SUMMITRY AT CASABLANCA

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BEFORE they met, the question everywhere asked was what the ' Casablanca powers ' have in common. What drew together in January 1961 the Heads of State from Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Morocco, the United Arab Republic and the Algerian Provisional Government, joined by the Libyan Foreign Minister and Ceylon's Ambassador to Cairo? There were well-founded rumours that, at some stage, others had been invited—Nigeria, Ethiopia, Liberia, Togoland, Somalia, Sudan, Indonesia, India and Tunisia—though the last seems doubtful. Although this was never denied, the official implication was that the invitations had been ' limited ' at the last minute to those who actually attended. The obscurity which surrounds this point makes even more interesting the issue of what precisely united these eight angry delegations.

For the delegations were without question angry—and determined and extremely ' serious ' about what had brought them together. It was not a propaganda or a ' solidarity ' conference, but a series of very hard-working sessions. These men were united by their common anger about the immediate issue of the deteriorating situation in the Congo. Of the other States allegedly invited only Indonesia, and to some extent India, share what can be described as the ' Casablanca ' view of the Congo crisis. If any long-term significance is to attach to the coalescence of these particular eight States at this point, it has yet to reveal itself in any convincing way.

By the end of 1960 every one of the States represented which had troops in the Congo had threatened to withdraw them, and Guinea had already started to do so. They had taken this step in protest against the failure of the United Nations Operational Command (U.N.O.C.), as they saw it, to fulfill the Mandate under which it had been established. They had witnessed in the Congo, in the presence of the U.N., the assumption of ' central government ' by a member of the Congolese National Army with no constitutional standing and no established political support; the imprisonment and ill-treatment by that ' government ' of the main leaders of the unitarian cause, including the constitutionally elected Prime Minister; the return of Belgian

technicians, ' advisers ' and military ' volunteers ' to the armies and administration of the secessionist and federalist Congolese authorities, presumed to be pro-Western; the break-up of the Army into a number of largely tribally-based, conflicting units with little predictable allegiances, and the consequent constant threat of civil war. Their resentment was completed by the seating at the U.N. General Assembly, with the support of the Western nations, of the representative of the federalist elements of President Kasavubu alone.

All this arose, in the ' Casablanca ' view, from the U.N.O.C.'s failure to support the central government of the Congo which had invited it in. They argue that since the U.N. was never intended to govern the Congo itself, it could only operate through a properly constituted Congolese authority; and if ' no intervention in Congolese affairs ' entailed failure to support that authority, then only chaos could result, since the position of U.N.O.C. was then an impossible one. Evidence that the Western States were apparently exploiting the chaos to ensure the ultimate ascendency of assumed pro-Western leaders lent credence to the ever-latent belief that new forms of colonialism—' neo-colonialism '—are never far from the surface. The only solution in their view was, clearly, the immediate restoration of the constitutionally established government of President Kasavubu and Prime Minister Lumumba, operating through the Congolese Parliament with the support of the U.N.

This has always been the stand of Ghana's President Nkrumah. The fact that he had not by the end of last year declared his intention to withdraw Ghana's troops from U.N.O.C. arose from his profound belief that only the U.N. is *potentially* capable of producing a lasting settlement for the Congo. Article One in the Pan-Africanist faith, of which Nkrumah must be described as a prime architect, declares the paramount importance of keeping Cold War conflicts out of Africa: it is interesting, for example, that when that principle came in conflict with Nkrumah's own cherished belief in unitary government—when Lumumba threatened to call in the Russians to bolster his campaign for unitary government—it was to the former principle that Nkrumah sacrificed the latter. He strongly advised Lumumba to seek a settlement with Kasavubu rather than involve the Russians.

In Nkrumah's view the failure of the U.N. could only open the Congo to the full blasts of Cold War conflicts. The West

would almost certainly continue to support the assumed pro-Western leaders; while the Communist bloc would use the opportunity to give overt support to the government of Lumumba and the army of Gizenga. Open civil war was the only possible outcome. And since no African State can be indifferent to the fate of the Congo, this would lead to an African division along Cold War frontiers, with a farewell to Pan-Africanism and neutralism alike.

This was Nkrumah's dilemma at Casablanca. It was the dilemma of everyone at the Conference, and it is perhaps the most dangerous dilemma facing the world today. Mali, Guinea and—probably to a lesser extent—the United Arab Republic pressed for the immediate withdrawal of all African and Asian troops, and the recognition of the 'Stanleyville government'. That meant in effect dismissing the U.N.O.C. as a *de facto* instrument of neo-colonialism; and despairing of its role towards a future settlement. Ghana, probably with the support of Ceylon and Morocco, favoured a new attempt at persuading the U.N. to return to first principles.

