

APRIL 7, 1957

THE VICE PRESIDENT'S
REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT ON TRIP TO AFRICA
February 28 ---- March 21, 1957

Executive Registry

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On the basis of my visits to Morocco, Ghana, Liberia, Uganda, Ethiopia, Sudan, Libya, Italy, and Tunisia, from February 28 to March 21, I submit the following observations and recommendations:

IMPORTANCE OF AFRICA

No one can travel in Africa, even as briefly as I did, without realizing the tremendous potentialities of this great continent. Africa is the most rapidly changing area in the world today. The course of its development, as its people continue to emerge from a colonial status and assume the responsibilities of independence and self-government, could well prove to be the decisive factor in the conflict between the forces of freedom and international communism.

The leaders and peoples of the countries I visited in Africa have many things in common. They cherish their independence, which most of them have only recently acquired, and are determined to protect it against any form of foreign domination. They rightfully expect recognition from us and others of their dignity and equality as individuals and peoples in the family of nations. They want economic progress for their undeveloped economies.

The great question which is presented to the leaders of Africa is whether they can attain these justifiable objectives and at the same time maintain and develop governmental institutions which are based on principles of freedom and democracy. I believe they all are convinced that they can, and that the Free World has a vital interest in assisting them to do so. For the success or failure of these new members of the family of nations to realize their aspirations in this manner will have profound effects upon the development of Africa and on the world in the years to come.

Herein lies the wider significance of the emergence of the new nation of Ghana. The eyes of the peoples of Africa south of the Sahara, and of Western Europe particularly, will be upon this new state to see whether the orderly transition which has taken place from dependent to independent status, and whether the retention of close ties on a basis of equality with the British Commonwealth, will continue to work successfully and thereby present a formula of possible application in other cases. By the same token, inimical forces will be closely following the situation to see whether any openings present themselves for exploitation in a manner which would enable them to disrupt and destroy the independence which Ghana seeks to achieve.

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Nor is this a situation peculiar to Ghana. The same factors are present everywhere among the independent states which I visited. Africa is emerging as one of the great forces in the world today. In a world in which, because of advances in technology, the influence of ideas and principles is becoming increasingly important in the battle for men's minds, we in the United States must come to know, to understand and to find common ground with the peoples of this great continent. It is in this context that the recommendations in this report, together with others previously made to the appropriate government agencies are presented.

APPRAISAL OF AFRICAN LEADERSHIP

Africa is producing great leaders, dedicated to the principles of independence, world responsibility and the welfare of their peoples. Such men as the Sultan of Morocco, Prime Minister Nkrumah of Ghana, President Tubman of Liberia, the Emperor of Ethiopia, and Prime Ministers Abdullah Khalil of the Sudan, Ben Halim of Libya and Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia, certainly compare most favorably with the great leaders of the world. Nor should one omit King Idris of Libya, whom I unfortunately missed seeing on this trip because of an engine failure, but whose wisdom and statesmanship I remember most vividly from my previous trip to that country in 1953. These are all men who command respect beyond the borders of their own country. They are backed up by other equally dedicated leaders who have much to contribute both to the problems of their own countries and to those which plague the world today.

RECOMMENDATION

The United States must come to know these leaders better, to understand their hopes and aspirations and to support them in their plans and programs for strengthening their own nations and contributing to world peace and stability. To this end, we must encourage the greatest possible interchange of persons and ideas with the leaders and peoples of these countries. We must assure the strongest possible diplomatic and consular representation to those countries and stand ready to consult these countries on all matters affecting their interests and ours.

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE UNITED STATES

There is no area in the world today in which the prestige of the United States is more uniformly high than in the countries which I visited on this trip. The President is respected as the acknowledged leader of the Free World. There is a most encouraging understanding of our programs and policies. These countries know that we have no ambitions to dominate and that the cornerstone of our foreign policy is to assist countries in resisting domination by others. They understand that the United States stands on principle and that this was

-3-

as we did in the recent Suez crisis. They approve the stand which we took at that time and look confidently to us to act consistently with that stand in the future. They understand that the American Doctrine for the Middle East is dedicated to the principle of assisting the states of the Middle East to maintain their independence. They know that the United States stands for the evolution of dependent peoples toward self-government and independence, as they become able to discharge the responsibilities involved.

