

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 Lamertz, 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 Tunis 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 Tunis 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

center of efforts to integrate the various Arab socialist parties into the Second Socialist International, is only one key figure in a Europe-wide battle, raging on an intense level between those forces eager to formulate a common development strategy with the Arab states and those forces who insist on buckling under to the Carter Administration.

PLO: Need A Clear Voice From Europe For Peace

The following are excerpts from the PLO Document published in Austria's Arbeiter Zeitung newspaper. The following summary follows the account of the document in France's Le Monde Feb. 15:

The document stresses that "the commitment of the Palestinians to achieve peace is very serious, rests on reciprocity, and is part of a veritable desire to attack the problems that must lead toward peace." That implies that "all the questions whose solution is absolutely necessary" must also be discussed among them "in any case the restitution by Israel of the West Bank, of the Gaza Strip, and the enclaves of Hamma and Auja," as well as the elaboration of an accord of non-belligerency between "the future sovereign State of Palestine" and the State of Israel.

The PLO stresses that the Palestinians are engaged in an "interesting process of maturity and of political evolution favorable to the guarantee of peace in the Middle East." This evolution must be considered as an "historic progression," which must be "put to advantage with eagerness by all the parties interested that the dream of peace be translated into reality."

But in a "surprising enough" manner, the Palestinian leaders note that "instead of being supported in their constructive attitude, they have been repulsed by the United States, attacked by the Israeli leaders, and barred by certain Arab states. The political myopia that these reactions convey is dangerous for it could convince the Palestinian leaders of the vanity of any moderate attitude, and force them to adopt a hard position which, without any doubt, could lead to a new military confrontation." This is why, "specifically, the role of Western Europe is largely necessary... The Palestinian position is still positive and it will remain so at least during the next month. But it is difficult to predict for how long the Palestinian leaders will continue to adopt this constructive attitude."

The PLO estimates that an assumption of a "clear" position on the part of Western Europe "could truly consolidate the moderation of the Palestinians, and contribute towards exercising a positive pressure on the negative attitude of the Americans, the Israelis, and of certain Arab countries."

El Moudjahid:

When Will Europe Take International Responsibility?

Algeria's government newspaper El Moudjahid Feb. 13-14 criticizes European policy toward the Arab sector and the Third World for continued stalling and postponing decisions until later in the year. Moudjahid then continued:

Relations between the United States and Europe are the key to the problem, and we can ask ourselves if the European Economic Community (EEC) has decided to take any international responsibility, when certain European countries have said they will not take any action that could indispose or upset the U.S. Both the North-South talks and the Euro-Arab dialogue have not escaped this contradiction....

We have just learned that the Group of 19 have decided that the final round of North-South talks should be held no later than the end of May. A special United Nations session is already being planned. Now it's only necessary to wait for a positive answer from the West.

While we are waiting, it's not useless to remember that the economic development of the state has become...the cornerstone of international economic relations and also the nerves of war. What is at stake in the North-South talks, aiming to prepare a new international economic order and mutually advantageous cooperation, is a source of development and progress indispensable to security and international peace.

Financial Times:

PLO Document Opens Way For Negotiations

In a Feb. 15 editorial entitled "The Palestinians Point the Way," the Financial Times of London finds the PLO document to be a solid basis for moving the Middle East towards peace.

The document handed to Dr. Bruno Kreisky, the Austrian Chancellor, by a member of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) is by no means a first sign, but it is one of the strongest so far, of a new readiness among Palestinians and among key Arab leaders to negotiate a Middle East settlement that goes to the heart of the Middle East problem, namely the lack of a home for the Palestinian people. As such, it potentially transforms the whole Middle East situation.

What the document says is that the PLO would be prepared to establish a state on a basis of non-belligerency in territory evacuated by Israel as part of a Middle East settlement....What it does not say outright, but which is at least as important, is that such a statement constitutes an implicit recognition of the State of Israel. It is this recognition which fundamentally changes the situation.

The Israeli refusal to negotiate with the PLO, and even to let the PLO sit at the negotiating table as a separate entity, has been based on the belief that the Organization

did not accept the right of the State of Israel to exist. Negotiations with the PLO therefore would have been tantamount to national suicide. Once this obstacle is removed, however, the whole Israeli argument is undermined.

