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The State of the Union.

DAR ES SALAAM,  
Tanganyika.  
18 August 64

Mr. Richard H. Nolte,  
Institute of Current World Affairs  
366 Madison Avenue  
New York 17, New York

Dear Mr. Nolte:

On 23 April, President Nyerere of Tanganyika and President Karume of Zanzibar announced to a startled world that they had signed Articles of Union merging their two countries into the United Republic of Tanganyika and Zanzibar. What led to the Union in the first place? After four months, what are the problems it faces? Most important of all, what are the chances of its survival in the future?

"Tanganyika and Zanzibar," President Nyerere explained to the emergency session of his National Assembly called to ratify the Union between the two countries, "are neighbours geographically, historically, and linguistically; they are neighbours by custom and culture and by politics ... we have these reasons to unite; on top of it all we have the overall African desire for unity."

Without doubt, the two countries have been close for just these reasons: a large proportion of Zanzibaris originally came from the mainland and still feel emotionally tied to it, both areas remember the oppression of the Arab slavers, and, of course, Swahili is their common tongue. Politically too, Africans in Zanzibar and Tanganyika are related, for as far back as 1956, Nyerere went over to the island to try and bring peace among the feuding Africans of mainland descent and the Shirazis (Africans whose ancestors came from Persia). Since Zanzibar's 1957 elections, when the two factions merged to form the Afro-Shirazi Party (A.S.P.), relations between the A.S.P. and Tanganyika's ruling party, the Tanganyika African National Union (Tanu), have been increasingly friendly. Tanu supported the A.S.P. with money, vehicles and even visiting speakers during its unsuccessful 1961 campaign.

But the real reason Tanganyika joined the United Republic, over which President Nyerere has carefully draped the above rationale, is that he saw his country threatened by the growing Communist influence on Zanzibar and thought he could protect it in a Union. He had, it is true, the other choice of trying to take Zanzibar over by force, but he believes passionately in non-violence and, even if he did not, having

disbanded one half his army, disarmed the other half, and dismissed a good part of his police force after the January mutiny, he was in no position to attack anyone.

Nyerere's feelings in this matter are well known here, but not so much is heard about President Karume's reasons for renouncing his newly-won sovereignty for union with Tanganyika. In fact, the press coverage of the merger makes it seem as if Nyerere's wishes alone brought it about. This is not so -- if Karume himself had not wanted to join Tanganyika there would be no United Republic today. He decided to merge because he felt himself threatened from several quarters in the early days after the revolution. First of all he was genuinely concerned that Arabs from the North supported by the British whose ships were still off Zanzibar, might counter attack his disorganized forces in an attempt to reinstate the Sultan. Also, though in retrospect it seems an unwarranted worry, President Karume felt his own status as leader of Zanzibar threatened by the leftward maneuverings of some members of his Revolutionary Council and thought that membership in the Union would, somehow, give him more control.

Security was foremost in Karume's mind when he considered joining Tanganyika, but there were other reasons for the move that appealed to him; like Nyerere, he believes in African unity and feels a strong tie between the A.S.P. and Tanu.

Few unions can have been born with so many Cassandras at their cradle-side; from the infant's first squall, observers said it would never last the year out. And, although their doom-filled prophecies of a short, unhappy life have not yet come to pass, some of their allegations, particularly those concerning Communist threats to the Union, have substance. Of all the problems that beset the United Republic today, the ones most likely to split it apart, both on the short term and in the long run, concern Communist influence, particularly that of the East Germans.

The East Germans saw their chance in the vacuum that occurred after the January 12th revolution, when neither America or England would recognize Zanzibar and she needed help badly, especially in the replacement of the British civil servants the revolutionary government had fired. With a speed that makes one wonder if there had not been some sort of prior communication, the East Germans were on hand with personnel, money, trade missions - all the usual artillery of influence. The result has been that, although they number only about 50, the same as the Red Chinese and the Russians (there are no Cubans on Zanzibar), they have by far the most influence of any foreigners now on the island. The Permanent Secretary in Zanzibar's Ministry of Finance is an East German and his countrymen are in education, information, communications and in the newly-named V.I. Lenin Hospital (né Karimjee Hospital) where, according to a recent

issue of the Zanzibar Gazette, eight of them now head departments. In their efforts to woo Karume, the East Germans sent his wife on a six week tour of their country and, further, they have just given him building materials for a \$1,400,000 housing project which lie for everyone to see in the middle of Zanzibar town's largest playing ground. If some of the teachers sent over could not speak English well enough and if many of the building materials were already available in Zanzibar, the fact remains that the East Germans have scored a resounding propaganda success, and that they have convinced Karume that they are his true friends, in his country to help him without thought of gain. His regard for them is such that he reacts strongly to any suggestions that he get rid of them. "They helped me when no one else would," he is reported to have said, "so why should I cast friends out?" A good example of this partiality occurred late in June when, after an editorial in the "Nationalist", Tanganyika's Government-sponsored newspaper, accused the East Germans of, "attempting to destroy our Union in the interests of their own desires," Karume promptly banned the paper from Zanzibar. An embarrassed statement denying that he had done so was hurriedly issued the next day, but it was obvious that, in attacking the East Germans, the "Nationalist" had stung Karume badly.

