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A REPORT ON GEORGE HOUSER'S TRIP TO AFRICA

From January 20 through February 25 I was in Africa; this was my fourth trip in the last six years. The comments which follow put in capsule form some of the observations I should like to share with a few people who are especially interested and concerned.

All African People's Conference

The main reason for my trip to Africa at this particular time was to attend the All-African People's Conference in Tunis, between January 25 and February 1. It is not my purpose in the brief report which follows to make many comments about the conference, since I have written an article about it which appears in the April issue of Africa Today. However, I would like to make just a few remarks about it. First, I and other Americans were glad that it was not as difficult to get a message from the United States to the conference as it had been for the first All-African People's Conference, held in Accra in December, 1958. Our committee, of course, did have a message of greeting signed by many prominent Americans, but on this occasion the message of greeting from Vice-President Nixon was one of the first received by the conference.

The issues which really led to an emotional unity among the many delegates to the second All-African People's Conference were probably three in number: the threat of the French to explode their atom bomb in the Sahara (which they subsequently did); the continued fight in Algeria; and the announcement that the Congo would become independent on June 30, 1960. One of the largest public rallies that I have ever witnessed was held at a public square in Tunis when President Bourguiba addressed a mass of people in protest against the testing of the French bomb in the Sahara. It was estimated that as many as 200,000 people may have turned out. Bourguiba also used this occasion to demand that French troops leave Bizerte. There was undoubtedly a genuine and spontaneous expression of feeling on the part of the mass of people in North Africa in this large protest rally.

At the conference itself, there was probably a more enthusiastic response to the speech of the Algerian delegate than there was to that of any other delegate. Especially was there a spontaneous demonstration when Boumedjel, the FLN representative, called for volunteers from the rest of Africa to join the army of national liberation in their struggle for freedom. It is doubtful that much will be done to give practical effect to this call for volunteers, inasmuch as the main need of the Algerians is not for manpower, but for equipment. Nevertheless, the emotional appeal, at this juncture of history, of this call for volunteers was very marked.

I had the impression, when the chairman of the conference announced that agreement had been reached in the Brussels discussions for the independence of the Congo, that African nationalists from various parts of the continent were as surprised as most observers elsewhere in the world. In spite of the problems that may lie ahead in the Congo, it was thrilling to observe the spontaneous enthusiasm of these delegates as they rose simultaneously to cheer this announcement.

The principal issue at the conference revolved around the question of

sion about the loan of \$100,000,000 for Ethiopian economic development. This inevitably has an effect on the attitude of the Ethiopian government towards the Soviet government. Furthermore, in a talk which I had with Prime Minister Nkrumah in Ghana, he indicated that he was being very patient as far as his Volta River project was concerned, that he had not approached the East for any economic assistance. Nevertheless, there was the implied statement that if he was finally turned down by Western countries and by the World Bank, he would not hesitate to approach the Soviet Union for assistance. As Nkrumah said to me: "No one will be able to say that I didn't try to get help elsewhere."

I think it should be assumed by anyone who is watching the African scene carefully that the Soviet Union will make great gains there in the years ahead. After all, the Soviet Union has not had an opportunity to develop any official relationships with the Africans as long as the colonial powers have been in control. The progress which the Soviets will undoubtedly make should not be disturbing to the United States, but rather should spur our country on to make even greater efforts to be of assistance to the Africans in every way possible.

Cairo

I spent a very interesting several days in Cairo on this trip, and was particularly anxious to understand the relationship of the U.A.R. government to the rest of Africa, and to the Afro-Asian Solidarity Council. It is very clear in my mind that Nasser and Egyptian leadership does not offer any competition to African leaders south of the Sahara, as far as their prominent role in African affairs is concerned. The Egyptians on the whole have very little information about what is happening in the rest of Africa. It is recognized by the Egyptians themselves that real leadership for the Pan-African movement must lie south of the Sahara.