The predictable Israeli reaction has been to say that they are not convinced and that any change in PLO policy must be confirmed by the Palestinian leadership as a whole. Yet it is now very likely that such confirmation will be given when the Palestinian National Council meets in Cairo next month. Certainly this is what the key Arab leaders have been pressing the Palestinians

to do. Assuming this happens, it will be very difficult indeed even for the Israelis to argue that the PLO must be outlawed.

Much of course would remain to be negotiated...But what is new is that the obstacles to negotiations taking place are falling away. It would be ironic indeed if the principal obstacle remained an Israeli refusal to recognize that things have changed. The Arabs and Palestinians have already made more concessions than many would have believed possible. It is time for the Israelis to begin to meet them, for the opportunity may not easily arise again.

Hawks Now Have Free Rein In Israel

Disclosures this week in a Tel Aviv court by a high ranking Israeli Labour Party figure that he funneled kickback money into party coffers has sealed the fate of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. Rabin's chances of winning the Labour Party candidacy for premiership are now next to nothing. That, combined with the extreme weakening of the Labour Party, which has been wracked by a series of scandals, has given the Israeli hawks tied to the Carter Administration — Defense Minister Shimon Peres, Gen. Yigal Yadin, and Likud opposition leader Menachem Begin — an open field to impose a war policy on Israel.

The disclosures on the kickback scandal were made by Asher Yadlin, nominated last year by Rabin to the post of governor of the Bank of Israel. When brought to trial last week, Yadlin collapsed in tears on the witness stand, pleaded guilty to several bribery charges connected with his tenure as head of the General Labor Federation's health fund, and proceeded to finger a number of important Labour Party leaders close to Rabin — Finance Minister Yehoshua Rabinowitz, Agriculture Bank head David Kalderon, and his cousin, Aharon Yadlin, Minister of Education. Aharon Yadlin is expected to resign from his post as a result of the testimony, according to rumors in Tel Aviv.

The Yadlin scandal follows the suicide last month of one of Israel's most prominent doves and a close ally of Rabin, Housing Minister Avraham Ofer, who reportedly shot himself after his name was linked to another kickback affair involving a Labour Party-connected construction firm.

Encouraged by Carter's backing and dismayed with Rabin's failure to provide firm leadership, dozens of Rabin supporters are breaking from the Prime Minister's camp and pledging allegiance to Peres. Among the latest defections are Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek, and Yossi Sarid, the leader of the New Guard faction of the Labour Party and an important Israeli dove.

Several weeks ago, erstwhile dove Abba Eban joined up with Peres, abandoning his peace rhetoric for the stated aim of "changing the party from within." Last week Eban declared, "With me on the team, nobody can accuse Peres of being a hawk."

Rabin is also losing people to the recently formed opposition group called the Democratic Movement for Change headed by Gen. Yigal Yadin, whose grab-bag "quality of life" program is attracting both doves and hawks alike.

A former member of the Israeli Knesset warned this week that if Peres wins the May 17 general elections, there will be little chance of his forming a viable government. The former Knesset member predicted that a weak Peres-Yadin coalition will take over, putting an end to the traditional Israeli political institutions. As a result of this leadership vacuum, there will be a sharp swing to the right and a military coup, with war inevitable by summer, he noted. (See interview below.)

"A Very Dangerous" Period

Spurring the hawks on in their push for war is the devastated Israeli economy. With its \$10 billion debt, and a population of only 3 million, Israel has the highest per capita income in the world. In the past year, the Israeli pound has been devalued by 24 percent, while inflation has soared at 35 percent. Aggravating the situation is labor unrest. More than 70,000 workers in various professional groups and unions are scheduled to strike in the coming days, with reports that 200,000 civil servants are engaged in labor disputes with their employers.

Addressing the Labour Party members of the General Labour Confederation (Histadrut) last week, Rabin warned of a recurrence of the 1966 recession that eventually led into the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, and noted that the convergence of the elections and the skyrocketing inflation had made the current period "a very dangerous one," Histadrut General Secretary Yeruham Meshel likewise warned that unless drastic steps were taken soon, "we may arrive at a situation where we will no longer be able to cope with the problem."

Meshel's drastic measures include a Histadrut proposal for a wage-price tax freeze, to remain in effect until June. The proposal was accepted last week by the government, but was denounced by such labor leaders as Gustav Badian, head of the 15,000-man engineer's union, which is scheduled to go out on strike. Badian charged that the deal is nothing but "a sad joke" which would solve nothing.