Both these points of view were incorporated in a communiqué hammered out with evident difficulty in the serious determination by each State represented to abide by it. It amounted to an ultimatum to the U.N. Ghana pledged herself together with the other States to the "intention and determination" to withdraw her troops from the Congo, unless U.N.O.C. changed the nature of its operation in accordance with the principles laid down by the Conference. A detailed course of action was specified. It included disarming the Army and bringing it under one responsible authority, releasing Lumumba and all other members of the elected government, and restoring the operation of the Congo Parliament with authority over the whole territory. It is significant that Lumumba was not singled out for special support. What was laid down were the essential conditions and principles for the re-establishment of constitutional Congolese government, of which Lumumba was still the Prime Minister. The communiqué ended with a threat—a concession to the Guinea-Mali view. The States represented reserved the right "to take appropriate action" if their conditions were not met by the U.N., and such action was generally believed to refer to open support for the Stanleyville 'government' of Lumumba and Gizenga.

About two weeks after Casablanca, the Security Council met

to debate the Congo. The Western nations and their allies voted solidly against, and therefore defeated, an Afro-Asian resolution proposing much the same programme as the Casablanca communiqué and supported by the Soviet Union. In response, Indonesia and every one of the Casablanca States—except Ceylon and Ghana—announced dates for the withdrawal of their troops.

Lumumba's death will be the last straw for most of the Casablanca States. Except for Ceylon and Libya, all of them have officially recognised the 'government' of Gizenga, Lumumba's Vice-Premier, in Stanleyville. When the Security Council met early in February, before the news of Lumumba's death, there were signs of some realistic thinking at last by the new American administration. Britain and France, however, combined with Belgium in strong diplomatic pressure against Kennedy's proposals and especially against suggestions to disarm Congolese forces. The Security Council resolution that eventually emerged, however, conformed broadly to the Casablanca demands. Sponsored by the U.A.R., Ceylon and Liberia, and passed by 9-0, with France and the Soviet Union abstaining, it urged the "use of force, if necessary, in the last resort" to arrange cease-fires and "the halting of all military operations"; "the evacuation from the Congo of all Belgian and other foreign military and para-military personnel and political advisers not under the U.N. command, and mercenaries"; the convening of the Congolese Parliament; and the reorganisation of Congolese armed units to eliminate their interference "in the political life of the Congo".

If the Congo problem was the most pressing issue before the Conference, the formulation of the ' African Charter of Casablanca ' may yet come to represent its most lasting achievement. The Charter does two things. The Preamble establishes the new doctrine of the need for vigilance against ' neo-colonialism'. This concept looks like usurping straightforward ' colonialism ' as the common enemy and as a force for African unity, at least for the militants of the continent. The Preamble is soberly couched. The section on foreign bases, for example, is a statement of desirable ultimate ends rather than a probably unrealistic call for immediate action. It declares the " determination . . . to discourage the maintenance of foreign troops and the establishment of bases which endanger the liberation of Africa and to strive equally to rid the African continent of political

and economic interventions and pressures.'' There was apparently some argument over this section; but Morocco and Libya, both with foreign base commitments for the next few years, won the day against the starker militancy of Guinea, Mali and the U.A.R.

The main body of the resolution announces the establishment of an African Consultative Assembly and four permanent bodies —political, economic and cultural committees, and a Joint African High Command. Each will comprise the relevant representatives of independent African States, and will meet periodically to co-ordinate and establish common 'African' policies. Experts are to meet in the next three months to set these organisations on their feet.

The form of these institutions is significant. First, it opens the door to association by African States who were not represented at Casablanca, even though they may not be in agreement with the other resolutions passed at the Conference. Second, it is interesting that the Conference adopted a functional approach to African unity rather than the more militant political approach of Presidents Nkrumah and Sékou Touré. None of the institutions established seems to envisage more than regular voluntary consultation and co-operation in practical fields. This approach is generally canvassed by Nigeria and Ethiopia, and its adoption at Casablanca, without so much as a mention of the whole controversy, represents a real concession on Nkrumah's part. Whether he will be content to abide by it is difficult to say. His public speech at the closing session was in effect a call for political union, and thus implied dissatisfaction with the Charter as it stands. But since there is little doubt that for the moment at least the practical, functional approach is more widely favoured in Africa, these institutions may prove effective in the regular co-ordination of African interests and policies. This depends very much, of course, upon whether they can attract the participation of other independent African States.

The other resolutions made up a rather mixed bag. There was a fairly routine declaration on the Sahara nuclear tests; and one on Algeria pledging unconditional support for the Provisional Government, condemning the referendum and '' assistance given by N.A.T.O. to France''. The Algerian representatives themselves resisted pressure for any immediate severance of diplomatic relations with France, favouring a threat to do so if the war should continue.

