, which has also annexed parts of northern Niger and reportedly southeastern Algeria, asserted its new boundaries in a 1976 official map. Libya bases its claim to the territories on a 1935 treaty between Mussolini and France.

MOROCCAN TROOPS RUSHED TO MAURITANIA

[AN] Morocco recently rushed 600 troops to help defend Zouerate, Mauritania after the vital iron mines there were attacked for the third time in as many months by guerrillas of the POLISARIO Front.

The Front is fighting against Moroccan and Mauritanian annexation of the Western Sahara, a former Spanish colony ceded to the two neighbor countries when Madrid pulled out in 1976. POLISARIO's military campaign has been largely successful, confining the Moroccan and Mauritanian troops to fifteen fortified towns while the

guerrillas move freely in convoys through the vast desert.

POLISARIO has launched numerous attacks into Mauritania, including two attacks on the capital city, Nouakchott. Under terms of a common defense pact, Morocco troops have participated unofficially in Mauritania's defense for some time. The recent airlift to Zouerate, however, was the first major open intervention by Morocco on Mauritanian territory.

Many Mauritians are disturbed by the increased Moroccan military presence in their country. Morocco's monarchy has in the past laid claim to Mauritania as part of its kingdom.

In the wake of the new POLISARIO raids and the arrival of the Moroccans, President Moktar Ould Daddah has streamlined and shuffled both his Cabinet and the top military posts, bidding for stronger more efficient leadership to shore up the nation's defenses.

DIPLOMACY FAILS, FIGHTING CONTINUES IN OGADEN

[AN] Following the failure of an Organization of African Unity (OAU) mediation effort, intense fighting continued last week in southeastern Ethiopia, accompanied by contradictory communiques and charges from Ethiopian and Somali sources.

At the weekend, the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) had claimed the capture of Jijiga, one of three remaining Ethiopian strongholds in the Ogaden region. Ethiopian sources denied that Jijiga had fallen, but admitted that opposition forces held a substantial portion of the region.

Mediation efforts faltered when Somalia walked out of a meeting in Gabon, demanding that representatives of the WSLF be admitted to the talks. Ethiopia charges that the fighting is a full-scale Somali invasion, but Somalia claims that WSLF forces are doing all the fighting.

Independent observers think that while the guerrillas of the WSLF are a well-trained force, it is unlikely that the present level of combat could be sustained without some involvement of regular Somali forces. In the air along the border at least, Ethiopian and Somali air force planes have clashed.

Ethiopia is so far having little success in pressing back the attacks, and WSLF spokesmen have predicted complete victory within months, if not weeks. This desperate military situation is leading to much speculation on the next step possible for the military government or its backers.

Somalia charged last week that plans were underway for the arrival of several thousand foreign troops of unspecified nationality to help the Ethiopian military. Ethiopia promptly denied the charge.

Such an accusation is difficult to reconcile with other reports coming from the Somali capital, also denied by Ethiopia, that the Soviet Union is trying to push a compromise settlement which would cede a substantial part of the territory to the Somali forces. Since the

fighting intensified last month, Soviet statements have tried to avoid a tilt to either side.

Contrary to recent Western press reports from intelligence sources, reporters on the spot in Somalia say there is no evidence of a large exodus of Soviet advisers. But Somalia remains upset at Soviet bloc aid to the Ethiopian military.

The ability of the Ethiopian government to reach a settlement, or to pull off a reversal of its military fortune, may be hampered by internal conflict, which is likely to be exacerbated by recent defeats.

There has been increasing tension between the ruling military council (Dergue) and its civilian supporters in the All Ethiopia Socialist Movement (Me'ei Sone) who have dominated the Political Office for Mass Organizational Affairs (POMOA). The Dergue has reportedly formed its own political party, Seded, which is engaged in a struggle for influence with Me'ei Sone and other smaller groups. Among the arenas of conflict has been the newly-formed peasant militia; some of its troops are reportedly discontent with being sent into operation in the Ogaden rather than used in their home areas.

If the present Dergue leadership should fall, the results would be highly unpredictable, from the possibility of a return to a Western alignment to a resurgence of the left-wing Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP). The EPRP has in the past been sympathetic to demands for self-determination Ethiopia's diverse nationalities.

SWAPO SETS TERMS FOR NAMIBIA SETTLEMENT

NEW YORK [AN] Exhausted Western diplomats and African guerrilla leaders ended four days of talks on the future of South African-controlled Namibia on Thursday with an agreement to meet again in the

near future. An eight-person delegation representing SWAPO, the Namibian independence movement, told the closed session that it would continue its war against South African rule of the former German colony until South Africa withdraws in favor of a United Nations peacekeeping force. But the two sides issued a press statement saying possibilities for a negotiated settlement do exist.

President Sam Nujoma, who led the SWAPO delegation told Africa News just before catching a plane for Lusaka, Zambia that a United Nations force would not have to be as large as the current South African military presence of about 50,000 troops. He said the UN force would be there to guarantee a ceasefire and to maintain law and order, not to oppress the people as the South Africans have done.

In the first mention of a possible timetable, Nujoma said SWAPO would be willing to give South Africa three months to complete its troop

withdrawal, and would agree to an additional six months period of campaigning before national elections. SWAPO was previously thought to be holding out for a longer transition period, but Nujoma said SWAPO considers six months sufficient to guarantee elections free of South African coercion. South Africa has been pressing for elections as soon as possible, while its administrative machinery is still intact.

SWAPO has now apparently agreed to the continued presence of a certain number of South African civil servants during the transition, but says a UN administrator must have overall executive power, a point in which South Africa has been balking. Last month South Africa appointed its own administrator, Judge Marthinus Steyn, represented as an impartial figure to oversee the transition.



PROMOTE GOOD RELATION - U. S. Ambassador to the U. N. Andrew Young (L) meets with Jamaican Gov. Gen. Florizel Glasspole (C) and Foreign Minister P. J. Patterson (R). Young is on a 10-nation Caribbean tour "to promote good relations and stable development" there. (UPI).

American negotiator Don McHenry, (who speaks for the Five Western participants (U. S., Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain) left for London after the talks to brief British Foreign Secretary David Owen and U. S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance.

ZAIRE RENTS LAND FOR ROCKET TESTS

[AN] While refusing to confirm details of the contract, a West German company has confirmed renting the eastern part of Zaire's Shaba province for a rocket testing range.

The Paris-based magazine "Afrique-Asie" has published in its latest issue a copy of the contract signed between Zaire and OTRAG. (Orbital Transport - und Raketen - Gesellschaft) in March of 1976. According to the text presented there, Zaire grants irrevocable rights to full use of the territory until the year 2000 in exchange for an annual rent of \$50 million.

Occupying approximately the northeastern third of Shaba province, the OTRAG concession is comparable in area to all of West Germany. The company is reported to be developing a cheaper technology for launching satellites, intended to be competitive with U. S. technology.

According to the contract,

territory," unless they affect the security of the country.

The rights of the company also include control over the presence of people in the area. According to Article III of the contract, "the state is bound, if requested by OTRAG, to evacuate all population" not connected with the company.

The contract explicitly states that Zaire cannot revoke the agreement, for whatever reason, until the year 2000.

If genuine, these terms are reminiscent of grants of African territory to private companies in the early years of colonialism.


Neighboring African countries will probably be concerned about the deal, since the likely route of the rockets is over Tanzanian or Zambian airspace. General Nathaniel Mbumba, leader of anti-Mobutu guerrillas, told Afrique-Asie that the use of the areas as a launching site could prove a threat to all of southern and central Africa.

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