What is amazing in the Cairo situation is to see evidence of almost contradictory policies followed. On the one hand, the U.A.R. government is internally very anti-Communist, and will not permit any kind of Communist activity. Also, there is an increasing antipathy to being tied to Soviet policy on the international scene. And yet there is a community of interests between the U.A.R. and the Soviet Union and China in their approach to the African continent through the Afro-Asian Solidarity Council. But what was a very short time ago a quite amicable relationship within this Solidarity Council has now become strained. The Afro-Asian Solidarity Council is now taking a forthright neutralist approach to the international power struggle. This is being done in spite of the fact that two members of the eight-man secretariat of the Council are the Soviet Union and China. The Indian representative on the Solidarity Council has broken with the Soviet-Chinese line over the Tibetan border dispute. This means that in the Solidarity Council membership there is now practically a four-four division, and it is increasingly difficult for the Council to operate on the unanimity principle which has always guided it. On one side of the split is China, the Soviet Union, the Cameroons representative, and the Japanese. On the other side is the Secretary-General, who is Egyptian, the U.A.R. representative, the representative of the Uganda National Congress, and the Indian. The Egyptians told me that they hoped a Ghana representative would be added to strengthen their side in this developing split.

Tanganyika

One cannot help but be heartened, in the midst of all the racial strife that exists in East, Central, and South Africa, by a visit to Tanganyika. I had a brief meeting with some of the key members of the Tanganyika Elected Members Organization (TEMO). This organization has been in existence for less than a year. Its chairman is Julius Nyerere, who is the president of the Tanganyika Africa National Union. The membership of TEMO are those who were elected under the TANU banner to the legislative assembly of Tanganyika, and they consist of ten Africans, ten Europeans, and ten Asians. In the next election, which comes in September, there will be an African majority, but the Europeans and the Asians not only expect this, but support it. The leadership of Julius Nyerere is applauded by all sides. I was struck not only by the great confidence that was placed in Nyerere, but also by the strength of his political organization. TANU was not organized until 1955, but it swept the country. I was told by a good many people that they had a pretty accurate count of at least 700,000 members. Also, I saw evidence myself in my brief travels around Tanganyika that every village has at least one TANU branch. There are twenty-four such branches in the Dar es Salaam area itself, and I visited seven of them on a Sunday afternoon in the company of leaders of the TANU organization, and I can vouch for the enthusiasm of the membership. With the possible exception of Sekou Toure's party in Guinea, I believe that TANU is the best organized political organization anywhere on the continent. The danger to Nyerere is that he will go so far in accommodating himself to a gradual assumption of power by the Africans, now that ultimate independence has been acknowledged as not too far distant, that his leadership will be contested by those who are unwilling to wait. Therefore it would not be surprising if much more impatient leadership, and leadership much less willing to work with European and Asian elements among the population of Tanganyika, should arise to challenge Julius Nyerere. One such organization, the Tanganyika African Nationalist Congress, already exists. The leader of this organization, a man by the name of Mtemvu, contacted me in Dar es Salaam. He has a strong anti-European line. He seems to offer no immediate challenge to Nyerere, but represents the kind of force that is feared by many will challenge Nyerere in his more moderate position.

Congo

It was thrilling, at this moment of history, to be in the Belgian Congo, even for only a few days. I had an opportunity, while I was there, to talk with Belgians and also with representatives of some of the political parties. The major leaders were in Brussels for the discussions which were then taking place, so that I was not able to see such persons as Kasavubu or Lumumba. The exodus of the Belgians from the Congo is so sudden that many observers are prophecying difficulties ahead. The Belgians did such a poor job for such a long time in the Congo in preparing the people for ultimate self-government, that there are now not only very few persons who are trained in any kind of administrative position, but also, there is a lack of political unity among the African leaders themselves. This should spell real trouble in the days ahead. The question inevitably arises as to why the Belgians are leaving so quietly and suddenly, without a struggle. The fact is that there would have been very bitter struggling and fighting taking place if the Belgians did not leave, and they were not prepared to face this. I was told by people in position to know that Kasavubu and Kanza, two of the principal leaders of the Abako organization

