

France's Diplomatic Offensive In Africa

FRANCE

The government of French President Giscard d'Estaing renewed its spectacular, if still cautious and indirect, offensive against the Carter Administration's plans for a nuclear conflagration in southern Africa on Aug. 22, when French Foreign Minister Louis de Guiringaud denounced the Republic of South Africa's "preparations for an imminent nuclear test" in an official statement. "We warned South Africa that we would consider such an explosion as a major danger for all peace processes presently underway in Africa," stated Guiringaud, "and that it might gravely affect relations between our two countries."

On Aug. 24, following the weekly Council of Ministers meeting in Paris, Guiringaud announced that France will soon "make joint proposals" for global "qualitative and quantitative reductions of armaments." Although the French did not specify who their partners will be in this endeavor, there is reason to believe that the European Economic Community (EEC), and particularly West Germany, are involved. West German Minister for Economic Cooperation Marie Schlei reportedly stated yesterday that only an increase in her country's development aid to Third World countries and greater purchases of West German technology by these countries can pull the economy out of its depression. This statement, which most members of West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's cabinet have reportedly endorsed, directly contradicts the Carter Administration's efforts to force West Germany into an inflationary "make work" slave-labor policy.

Simultaneously, Henri Simonet, Belgium's Foreign Minister and pro-tem president of the EEC, announced at a United Nations conference on apartheid currently held in Lagos, Nigeria that the EEC Nine would "actively examine a range of initiatives with a view to using the collective weight of the Community to persuade South Africa to abandon its apartheid policy." This cautious approach not only echoes France's, but also the repeated forays made on behalf of a southern African development policy by the late West German banker Jürgen Ponto, and contrasts with the purposely abrasive and provocative "human rights" slogans uttered by the White House.

Already, White House circles have rightly concluded that Giscard's initiatives are aimed straight at the Anglo-American conspiracy to detonate a regional war between the racist South African and Rhodesian regimes, and the various black African liberation movements and states which struggle for majority rule in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and an end to apartheid in South

Africa. The major press conduits for Wall Street policy, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, both gave front-page coverage to Guiringaud's warning yesterday morning, while in his afternoon press conference, a defensive Jimmy Carter denied on behalf of the South African Vorster regime that any atomic test was about to take place in the Kalahari desert, as the French claim on the basis of precise satellite information.

Carter's Worries

The cause of the Carterites' worries is all too apparent. First, Guiringaud's announcements reveal the gradual convergence of Soviet and French (and perhaps West European) perspectives in regard to Carter's blatant provocations in several hot spots on the African continent. On Aug. 8, the Soviet press agency Tass blasted the South Africans' nuclear plans, adding in especially tough language that the USSR "would never permit" such a development, and calling on the West to intervene.

Second, the Carter Administration is particularly annoyed by recent French efforts to defuse the southern African powder keg. Last week, following several meetings with black heads of state and nationalist Zimbabwe and Namibian leaders in the region, Guiringaud clearly stated that France intends to play a mediator's role by capitalizing upon its traditional commercial and military relations with South Africa and its reinforced political ties with the black "front line" states, which only the Soviet Union had so far openly supported.

It is precisely in order to stymie these French efforts that the Carterites organized their dupe, Tanzanian President Nyerere, to stage a "spontaneous" anti-French demonstration at the Dar-Es-Salaam airport on Guiringaud's arrival last week. The provoked abrupt departure of the French minister was supposed to give the rest of the world the impression that his mediation attempts were of no interest to the front line states.

Third and most significant, Washington circles fear that Giscard is about to publicly denounce the duplicity of U.S. policy in southern Africa, which consists of exacerbating tensions by supporting both sides' claims. While shedding crocodile tears on the fate of the black oppressed in both Rhodesia and South Africa, the U.S. is responsible, through shipments of weapons-grade enriched uranium to South Africa, for that country's nuclear capability.

To preempt possible French revelations which might blow the entire Atlanticist game to smithereens, today's *New York Times* conceded that the U.S. has supplied South Africa with 229 pounds of enriched uranium over the last 20 years, but quickly added that "most" of these spent supplies are now back in the U.S. for reprocessing. The hope is that this concession will prevent irreparable damage to U.S. United Nations Ambassador Andrew

Young and British Foreign Minister David Owen's plans to resume their stalling diplomatic game with the front line states at a conference in Zambia beginning Aug. 26.

