

ADDRESS BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF DEFENCE  
MR. LEVI ESHKOL, AT GRADUATION CEREMONY OF CONGOLESE PARACHUTISTS FOURSE

---

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1963

GENERAL MOBOUTU, CONGOLESE PARACHUTISTS, MINISTERS, AMBASSADORS,  
OFFICERS OF THE ISRAEL DEFENCE FORCES, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS:

IT IS NOT BY CHANCE THAT THE FIRST CONGOLESE PARATROOPERS UNIT SHOULD BE TRAINED AND ESTABLISHED IN THE YOUNG STATE OF ISRAEL AND IN THIS SCHOOL OF THE ISRAEL DEFENCE FORCES. WE, LIKE THE SONS OF AFRICA, HAVE KNOWN WHAT IT IS TO FIGHT UNDER A FOREIGN FLAG, UNDER FOREIGN COMMAND - AND, IN OUR CASE, ON FOREIGN FIELDS AS WELL UNTIL WE ACHIEVED OUR INDEPENDENCE.

EVER SINCE ISRAEL RECOVERED HER SOVEREIGNTY, SHE HAS REGARDED IT AS A DUTY AND AN HONOUR TO SHARE WITH EVERY FRIEND THE MODEST KNOWHOW AND EXPERIENCE THAT HAVE BEEN - AND STILL ARE - OF ASSISTANCE IN HER ENTERPRISE OF RESURGENCE. WE ARE PARTICULARLY PROUD THAT WE HAVE BEEN PRIVILEGED TO COOPERATE WITH THE LIBERATED NATIONS OF AFRICA, STRIVING FOR RENEWAL, IN ALL FIELDS OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

NOW, WHEN THE PEOPLE OF THE CONGO, LIKE US IN ISRAEL, HAVE ACHIEVED FULL INDEPENDENCE, WE ARE PROUD THAT WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO HELP THEM TO ESTABLISH FOR THEMSELVES AN ARMY FOR THEIR DEFENCE AND SECURITY.

ANYONE WHO COMPARES THE CONGO WITH ISRAEL WILL EASILY SEE THE TREMENDOUS DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES. WE ARE COMPARATIVELY SMALL IN AREA AND IN POPULATION, WHILE THE CONGO IS AN ENORMOUS LAND WITH A LARGE POPULATION.

BUT THERE ARE GREAT THINGS THAT UNITE US: THE FERVENT DESIRE FOR PEACE, THE NEED FOR PEACE.

THE ASPIRATION FOR PEACE IS NOT JUST A SLOGAN; IT IS RATHER THE MAIN CONDITION FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE ECONOMIC, CULTURAL AND SOCIAL LEVEL ~~XXX~~ OF OUR PEOPLES.



TO ACHIEVE THESE LONGED-FOR GOALS, A YOUNG COUNTRY MUST DEDICATE ALL ITS SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL RESOURCES, AND THIS CAN ONLY BE DONE UNDER CONDITIONS OF PEACE AND SECURITY. ALTHOUGH THE HOPE FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN PEOPLES IS VERY MUCH IN THE ATMOSPHERE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS TODAY, HOSTILITY HAS NOT YET CEASED, NOR HAVE WARS YET DISAPPEARED FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH. THEREFORE, TO OUR REGRET, WE MUST, LIKE EVERY OTHER NATION STRIVE, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF FRIENDLY PEOPLES, TO ENSURE THE DEFENCE OF OUR SOIL AND THE PEACE OF OUR CITIZENS.

THUS, A SHORT TIME AGO, THE CONGO GOVERNMENT TURNED TO ITS FRIENDS IN THE WORLD AND ASKED FOR ASSISTANCE IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ITS ARMY. WE WERE ASKED TO COOPERATE IN THE SETTING UP OF A PARATROOPERS' UNIT. AND NOW, AFTER THE PASSAGE OF ONLY A FEW MONTHS, I AM HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE TO THE CONGO GOVERNMENT AND THE COMMANDER OF ITS ARMY, THAT THE FIRST MISSION WE UNDERTOOK HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT.

PARATROOPERS: ON THIS DAY, AT THIS FESTIVE CEREMONY, YOU COMPLETE A DIFFICULT AND EXHAUSTING PERIOD OF TRAINING. YOU HAVE DEVOTED GREAT EFFORT AND DETERMINATION TO YOUR TRAINING, SO THAT YOU MIGHT ACHIEVE AS MUCH AS WAS HUMANLY POSSIBLE IN THE SHORT TIME ALLOTTED FOR THE PURPOSE.

YOU HAVE REACHED YOUR GOAL AND ACQUITTED YOURSELVES HONOURABLY.

IT GIVES ME PARTICULAR PLEASURE TO NOTE THE HONOUR THAT WAS VOUCHSAFED TO ME A FEW MOMENTS AGO OF PINNING THE PARACHUTIST'S WINGS ONTO THE CHEST OF YOUR VAIIANT COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. HIS COURAGE WILL SERVE YOU AND US AS A SYMBOL OF THE PERSONAL EXAMPLE THAT SHOULD BE SET BY AN OFFICER AND A COMMANDER.

I KNOW THAT THE COMMANDER OF THE SCHOOL AND THE INSTRUCTORS WHO TAUGHT YOU ARE FULLY SATISFIED WITH THE JOINT ACHIEVEMENT, AND THEY TOO WORTHY OF OUR



GREETINGS AND THANKS.

YOU ARE RETURNING SHORTLY TO YOUR COUNTRY; I HOPE YOU  
WILL SPREAD OVER IT WINGS OF SECURITY AND PEACE. YOU TAKE WITH  
YOU THE BLESSINGS OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL.

ENDS NM

RCD LEV TOV