in the Leopoldville area, had approached the political leaders in Brazzaville in French territory just across the Congo River, about setting up a government in exile if the Belgians did not leave. African nationalism finally caught up with the Belgians before they were quite prepared to come to terms with it, and although they can be respected, on the one hand, for giving in to nationalist demands, they cannot be respected, on the other hand, for their lack of insight far enough in advance to prepare the way for inevitable self-government. Sixty percent of the wealth of the Congo comes from the most southeastern province of Katanga. And yet this province is more anxious to have as loose as possible a federal arrangement, so that if necessary they can break away from the Congo and still maintain the natural resources which reside there. There is no truly national political force in the Congo, although one may emerge in the next few months.

Accra

I arrived in Accra, the capitol of Ghana, only a few days after the government had frozen assets of the French companies as a retaliation against the French testing of an atomic bomb in the Sahara. With the possible exception of the opposition to the testing of the bomb in such North African countries as Tunisia and Morocco, there was no country in Africa so emotionally disturbed by the French action as Ghana. The government of Ghana gave virtually official backing to the international team of persons who protested against the testing of the bomb by trying to go across the northern border of Ghana into French land with the aim of driving into the atomic bomb test area itself. Mass demonstrations were held in Ghana, not only protesting against the bomb test, but also backing up this international team composed of Americans, Britishers, and Africans. It is significant that Mr. K.A. Gbedemah, the Finance Minister in the Ghana government, gave particular leadership to the support of this protest team. Gbedemah is, incidentally, the international president of the United World Federalists. Due to the opposition to the testing of the bomb in the Sahara, perhaps it was not surprising that Prime Minister Nkrumah took the seemingly drastic action of freezing French assets in Ghana. Although this was a significant effort, I understand from discussions I had with a good many people in the government and with economists outside the government that the practical effect of the action would be slight. Eighty-five percent of the business of even the French companies of Ghana is outside of the franc zone. Therefore, there will be very little practical effect from the action on the propaganda front.

One cannot help but be struck, in Ghana, with the devotion which one finds among both governmental and nongovernmental persons to the Pan-African cause. The death of George Padmore, who had been the advisor to the Prime Minister on African affairs, left quite a void, which has not been filled by any other individual. Following Padmore's death, a Bureau of African Affairs was established. It now comes directly under the Prime Minister's office. In the course of any single year there are hundreds of political refugees and individuals from various parts of Africa who come to Ghana for help of one kind or another. The Bureau of African Affairs is established to be of assistance to them. Also this Bureau has a liaison relationship with the All-African People's Conference, and with any organizations struggling for freedom and independence in any part of the continent. Although it is a governmental agency, it does not usurp the authority of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at all, because it

deals primarily with political organizations on the continent that are in the not-yet-independent areas. It does have to maintain a close working relationship with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, however. The Secretariat of the Bureau of African Affairs does not give assistance to just any person or group that gets in touch with it. It investigates to find out whether it is a responsible group with a significant backing. When any legitimate African leader or organization needs assistance, the Bureau will do anything it can to offer the help that is within its power. When African leaders come through Accra, as they do in a steady stream, there is always a place for them to stay. The government has established a number of chalets, each one named after an independent African state, and here these visiting nationalists can stay for as long as it is necessary, at no cost.

U. S. Personnel

I was agreeably impressed on this trip with most of the personnel in the United States Embassies, Consulates, and U.S. Information Agencies that I met. This has not always been true in the past. I have the impression from those persons with whom I talked (and I made a point of visiting U.S. headquarters in every city where I stopped) that the State Department is taking Africa very seriously now, and that most of the American personnel in Africa are there because they wish to be there. I think I detected a genuine interest in the affairs of Africa, and a sympathetic concern for the success of the nationalist movements in Africa. Furthermore, I understand that, contrary to what the case was a few years ago, those Americans who are representing the government in Africa want to stay on the continent even when they are re-assigned from one post to another. From some of the American personnel there was what seemed to me healthy criticism of the slowness with which American policy is coming to terms with the dynamics of nationalism in Africa. This represents some real hope for the immediate future.

