

IVORY COAST

PRESIDENT FEARS DANGERS OF DIVISION

Abidjan Domestic Service in French 2000 GMT 20 November 1961--L

(Live relay from Monrovia of speech to Liberian Parliament by President Felix Houphouet-Boigny of the Ivory Coast)

(Excerpts) We intend to retain our independence acquired at such cost, against all attempts from within or without. Our constant aim is peace. We need peace, so that we may achieve the consolidation of our country. We believe, like you, in the need for the unity of and cooperation among the independent nations of Africa. Nothing must divide them, from the moment they are independent, if they have the determination to insure for our continent a future of progress in peace, true neutrality, freedom, and fraternity.

I have struggled as much as anyone, for 16 years with the great movement of the RDA (Rassemblement Democratique Africain), having obtained for my country total and unconditional independence, and all this peacefully, with the full agreement of the colonizing power. I not only voice the wish but I work for the total independence of all Africa, for no one can call himself truly free until all Africa is independent. Just as you are doing, we are acting for the elimination of war, whether hot or cold, while believing in the indispensable role of the United Nations like you, we think that all differences between nations can be solved happily by means of negotiations.

Just as the Liberian Government, we encourage investments in the Ivory Coast, thanks to a liberal economic policy, aimed at securing the maximum number of jobs for our workers, to develop the country's wealth with the aim of improving the standard of living while at the same time jealously preserving our independence against all corners. It has been a most agreeable duty for me to stress the concord which exists as much in the home as in the foreign domains between my country and yours, with the full support of the Liberian Parliament and people. (Applause) It is a true cause for satisfaction for us in the Ivory Coast, and we see in it an ideal forerunner for ever greater cooperation between our two countries for the strengthening of their solidarity. Today, within the walls of this Liberian Assembly, we solemnly proclaim our faith in the future of relations between the Liberian and Ivory Coast nations, and we ask you earnestly to share our conviction of the need for joint action by our two countries, in the interests of safeguarding peace in our beloved Africa in particular, and in the world in general. (applause)

After some disappointing results, attempts at unity at the summit, without serious preliminary preparations at the level of the people--everyone is convinced of the truth of this--the political unity of Africa is not something for today. Unity based on a single man, on a single country, is not unity. Unity, like every human endeavor, must proceed stage by stage, passing through friendship, tolerance, understanding, union, cooperation and solidarity based on respect for all interests concerned. Unity can in the final resort be achieved neither by ruse nor force, but by sincere and methodical organization for solidarity, which must stem from fraternity, the indispensable support of the entire edifice.

The whole world expects much of young Africa. Our continent, more than any other, needs peace to enable it to catch up with the others on the path of human progress. Criminals and traitors to Africa are those who by stupid ambitions, attempt to endanger peace in Africa by means of subversion aided from abroad. (applause) It is tragic that more often than not it is precisely those who fail to insure peace at home. True peace, the peace of the heart and spirit, they disturb for others. (applause) All Africans have the duty of firmly fighting these traitors. We do not hesitate to use the word--traitors--who can do so much harm to the African cause. They have even tried--and we heard of this in the noble message President Tubman sent to the Liberian nation before his departure last month on an official visit to the United States--to endanger the lives of members of your government. I believe that our countries, who are neighbors, must join efforts to put out of the way, where they can do no harm, all these misguided souls, who, benefiting from our joint frontier, can pass from one country where they commit their misdeeds, to the other.

We must not allow these troublemakers to install subversion in our two countries in order to bring about a regime from which our people would have nothing to gain. They seek to make democracy and freedom disappear. But, we have fought for democracy and freedom. There can be no question of leaving them to the mercy of men who are irresponsible or criminally ambitious.