RECOMMENDATION

This understanding of the principles for which we stand as a nation is a tremendous asset to us in this area. The maintenance of the present high prestige we are fortunate to have in Africa will depend upon whether the people of the Continent continue to understand our dedication to the principles of independence, equality and economic progress to which they are so deeply devoted. We must staff our diplomatic and information establishments in these countries with men and women capable of interpreting and explaining our policies and actions in a way which will guarantee that they are so understood.

EFFECT OF DISCRIMINATION IN U.S. ON AFRICAN ATTITUDES

As a result of skillful propaganda primarily inspired by the enemies of freedom, a consistently distorted picture of the treatment of minority races in the United States is being effectively presented in the countries I visited. Every instance of prejudice in this country is blown up in such a manner as to create a completely false impression of the attitudes and practices of the great majority of the American people. The result is irreparable damage to the cause of freedom which is at stake.

RECOMMENDATION

We must continue to strike at the roots of this problem. We cannot talk equality to the peoples of Africa and Asia and practice inequality in the United States. In the national interest, as well as for the moral issues involved, we must support the necessary steps which will assure orderly progress toward the elimination of discrimination in the United States. And we should do a far more effective job than we are presently doing in telling the true story of the real progress that is being made toward realizing this objective so that the people of Africa will have a true picture of conditions as they really are in the United States.

ECONOMIC

ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

All of the African states which I visited are underdeveloped. Most of them have great economic potential. Their leaders are anxious to strengthen the economies of their countries in order to assure for their peoples a larger share of the advantages of our modern civilization. They seek economic as well as political independence insofar as this is possible in the world of today.

Their needs are great in terms of education and public health. They require roads and other communications in order to open inaccessible parts of their territory to economic development. They need agricultural development to sustain their expanding populations. They want assistance in developing their great mineral and forest resources. They foresee great opportunities for developing small industrial enterprises. In most cases, these developmental needs are beyond their capacity to finance.

All of the leaders with whom I talked expressed preference for developing their economies through encouraging the investment of private capital and through loans from international agencies such as the World Bank where feasible rather than through government-to-government grants. It can truly be said that the welcome sign is out for investment of foreign private capital in Africa. African leaders are aware of the great role that such private capital can play in the development of their countries and many of them have adopted, or are in the process of adopting, special legislation designed to create an atmosphere conducive to expanded foreign investment.

RECOMMENDATION

Consistent with the desires of African leaders, the United States Government through its agencies should, as appropriate, draw the attention of private American capital to opportunities for investment in those areas where the conditions for such investment are propitious. Strengthening the economic sections of American Embassies in this area is needed if this objective is to be carried out.

We should support applications before the appropriate international agencies for financing sound economic development projects in the area.

To the extent that our resources and the demands of other areas permit, we should extend economic and technical assistance to the countries of Africa in helping them to further their economic development.

In this connection, I think it is appropriate to place in proper context the United States economic assistance programs. These programs should be approved only when they are in the mutual interests of the United States and the recipient country. They should be approved only when they are in the mutual interests of the United States and the recipient country.

But while these programs should be constantly re-examined and improved so that they can better serve the national interest, shotgun attacks on our foreign assistance programs as such cannot be justified.

In this connection, I believe a comment on what has happened in Italy is pertinent. While my visit to Italy was not on an official basis, I did have the opportunity to discuss economic and political problems with President Gronchi, Prime Minister Segni and other Italian officials. It was significant to me that at the time I arrived in Italy, the last American aid office was being closed. I recalled that ten years before when I visited Italy as a member of the Herter Committee on Foreign Aid, the most dire predictions were being made as to the future of the Italian economy. It was said that American assistance would be thrown down a rat hole, that the Italian people should live within their own means, that they should work harder, and that in any event, once the economic program began, we would never see the end of it. The fact that Italy today has one of the soundest, most productive economies in Europe is eloquent proof of the validity of economic assistance properly administered and properly used by the recipient country.