African Ideology

This final note on the question of ideology in Africa. First of all, the ideology of Africa will be anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist. These words are and will be used freely and interchangeably in virtually any part of the continent where one goes. The slogan of the first All-African People's Conference, "Hands off Africa--Africa Must Be Free", will be the cry of the nationalists for some period of time. In the second place, the ideology of Africa will be one of Pan-Africanism, and may be one moving towards a kind of federalism. Whether federalism can be established on a regional basis remains to be seen. There are certainly jealousies which are developing between some of the leaders in various parts of the continent. Despite this fact there is a very strong pressure for a truly Pan-African outlook and for the leaders of the various individual countries to submerge their own private ambitions for the good of the whole. Regardless of whether regional organization develops in the years just ahead, there is no question of the fact that a strong note of Pan-Africanism will be an essential part of African ideology in the years ahead.

In the third place, the ideology of Africa will be one of condemning what is called neo-colonialism. As the leader of the Liberian delegation to the Tunis All-African People's Conference said: "Let us beware of the Greeks who come bearing gifts." The remark is made again and again at virtually all political conferences in Africa that there is danger that political colonialism will go out

the front door while economic colonialism comes in the back. There is still a very real fear in the under-developed countries of Africa that future domination will be, not by political control, but by economic control. There is of course a strong contradiction in the condemnation of neo-colonialism on the one hand and the requests for economic assistance from these countries in Africa on the other. There is no question about the fact that in the years ahead there will be a profound need for foreign capital investment and for loans and grants, not only from international agencies, but from the more wealthy countries of the world.

In the fourth place, the international ideology of the African countries will be one of neutralism. The African independent states would like to avoid implication in the international power struggle. Therefore, the United States should not only expect, but should probably support, the African states as they maintain a neutralist position. It is my own firm belief that if the United States attempts to adopt any other policy, the African states will react bitterly against her.

Many Americans may not particularly like some things they see developing in Africa in the years ahead. It can be expected that the Soviet Union will make a great deal of headway. An increasing number of students will go from Africa to Russia, to China, and to Eastern European countries. Russian funds, either as loans or as grants, or Communist technical assistance will be found with increasing regularity and effectiveness in various parts of Africa. But it must be remembered that the Soviet Union has no place to go except up in Africa. For until only the last two or three years, there has been no relationship between Communist countries and Africa. It was impossible for the Communist countries to have relations with a continent which was completely under the domination of the colonial powers who were also the anti-Communist Western European countries. The United States can expect to receive a good bit more open criticism than the Soviet Union will receive. As long as the United States is tied to the policies of France and seemingly dares not speak out against the French policy in Algeria, or against the testing of the French bomb in the Sahara, it must be expected that there will be sharp and open criticism of the United States. But this does not mean that African countries will be going Communist. Africa will probably be neither Communist nor capitalist. There will continue to be a very important role in the African economies for the small individual trader or entrepreneur. There will continue to be a place for the individual who can amass a certain amount of capital and start his own business or industry. There will continue to be a place for the individual investor from overseas, as long as a policy of white supremacy is not followed and as long as there is no threat of interfering with the inner political workings of the country with which he is doing business.

The fact that the Soviet Union will continue to make a great deal of progress even in such countries as Liberia that have traditionally been tied closely to the United States should not by any means discourage the American government in following a dynamic policy towards Africa. To assume that because Guinea recognizes the government of East Germany Guinea has gone Communist would be false. It would also lead to disastrous results as far as the future of the United States in Africa is concerned. If the United States increasingly takes a forthright position against foreign domination, against a policy of white supremacy, and lends a helping hand to the African people which is so much needed, there will be a tremendously important role that America can serve in helping Africa to develop along democratic lines.