

ROUND THE WORLD

NAMIBIA

Armed Struggle Stepped Up

In the past four months, the guerrillas of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) wiped out nearly 100 South African racist occupation troops in their intensified armed struggle. This was announced by SWAPO's Chief Representative resident in East Africa Lucas Pohamba at a press conference on May 20 in Dar-es-Salaam.

On April 22, SWAPO guerrillas, operating in the northeastern area, ambushed a motorized detachment of the racist army at Enana, 30 kilometres south of the Namibia-Angola border, inflicting heavy losses in men and material on the enemy side. In one of the battles, he said, 29 South African troops were killed, 60 others wounded and four armoured cars and four military jeeps completely destroyed.

On April 19, a SWAPO sabotage unit attacked the building of the Bureau of State Security in Windhoek, capital of Namibia, killing four agents and wounding 20 others.

From March 7 to 18, the SWAPO guerrillas engaged the South African troops patrolling the border areas between Namibia and Angola. Anti-aircraft units shot down three helicopters and one military plane of the South African occupation army. In another engagement, the SWAPO guerrillas destroyed seven enemy troop carriers, killing 45 enemy troops and wounding many others.

ISLAMIC COUNTRIES

7th Foreign Ministers Conference

The 7th session of the Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference attended by 41 countries took place in Turkey's Istanbul during May 12-15.

A communique issued by the conference says that the conference affirmed its solidarity with and support for the struggle of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian and Arab people for ending Zionist occupation, for liberating the occupied territories and for re-

storing the full national rights of the Palestinian people. The conference maintained that "the Palestinian cause is the core of the Middle East question," and that peace in the Middle East "can only be based on the total withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Arab territories and the restoration of the national and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people."

The conference, the communique adds, reaffirmed the commitments of the Islamic countries to the struggle against racism in Azania, Namibia, Zimbabwe and occupied Palestine, and called on all Islamic countries to extend greater moral and material assistance to the liberation movements in southern Africa.

The communique expresses concern at the difficulties experienced by Bangladesh as a result of sharing the water of the international Ganges River. "The conference," the communique says, "expressed the hope that this problem will be solved expeditiously and satisfactorily through discussions among the countries concerned in the greater interests of peace and stability in the region."

"The conference examined the new international circumstances resulting from the emergence of the group of third world states as a force that should play its role in directing international politics in order to realize international peace and justice," it says. "The conference underlined, in this connection, that the time has come to revise the United Nations Charter in accordance with these new circumstances in a manner that would guarantee all states justice and equality."

"The conference affirmed the commitment of the Islamic countries to the establishment of a new and just international economic order," the communique adds.

NATO COUNCIL

Spring Session

The NATO council held its spring session in Oslo on May 20 and 21. The session, attended by the foreign

ministers of the 15 member countries, put the stress on reviewing the recent trends in the relations between these countries and the Soviet Union.

After the conference on European security and co-operation last year, the Soviet Union stepped up, instead of slowing down, its military expansion. In particular, it made no attempt to conceal its interference in the affairs of Angola. This has aroused apprehensions and vigilance in the Western countries. To a certain extent, the session reflected the public feelings of these countries. The final communique released at the end of the session emphasizes that the members of the North Atlantic alliance must "maintain and, where necessary, enhance . . . their deterrent and defensive strength." It adds that they will "continue to strive for a relaxation of tensions."

The final communique says the ministers attending the session felt that "they must once again voice their concern at the sustained growth in the Warsaw Pact countries' military power, on land, at sea and in the air beyond levels apparently justified for defensive purposes." "The ministers again stressed the determination of their governments to take measures necessary to maintain and improve the efficiency of their forces, as an essential safeguard for the security of member countries whether against military aggression or political pressure."

The session discussed the Vienna negotiations on disarmament in Central Europe. The ministers present reaffirmed that "NATO forces should not be reduced except in the context of mutual and balanced force reduction agreements."

On the situation in the Mediterranean, the communique says that the ministers "emphasized the importance they attach to maintaining the balance of forces throughout the Mediterranean area."

Speaking at the opening ceremony, NATO Secretary-General Joseph Luns said that the Soviet Union "is not only pressing on by means of an unremitting defence effort, with the reinforcement of its nuclear potential and its conventional forces in

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Europe, but it is also providing itself with the means of engaging in power politics everywhere in the world and demonstrating that it intends to use these means even in areas which have hitherto been outside its traditional sphere of interest." Itms went on record to oppose the call by some West Europeans for defence spending cuts to ease economic strains.

Norwegian Prime Minister Odvar Nordli's speech at the opening ceremony and the speeches of foreign ministers of some other countries expressed worries about the Soviet Union's feverish military buildup, penetration and expansion everywhere.

U.S. Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger promised the NATO participants that U.S. foreign policy would support "a firm defence" of the West against Soviet aggression, no matter what administration is in power in Washington. He expressed concern about the possibility of another Angola and said that Soviet behaviour in that African country violated the spirit of the European security and co-operation agreement. But he tried to justify his policy towards the Soviet Union, describing it as "the only viable course."

SOVIET UNION

Huge Foreign Trade Deficits

The Soviet total trade deficit reached a record high in 1975.

An article in the 19th issue of *Economic Gazette*, published at the

beginning of May, by V. A. Klochek, member of the Collegium of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Director of the Administration of Planning Economy under the ministry, noted that last year the Soviet total foreign trade turnover reached 50,700 million rubles, among which import amounted to 26,700 million and export 24,000 million, resulting in a deficit of 2,700 million (some 3,600 million U.S. dollars). Its trade with industrially developed capitalist countries totalled 15,800 million rubles, among which import amounted to 9,700 million and export 6,100 million, leaving a deficit of 3,600 million (some 4,800 million U.S. dollars).

This huge deficit was caused by the aggressive social-imperialist policy of unbridled arms expansion and war preparations pursued by the Brezhnev clique to contend for hegemony with U.S. imperialism. It was also caused by the all-round capitalist restoration in all sectors of the Soviet national economy. According to Klochek, the Soviet Union imported in 1975 a large quantity of machinery and equipment, including many sets of equipment and vessels for various purposes. The import of machinery and equipment reached 9,000 million rubles, accounting for 34 per cent of the total import. It imported over 5.6 million tons of rolled steel last year. All this shows that the Soviet social-imperialists are trying their utmost to build up their economic and military strength with Western technology, equipment and raw materials.

Another important cause for its huge trade deficit last year was the repeated crop failures, particularly the unprecedented one of last year, which resulted in large purchases of grain on the international market. Since last July, the Soviet Union has bought some 30 million tons of grain, a record high in the history of Soviet grain import, with the United States supplying 16.5 million tons. In addition, the Soviet Union bought meat, edible oil, sugar and other farm and animal products from other countries.

What merits attention is that the huge trade deficit appeared at a time when the Soviet Union was busily engaged in arms sales and ruthless exploitation of developing countries and its "allies." An American press report says that "the Soviet Union enjoyed a surplus of about 400 million dollars in its trade with developing countries (last year). A portion of this came from arms sales that would bring in hard currency. It also had a larger surplus — about 660 million dollars — with its East European allies."

It is obvious that if the Soviet Union failed to reap some profits at the expense of the developing countries and its "allies," its trade deficit would become much bigger. In addition, the Soviet Union has obtained loans from the West and sold gold in large quantities in order to make up for the huge trade deficit. One press report says that the Soviet debts have reached 20,000 million U.S. dollars.