While the economic problems of Italy were obviously different from those Africa now faces, I am confident that in the African countries I visited, we shall have similar success as we work in cooperation with the enlightened leaders of these nations towards the development of their great natural and human resources.

SPECIAL RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES

Africa and Europe have much in common. To a large extent, their economies are complementary. Certain of the independent states on the African continent maintain close ties of an historical, cultural and economic nature with the states of Europe. The maintenance of these relationships, on a basis of equality, can greatly benefit both Africa and Europe.

RECOMMENDATION

We should encourage the continuance of these special ties where they are considered mutually advantageous by the states concerned. We should take them in account in formulating our own policies to the extent compatible with the fundamental requirement of conducting our own relations with those states on a fully equal and independent basis.

The task of providing the economic assistance which is needed by the newly independent countries of Africa cannot be done by the United States alone. We should make it clear that we desire no exclusive position in any country in that area and that we want to work with other Free World nations in providing the assistance which will build strong, free, and independent nations in this area of the world.

COMMUNISM

Africa is a priority target for the international communist movement. I gathered the distinct impression that the communist leaders consider Africa today to be as important in their designs for world conquest as they considered China to be twenty-five years ago. Consequently, they are mounting a diplomatic propaganda and economic offensive in all parts of the continent. They are trying desperately to convince the peoples of Africa that they support more strongly than we do their natural aspirations for independence, equality and economic progress.

Fortunately, their efforts thus far have not been generally successful and, for the present, communist domination in the states of the area is not a present danger. All of the African leaders to whom I talked are determined to maintain their independence against communism or any other form of foreign domination. They have taken steps to bring under control the problem of communist subversion of their political, economic and social life. It would be a great mistake, however, to be complacent about this situation because the Communists are without question putting their top men in the fields of diplomacy, intrigue, and subversion into the African area to probe for openings which they can exploit for their own selfish and disruptive ends.

RECOMMENDATION

The communist threat underlines the wisdom and necessity of our assisting the countries of Africa to maintain their independence and to alleviate the conditions of want and instability on which communism breeds. The importance of Africa to the strength and stability of the Free World is too great for us to underestimate or to become complacent about this danger without taking every step within our power to assist the countries of this area to maintain their effective independence in the face of this danger.

TRADE UNIONISM

In every instance where my schedule permitted, I made it a point to talk to the leading labor leaders of the countries I visited. I was encouraged to find that the free trade union movement is making great advances in Africa, particularly in Ghana, Morocco, and Tunisia. The leaders of these countries have recognized the importance of providing an alternative to communist dominated unions and they, thereby, are keeping the communists from getting a foothold in one of their favorite areas of exploitation. In this connection, I wish to pay tribute to the effective support that is being given by trade unions in the United States to the free trade union movement in the countries which I visited. These close and mutually advantageous relationships are in the national interest as well as in the interest of developing a strong labor movement.

RECOMMENDATION

It is vitally important that the United States Government follow closely trade union developments in the Continent of Africa and that our diplomatic and consular representatives should come to know on an intimate basis the trade union leaders in these countries. I believe, too, that American labor unions should continue to maintain close fraternal relationships with the African free trade union movement in order that each may derive the greatest possible advantage of the wisdom and experience of the other.

NILE DEVELOPMENT

The Nile is one of the world's greatest international rivers. Perhaps in no other part of the world are the economies of so many states tied to a particular waterway. The river is so located geographically that whatever projects are undertaken on it within the territorial domains of one state are bound to have their effect on the economies of other states.