The immediate danger to the Union stemming from Karume's close relations with the East Germans is that they bring him into direct conflict with Nyerere. Karume has allowed his new friends to establish an Embassy on Zanzibar, their first in Africa, and insists that they keep it there even though Nyerere, who as President of the United Republic is Karume's superior, and who does not recognize East Germany, has said specifically that all embassies on the island had to become consulates by the first of July. Karume has chosen to interpret this order as applying only to countries with embassies in Dar es Salaam and says that, as the East Germans have none there, they should have one in Zanzibar.

It is hardly surprising then, that the West Germans, who have made Tanganyika the pet of their foreign aid program, regard these developments with something less than hand-rubbing delight. Privately and through government channels, they have given or pledged over \$35,000,000 and they grumble threateningly that this help will stop if the Zanzibar half of the United Republic does not put the East Germans in their proper diplomatic place. In actual fact, however, the chances of West Germany pulling out are slight, for to do so would merely leave the field open to their hated rivals. The Africans, for their part, will probably be content to let the situation drift along, as the preservation of the United Republic is more important to Nyerere than the conflict between the Germanies. The real difficulty could come if the East Germans, thinking that their roots into Zanzibar were sufficiently deep, would press Karume for the removal of the West Germans as a condition of his continuing membership in the United Republic.

A second problem, which also involves the Communists, concerns the Army. According to the Articles of Union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar defence is among the eleven "matters" under the jurisdiction of the United Republic, but both countries now maintain their own troops. In Zanzibar, the 600 man People's Liberation Army is split into two groups, one of which 20 Russian military advisors are training, the other of which is being schooled by the Chinese\*. On the mainland, in contrast, the Tanganyika Rifles train themselves. Whether Karume will allow the People's Liberation Army to integrate with the mainland forces or, for that matter, whether Nyerere would want such a potentially subversive element in his country is an important hurdle which remains to be cleared.

There are other, lesser, immediate strains in the Union. Immigration should also be controlled by the United Republic, but, in practice, only Zanzibar controls who visits her. To get permission to go there, I had to deal, not with the immigration authorities in Dar es Salaam, but directly with Zanzibar's Principal Immigration Officer. The Postal Service should, furthermore, be a function of the United Republic, but Zanzibar still puts out its own stamps -- made in East Germany.

In the long run, the greatest danger to the viability of the United Republic is the possibility that, because of Communist influence, the Government of Zanzibar may become so radical that President Nyerere will no longer be able to feel safe in a Union with it. The Sino-Soviet split has been kept carefully under the table in Zanzibar; in the Umma Bookshop at the A.S.P. headquarters, for instance, portraits of Krushchev and Mao Tse Tung huddle together on one of the walls and the stock consists of a mixture of Russian and Chinese literature, but it seems unlikely that this apparent amity can last. If a split occurs and lines of battle are drawn with Zanzibaris on either side, the effect on the Union could be fatal.

But, in spite of all these problems, the United Republic now looks as if it will last. Both Nyerere and Karume are in full control of their countries and have their prestige fully staked on the Union, particularly since the recent Cairo summit conference when they presented it as an example of real African unity. Some say the relationship between the two men is strained, that Karume has felt submerged in the United Republic, but, according to the Articles of Union, he has a large measure of autonomy; until a constitutional assembly approves a new

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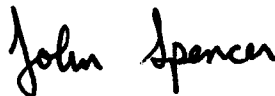
\* It is worth a note in passing, that the Chinese had a shipment of small arms half-way to Zanzibar when the United Republic was formed. Instead of keeping quiet about it, they cleverly asked President Nyerere if he wanted the ship to turn back. Surprised and pleased, Nyerere answered that the weapons should be used for the Army of the United Republic.

constitution, Zanzibar is to have, "a separate Legislature and Executive ... constituted in accordance with the existing law of Zanzibar", and, "under the style of President of Zanzibar", Karume is to be the head of the "aforesaid Executive". According to those who know him, the bear-like Karume is genuinely relieved to be rid of part of the difficult task of decision-making; "That" he likes to say, "is for Julius to decide now."

An important reason the United Republic should survive is simply that no one seems to be directly against it. The Chinese, East Germans, and Russians all appear to support it and even the two men generally assumed to be the most fervent indigenous communists; Peking's favourite, Abdul Rahman Babu, and Kassim Hanga, a recent graduate of Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow, both of whom are Ministers in the United Republic's Cabinet, are taking their jobs seriously and trying to do them well. Hanga himself told me, with what appeared to be real conviction, "Our Union will last forever!" Some say the Communists want the United Republic to last because they realize it is a far more important objective than the small island of Zanzibar alone. Others believe that the Communist line and Communist differences are deliberately being played down lest one day Karume awake and see that his new friends perhaps are not as altruistic as they would have him believe. Whatever their reasoning, for the time being at least, the Communists are supporting the Union.

The Africans here devoutly wish that critics, particularly the Western Press, would leave them alone and stop worrying about the state of their Union. "Can't you see," a Minister of the United Republic told me, "that what we have done is first to build a roof. For us, this is the most important thing. After that, the windows, walls and doors will come. It may take time, but this is the African way." Viewed in this light, and knowing the African ability to adjust, what President Nyerere described to a friend as, "The biggest gamble of my life", may well succeed.

Sincerely,



John Spencer

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