The Times report, however, fails to account not only for the fate of the fissile material which has *not* been returned, but also for recent shipments of several pounds of weapons-grade uranium which, in the words of Wisconsin Representative Les Aspin, would suffice to help the South Africans cross the military nuclear "threshold."

Test of French Intentions

In any event, the French initiatives reveal that, contrary to the wishes of the State Department, certain continental West European countries are on the verge of proposing a credible alternative — based on racial peace

and region-wide economic development projects — to the Carterites' war scenario. The French magazine *Le Nouvel Observateur*, a mouthpiece of the terrorist Institute for Policy Studies which has traditionally denounced General De Gaulle and his successors Pompidou and Giscard d'Estaing as the main Western supporters of pro-apartheid layers in South Africa, was forced this week to quote Zimbabwe Patriotic Front co-leader Mugabe, who affirmed his belief in the sincerity of France's intentions as a potential mediator after his meeting with Guiringaud. The first test of France's intentions, stated Mugabe, is whether or not Giscard will stop shipments of French conventional arms to the Vorster government. Giscard's upcoming disarmament proposal is certainly a major step in this direction.

— Jean-Claude Barré

De Guiringaud Reports On His African Tour

The following are excerpts of a statement made by French Foreign Minister de Guiringaud to France-Inter Aug. 22 after his return from a trip to several African nations:

... I am returning satisfied with my trip. France has close traditional relations with Western Africa and is known there. France is unknown in Eastern and Southern Africa and I unfortunately experienced this fact. But it must also be said that the French do not know this part of Africa well. Thus, my trip was an exploratory one. There were certain risks in it. But for three stages of it anyway, I am perfectly satisfied with the results. I was able to explain our policy. I think that I was able to get many aspects of it accepted, and I was also able to hear leaders of these countries explain the problems which concern them, and the more particular points on which they would like our policy to change.

... We must replace this problem (of French weapons delivery to South Africa—ed.) in its framework. Decolonization is not over in Southern Africa; the British colony of Rhodesia is still dominated by a minority of Whites, two hundred thousand Whites, led by Mr. Ian Smith, who want to impose their law on four or five million Blacks, in a regime of segregation and racial oppression which is quite comparable to that which exists in the Republic of South Africa. There is a second problem of decolonization. A territory which used to be called German South-West Africa, which fell under the control of the Republic of South Africa and which is now called Namibia, must accede to independence. France has played a spearheading role, a leading role in the United Nations to determine the conditions in which this territory of Namibia should accede to independence. The support of the Republic of South Africa can be seen behind the resistance to the moves towards independence of these two territories, Rhodesia and Namibia. Or, it is true that in the past, we have supplied arms to South Africa. We have even supplied an im-

portant quantity of them; we cannot deny it. But, for two years these supplies have been reduced, and since last fall the President of the Republic (of France—ed.) has imposed a total embargo on arms supplies to South Africa.

... There are two things to say about (Franco-South African nuclear cooperation—ed.). First, the Soviets have accused the South Africans of preparing, not an atomic bomb, but a nuclear explosion. We have effectively received intelligence according to which preparations were taking place in South Africa in view of an atomic explosion, which the South Africans affirmed would be peaceful. We know what a peaceful explosion is. At least, no difference can be made between a peaceful atomic explosion and an atomic explosion for military experimentation ends. Thus, we warned South Africa that we would consider that such an experimentation would put in danger all the processes of peace which have been engaged and would possibly have grave consequences on our relations with this country. This is what the precisions of my ministry this morning alluded to.

... There is a second thing I would like to say. It is very unfortunate that nuclear power appeared to men for the first time in the form of a bomb. This was the fault of the war and the concern which the incredible progress of the Germans and Japanese in 1942 gave rise to. It was then that Einstein wrote to Roosevelt to inform him that, on the basis of the atom, a bomb of heretofore unequalled power could be produced. The Americans went to work, and we know what the results were. What is unfortunately forgotten, is that until then the research of French scientists, Joliot-Curie, Perrin, Bertrand Goldschmidt, Kowarski, who were the most advanced in the world in this field, was oriented towards the industrial utilization of the fantastic energy produced by the disintegration of the atom. If there had not been any war, there would not have been any bomb. But, we still would have had electro-nuclear plants, and no one would have worried about it, any more than one worries about heating fuel and coal plants.

It is necessary to recall these facts to show how dishonest it is to make an amalgamation between electro-nuclear plants and the atomic weapon. It is to