RECOMMENDATION

The United States must take into account the common interests of the riparian states in the development of this great river and, at such time as political conditions permit, should support a cooperative approach to its development which would accord with the common interests of all the states involved.

OPERATION OF UNITED STATES PROGRAMS

Specific recommendations as to the operation of American programs in the countries I visited have been made on a classified basis to the various interested agencies. In general, I found that our political, economic and information programs in the countries which I visited, are being administered in accordance with our obligations to the United States taxpayer. There is, however, always room for improvement and, in the spirit of constructive criticism, I wish to make the following public recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the political side, I believe that our diplomatic and consular missions are generally under-staffed. We must assure that these establishments have sufficient personnel to enable them to interpret our policies, to consult fully with the local governments on matters of mutual interest and to report on developments of importance to the United States. We must assure that our diplomatic and consular offices have sufficient funds to enable them to travel about the vast territories within their jurisdiction for the purposes of reporting on developments outside the major centers of population and of forming contacts with the peoples of those areas.

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We must recognize that the posts in this area are, in many instances, unhealthy and trying climatically to those who are raised in a temperate zone. We must, therefore, endeavor to ameliorate hardship conditions for our personnel in order to enable them more effectively to perform their tasks. We must recognize that the importance of the African area and the difficult living conditions there necessitate our assigning officials of the highest possible competence and stability. The emphasis should be on youth, vigor and enthusiasm.

Insofar as our economic programs are concerned, I believe that our technicians in the field are doing an excellent job in working alongside the African and teaching him to perform the various functions of social and economic development for himself. Obviously, the maintenance and support of these technicians in the field require a headquarters staff in the country capitals. From my own observations, I believe these headquarters staffs sometimes tend to become inflated and I, therefore, recommend that they be carefully reviewed to see whether economies in personnel could not be effected. I believe also that there is sometimes a tendency to scatter programs over a number of fields of economic and social development, whereas greater concentration on a few key projects would bring more lasting returns to the country concerned. Our programs should constantly be reviewed from this point of view. The same comments which I made with respect to the calibre of our diplomatic and consular representation apply as well to our economic and information personnel.

On the informational side, I believe that the most worthwhile projects are the libraries and reading rooms which we have established in a number of centers overseas and the exchange of persons programs. The funds available for these programs in the African area should be substantially increased over the present level.

To the extent that the Africans become familiar with the culture and technology, the ideals and aspirations and the traditions and institutions which combine to make up the American character, we shall have made great advances in common understanding. This can be done through books and periodicals, through student exchanges and through the leader grant program for bringing outstanding Africans to the United States for study and travel. We should also assist as we can in the development of indigenous educational facilities in Africa. In this way, we can get to know them and they to know us.

I believe that the information output from our radio and news programs in the African area have in the past not been as effective as they should be if we are adequately to counter the propaganda being disseminated by the Communists. In the studies which are currently being made of these programs by the USIA, I believe it is important that the highest priority be assigned to this area both as to improving the quality of personnel in the field and in more adequately providing information which is particularly suited to the special problems of Africa.

CONCLUSION

For too many years, Africa in the minds of many Americans has been regarded as a remote and mysterious continent which was the special province of big-game hunters, explorers and motion picture makers. For such an attitude to exist among the public at large could greatly prejudice the maintenance of our own independence and freedom because the emergence of a free and independent Africa is as important to us in the long run as it is to the people of that continent.

It is for this reason that I strongly support the creation within the Department of State of a new Bureau of African Affairs which will place this continent on the same footing as the other great area groupings of the world. I recommend similar action by the I.C.A. and U.S.I.A. These bureaus, properly staffed and with sufficient funds, will better equip us to handle our relationships with the countries of Africa. But this in itself will not be enough. There must be a corresponding realization throughout the executive branches of the Government, throughout the Congress and throughout the nation, of the growing importance of Africa to the future of the United States and the Free World and the necessity of assigning higher priority to our relations with that area.

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State--FD, Wash., D. C.

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*The Vice President
of the United States of America*