

SPEECH

BY

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His Excellency Vladimir Putin,

Their Excellencies the African Heads of State
and Government,

The people of Uganda send you greetings and
well wishes.

I have had the good fortune of watching and participating in freedom activities in our area for the last 60 years, plus. In order to understand the struggles we have been involved in, we should be reminded that by 1900, the whole of Africa had been colonized except for Ethiopia. This colonization followed 500 years of taking slaves from Africa and the devastation, that criminal trade caused. It was not only Africa that was colonized, but also much of Asia (India), Indonesia, Indo-China, Burma, the Philippines, Malaysia, etc.) and the subjugation and extermination of the indigenous people of the Americas and Australia.

However, these criminal acts by the imperialists – the slave trade and colonialism – provoked the colonized people into launching a resistance movement by some of the black people in the USA, in the persons of Du Bois and Padamore, who launched the Pan-African Movement. This was the first step.

Secondly, in 1912, the ANC of South Africa, was launched, led by new resistance fighters, different from before, when the leaders of the resistance were the Kings and Chiefs (Kabarega, Mkwawa, Lobengula, Mwanga, etc.). Thirdly, the huge Country of the Soviet Union, was taken over by Communists in 1917 and so was the huge country of China, in 1949. Those communists, were staunch anti-imperialists. Fourthly, our good fortune was that the greedy imperialists, started fighting over us. I am referring here, to the so called First and Second “World Wars”. In effect, these were inter-imperialist wars, vying for domination.

In those wars, the imperialists weakened themselves to the advantage of the anti-colonial movement. That is how India, Pakistan, Indonesia, etc., got independence. Some of the imperialists, tried to cling to the colonies, but they were defeated in Algeria, Vietnam, Kenya, Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa.

Fifthly, even within the imperialist countries, we had allies that were against the evil system. People like Fenner Broackway, Dingle Foot, Olof Palme, were with us and with our parents before us, in opposing this evil system.

It is these 5 factors, that caused the defeat of imperialism and restored our sovereignty, to some extent. These are: the anti-colonial Movement in Africa, Asia and Latin America; the rise of communism in the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, North Korea, etc; the two inter-imperialist wars of the last century that caused the weakening of the imperialist

countries, to our advantage even when our parents were used as cannon fodder in those criminal wars – fighting the Japanese in Burma, the Italians in Ethiopia, the Germans in North Africa and Europe; the Pan-Movement launched by some of the Black people in the USA; and the support by some fair-minded persons in the imperialist countries – persons like Fenner Brockway, Dingle Foot, Olof Palme and others.

We are, therefore, happy to be here in Russia and we take this opportunity to thank the Soviet peoples and other socialist countries, for that support.

However, flag independence did not, in the majority of cases in Africa, mean healthy disengagement with imperialist economies. Up to now, many of the African economies, still face the bottlenecks and distortions of the colonial era. Although some progress has been achieved.

That is why you hear that the GDP of Africa is currently USD2.7 trillion, smaller than the individual economies of countries like Japan, Germany, etc. This stunting of the African economies, is caused by a number of bottlenecks that I may not have time to enumerate here. We have, however, identified them and we are handling, together with our brothers in the African Union.

However, one example can bring out some of these bottlenecks. This is the issue of coffee. The global value of the coffee businesses, currently, is: USD460bn. However, all the coffee producing countries in the World, take only USD25bn of this. Africa's share is USD2.4bn, with Uganda taking USD 800million because we are now producing 8 million, 60kg bags. Germany earns USD6.85bn from coffee – more than all the African coffee producing countries. This is part of modern slavery. What is causing this?

Africa being locked into and also locking itself into, only producing raw-materials of agriculture, minerals, etc. and abstaining from adding value. A kg of good coffee today earns about USD2.5. The same kilogram roasted and processed, outside Africa, earns about USD40. This is the hemorrhage that has stunted Africa's growth. There are other bottlenecks, but I do not have time to go into them. Therefore, my proposal to our allies of Russia, India, China, etc., is to point out to them that they could help here by policy decisions to buy value-added products from Africa rather than raw materials. Those are products like processed coffee, instead of bean coffee; chocolate, instead of cocoa beans; textiles, instead of just cotton; steel, instead of iron ore (*obutare*); electric batteries, instead of just lithium, etc.

Part of the issues we are solving among ourselves in Africa, is the issue of the free-flow of goods and services in the CFTA.

If this is addressed, the other problem of food for African societies, will also be, partially, addressed. Uganda is a net-exporter of food; produce like maize, milk, bananas, fruits, fish, cassava, not to mention beverages like coffee, tea, cocoa, vanilla, etc, are produced in big quantities and, with irrigation, bigger quantities are possible. Without irrigation, our farmers produce 5.3 tonnes of bananas per hectare. With irrigation and fertilizers, that production has gone to 53 tonnes in some of the Government supported farms. It is, therefore, important for our partners to know that some of the African countries, such as Uganda, produce huge quantities of food and, moreover, food of unique nutritional value (beef with yellow fat instead of the cholesterol laden types you get from many parts of the World, potassium rich bananas, high cream (*omwiitsi*) milk, fish with *enuni* (Nile Perch bladder) that is a cure for some maladies, millet with protein, carbohydrates and iron together, etc.).

What we actually need, are markets in both Africa and beyond.

Secondly, you could also encourage your companies to invest in value addition in Africa. Definitely, this would be a win-win formula for all of us.

Value addition to the abundant raw-materials in Africa, means more jobs for the unemployed African youth that are dying in the Mediterranean trying to reach Europe and more money in their pockets. They will, then, afford to pay for more electricity generated by turbines made from outside – which creates more jobs and money for the turbine producers. After some delays, we in Africa, are making some good moves. One of them is the CFTA – the Continental Free Trade Area – that is uniting the huge market of Africa of 1.5bn people. We shall be 2.5bn in the next 30 years. Remember that Africa is 12 times bigger than India in land area.

Therefore, Africa has been under-populated for much of the millenia, the fact that it is the origin of man (homo sapien sapien), 4 and a half-million years ago, notwithstanding. Today, on account of modern medicine, Africa will have optimal population for the first time in human history.

Finally, those who ferment wars on account of ideological issues, are wrong and they are time and opportunity wasters. Human history will move on, whether they like it or not. Did the religious wars in Europe impose religious conformity in the World? Did Metternich's Holy Alliance stop the spread of capitalism and the overthrow of feudalism? The only justified wars are the just wars, like the anti-colonial wars. Wars of hegemony, will fail and waste time and opportunity. Dialogue is the correct way.

I thank everybody.