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Comments on Kissinger's Lusaka Speech

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On April 27th, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger made an important speech at a lunch in the State House in Lusaka, Zambia's capital. This will be a speech long referred to as a new statement of U.S. policy toward Africa, particularly southern Africa. This paper is a brief outline of my immediate reactions to the speech. A longer paper should be written in due course. My comments fall in two parts. The first part expresses positive reactions. The second part raises questions about U.S. policy growing out of the speech. First on the positive side:

1. Kissinger has discovered Africa. Until the last few months he has given little indication of taking Africa seriously. As a global strategist, no area of the world seems to have entered his consciousness unless it had within it the seeds of conflict with other big powers. Therefore Angola woke Kissinger up. He discovered what we at ACOA had been pointing out for a long time, namely, that there could be a worldwide conflagration triggered by the issues of southern Africa. In the fall of 1975 I attended a luncheon at the U.S. Mission to the UN where Kissinger spoke to the assembled African ambassadors and Secretaries of State from Africa who were in New York for the opening session of the UN General Assembly. His remarks were very brief. He commented almost jokingly that the United States had not given very much attention to Africa. In less than a year, this was not something to joke about. I recall talking with staff persons in the Africa Bureau of the State Department something over a year ago on the question of whether Kissinger should take a trip to Africa. They said they were not sure he should go because it might do more harm than good. This was their allusion to the fact that he would look at Africa only in the context of global conflict with the Soviet Union. Given this background it probably is good that Kissinger has met with leaders of a few African countries and has had a few realities pointed out to him. What the long-term effect of this will be we'll have to wait and see.

2. The Kissinger statement in Lusaka somewhat changes the position enunciated in the NSSM 39 document of 1969. In that document Kissinger accepted the long-term continued control and superiority of the white minority regimes in southern Africa and concluded that the liberation movements did not need to be taken very seriously. Consequently the U.S. policy "tilted" towards support of the white minority regimes. His statement in Lusaka reverses this position at least as far as Rhodesia is concerned. That is he stated clearly that the United States would give no support whatsoever to the Smith regime. He very clearly called for American citizens not to travel in Rhodesia. He also urged American citizens who were in Rhodesia to leave.

3. Kissinger made a personal commitment for the repeal of the Byrd Amendment which he had never done so forthrightly before. The test of this commitment of course will come in the weeks and months ahead.

4. There was not a great deal of new substance in the speech, but there were certain things which should be noted on the positive side. He indicated that the U.S. would assist Mozambique to meet the economic hardships attendant to the closing of its border with Rhodesia to the tune of \$12.5 million. He

also said that the U.S. would help alleviate the economic hardship of other countries neighboring Rhodesia, a reference to Zambia and Botswana. He called on the South African government to "permit all the people and groups of Namibia to express their views freely, under UN supervision, on the political future and constitutional structure of the country." He called for the South African government to "announce a definite timetable...for the achievement of self-determination" in Namibia. He announced that the United States expected to triple its support in the development programs in southern and central Africa over the next three years.

On the other side of the analysis there are certain aspects of the speech about which it is impossible to have a positive response.

1. Kissinger did not say very much new as far as Namibia is concerned, and definitely avoided any serious discussion of South Africa. He spoke only with some clarity on Rhodesia. It should be observed that Rhodesia is the easy issue. There the handwriting is so clearly on the wall and it does not take very much insight or determination to speak forthrightly on the issue of majority rule. Even South Africa has announced a position not to back the Smith government.

2. Kissinger made no comment at all on the risks involved in the greatly increased American investments in South Africa. There was no mention of the fact that this might lead to United States ties with the status quo there that would subsequently lead to confrontation with liberation movements and probably other international powers.

3. Kissinger said nothing about the Bantustans unless his use of the phrase "institutionalized separation of the races" was a veiled reference to the "homelands". There was nothing about the forthcoming independence of the Transkei or whether Bantustans should be recognized.

4. There was no indication in the speech about any sort of assistance to the liberation movements. He made reference to the fact that U.S. did not intend to choose between the movements and support one as over against another, but no reference to the possibility of giving assistance to the movements through the OAU, for example.

5. In spite of the signs of the time in southern Africa, with guerrilla warfare increasing in Rhodesia and a build-up going on in Namibia, Kissinger still talks about "peaceful change" and uses such mild language as "that within a reasonable time we shall see a clear evolution toward equality of opportunity and human rights." This is the language of the NSSM 39 document. Even if the U.S. was not planning to engage itself in direct support for the armed struggle of the liberation movements, at least it could be recognized that these movements had a right to carry on their struggle as they saw fit and a recognition that no power, including the U.S. should stand in their way. The terms "peaceful" and "evolution" can only perpetuate the African view that the U.S. is hypocritical and uncommitted.

6. There is no real discussion of how international confrontation is to be avoided in the struggle in southern Africa. Kissinger mentioned that the United States was not interested in forming power blocs. He said that "your cause (African liberation) is too compatible with our principles for you to need to pursue it by tactics of confrontation with the United States." There was nevertheless a veiled threat in his statement on formation of power blocs

in southern Africa. Although the U.S., he said, "does not seek any pro-American African bloc...neither should any other country". And then he added "an attempt by one will inevitably be countered by the other." How is the United States going to avoid a confrontation with another big power such as the Soviet Union or China if the U.S. is still tied through economic "interests" to the status quo in South Africa and is uncommitted in its support of the African liberation struggle?

In a later speech Kissinger referred to the Angolan issue and the problem of recognition of the Peoples Republic of Angola by suggesting that relations could not be normalized until Cuban troops had been withdrawn. "How can a government be considered African if it has stationed on its soil a large force from Cuba?", Kissinger asked. Inasmuch as American troops have bolstered up regimes elsewhere in the world many times, it is placing a rather grave limitation on the independence of an African state to tell it what it must do regarding support from its allies.