A special resolution condemns South Africa and the '' imperial-

ist powers '' which support her. It goes on to '' reaffirm and undertake to implement '' resolutions passed at previous African conferences. It is worth asking why these resolutions have not yet been implemented by these States. The failure cannot be blamed on the forces either of ' colonialism ' or of ' neo-colonialism'. It is worth recalling that the Conference of Independent African States at Addis Ababa in June 1960 called for South Africa's exclusion from the Commonwealth, and it was signed by Ghana and Nigeria. Presumably this intention was confirmed at Casablanca? Its implementation should not prove too difficult, given the proper degree of determination.

Nasser achieved a moral victory by committing the Conference to the view that Israel is '' an instrument in the service of imperialism and neo-colonialism, not only in the Middle East but also in Africa and Asia''. The effect was to some extent offset however, by a speech in Ghana from the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Kojo Botsio, a few days later, in which he expounded upon the cordial relations between Ghana and Israel. Though Dr. Nkrumah has since stated publicly that he stands by the Casablanca resolution on Israel, it is not easy to envisage its practical implementation in Africa—for the near future at any rate.

A similar moral victory was achieved by Morocco on the subject of Mauritania—which, she claims, is a part of Morocco and should never have been given independent existence. Mauritania's independence is denounced by the Conference, as a French plot to '' encircle the African countries, ensure for herself bases to which she can retreat, and increase the number of her satellites ''; and the Conference resolved to '' approve any action taken by Morocco on Mauritania for the restitution of her legitimate rights''. Again, there was little apparent enthusiasm for this cause outside the Moroccan delegation. Ghana had recognised Mauritania's independence before the Conference started.

What does it all amount to? From one point of view, you might say, very little. Even on the Congo issue—on which there was, and is, considerable real agreement—the ' Casablanca powers ' have not subsequently acted in unison, nor have they given much evidence of mutual consultation before they acted. The African Charter has yet to prove itself, and its success depends very much on the participation of a wider circle of African nations. This is not likely to be helped by vendettas

conducted by individual 'Casablanca' States against others outside it. Morocco's attempts to isolate Tunisia in the African and Arab worlds because of Tunisia's support for Mauritania is a good example. The fact also that the Brazzaville States (Communauté and ex-Communauté) tend to be dismissed as 'colonialist agents' is discouraging. There is little convincing evidence that Casablanca resolutions on subjects other than the obvious ones like Algeria, South Africa and the Sahara tests, will be implemented in unison.

This, however, is to take a very limited view of the Conference. Immediate results are not the most obvious features of 'Summits' anywhere. What is important is that the Casablanca States represent for the moment the pace-makers of Africa and Asia, especially on the specific issue of the Congo. Such a group of States will always exist, though its composition may vary. Clearly, for instance, Indonesia should be numbered with the 'militants' today, and tomorrow there may be others; while today's 'militants' may be tomorrow's 'moderates'. Their views are important, for they provide a magnet for militants all over Africa and Asia. The Pan-African emphasis on the oneness of Africa will perpetuate this focus, whether it is on Accra or Addis Ababa, Cairo or Dar-es-Salaam.

The militant—you might even say revolutionary—attitude will centre from time to time on specific problems which affect Africans and Asians in particular. The danger to Pan-Africanism —and the Bandung spirit—is that these problems will divide African and Asian nations rather than unite them. So far the Congo crisis has produced just that danger. There exist at present three more or less defined blocs in Africa and Asia, each with its own approach to the problem: the Casablanca powers, with an ideological, 'Africanist' view; the Brazzaville States, with a discreetly pro-Western bias; and the large loose remainder of States, like Nigeria, Tunisia, Ethiopia and India, who are approaching the problem more or less pragmatically. This may be the pattern for some time to come, though the composition of these groups will remain, as it is, flexible, variable and overlapping. It seems likely at any rate that the Congo situation has strained the ideal of African unity almost to breaking-point, if the convening of semi-exclusive gatherings like Casablanca and Brazzaville are anything to go by. If so, that ideal will not be the least significant casualty of the Congo disaster.


Casablanca
MOROCCO
TUNISIA
ALGERIA
Provisional Govt.
LIBYA
EGYPT
U.A.R.
SP. SAHARA
MAURITANIA
MALI
NIGER
TCHAD
SUDAN
FR. SOMALI
SENEGAL
GAMBIA
PORT. GUINEA
GUINEA
UP VOLTA
DAHOMEY
TOGO
NIGERIA
ETHIOPIA
SIERRA LEONE
IVORY COAST
LIBERIA
GHANA
C.AFRICAN REP.
CAMER-OUN
SP. GUINEA
GABON
CONGO
CONGO REP.
UGANDA
KENYA
SOMALILAND
Brazzaville
TANGANYIKA
FED. OF
ANGOLA
RHODESIA & NYASALAND
MOZAMBIQUE
S.W. AFRICA
BECHUANA LAND
MADAGASCAR
UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA
CASABLANCA BLOC
BRAZZAVILLE BLOC