

WASHINGTON NOTES ON AFRICA

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AFRTER ANGOLA: U.S. POLICY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

The Administration is now planning its post-Angola southern Africa strategy. There is a major "options" paper on Secretary Kissinger's desk - probably the second appraisal of U.S. policy in the region since the well-known "NSSM 39" at the beginning of the Nixon Administration. At this new juncture, what factors is the United States considering in its policy formulation, and what conclusions is it likely to draw?



The central change in the U.S.- southern Africa scenario is, of course, the defeat of U.S. intervention in Angola and the emergence of the MPLA-led People's Republic of Angola. It has brought increasing momentum to the liberation struggles in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) and Namibia. The United States is trying to stop that momentum and "prevent another Angola" in the region.

During the Angolan war, the main preoccupation of the Ford White House and the Kissinger State Department was the significant support given to the MPLA by the Soviet Union and Cuba. The Administration sounded this theme from the moment the MPLA regained the initiative in the war after the October South African/UNITA offensive. On November 25, Kissinger said that "the United States cannot remain indifferent" to Soviet and Cuban "military intervention" in Angola. When Congress prohibited further CIA intervention and the MPLA continued to advance, the Administration strengthened its warnings to the Soviets and Cubans, hoping thus to weaken their support for the MPLA. By February 12, Kissinger warned that Soviet involvement in Angola "will have serious consequences for any possibility of easing of relations with the Soviet Union, and if continued, and if it becomes a pattern, must affect other relationships."

At the same February 12 press conference, Kissinger indicated that U.S. concern about the Soviets and Cubans extended beyond Angola's borders. He said the U.S. would "do its best ... to prevent the pattern of Angola from setting a precedent for the rest of Africa. And when I go to Africa later this year in mid-April, this is one of the subjects that I plan to discuss."

Now that the U.S.- Angola debacle is over, Ford may be trying to pull another Mayaguez, this time over Zimbabwe. U.S. threats toward Cuba have reached a high pitch. On March 4 before the House International Relations Committee, Kissinger said that Cuba should "act with great circumspection" with regard to Rhodesia and Mozambique "because our actions cannot be deduced from what we did in Angola." In a major speech on March 23 in Dallas, Kissinger was even more explicit, saying that "the United States will not accept further Cuban military intervention abroad," even against white minority regimes, specifically Rhodesia.

What will these threats really amount to? In order to evaluate the options,

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we must consider the over-all aim of the Administration's policy in southern Africa, and how it will implement it.

We can extrapolate from the Administration's definition of the issues in Angola to see how it may now be approaching the entire region. Secretary Kissinger gave confidential testimony to the House Intelligence Committee on Angola in early 1976. Excerpts of the Committee's report published in the Village Voice of February 16 include the following:

"Dr. Kissinger has indicated that U.S. military intervention in Angola is based on three factors: Soviet support for the MPLA and the USSR's increased presence in Africa, U.S. policy to encourage moderate independence groups in southern Africa, and the U.S. interest in promoting the stability of Mobutu and other leadership figures in the area."

The main goal of U.S. policy towards southern Africa in the post-Angola period appears to be to promote moderate Black governments in Rhodesia and Namibia - governments which will protect the economic and strategic interests of the West, and remain under their political influence. It is now clear to the Administration that the rule of the illegal white regimes in these territories, particularly in Rhodesia, will soon end, so the U.S. is trying to influence what kind of Black governments emerge there. The U.S. wants to buy time in Rhodesia and Namibia, not only to increase the chances of moderate solutions in those countries, but also to give South Africa more time. There, more options still seem available. The Administration probably thinks that South Africa can avert a transfer of power to the black majority, if it can convince the Vorster regime to make quicker reforms in apartheid. Linked to this strategy, the U.S. is giving further aid to Zaire and Zambia, in hopes of winning their continued co-operation in southern Africa.

ZIMBABWE

The most critical issue the United States is now facing is the rapidly changing situation in Rhodesia. On March 9 the negotiations between "Prime Minister" Ian Smith and Joshua Nkomo, the moderate leader of the internal wing of the African National Council, came to "the end of the road" (as Nkomo put it). Mozambique has tightened the economic squeeze on Rhodesia by closing its border and ports as of March 3 to 60 per cent of Rhodesia's foreign trade (according to records of the Mozambican railway and port authorities).

The most significant factor now is the balance of military forces. Late last year Zimbabwe nationalists from the former ZAPU and ZANU (Zimbabwe African Peoples Union, and National Union) formed a new Military High Command with equal participation from both groups. They are directing a united Zimbabwe People's Army, which is now engaged in incidents "virtually every day" (according to the Rhodesian military) all along the Mozambican border and inside the northeastern part of the country. The Rhodesian military estimates that 1,000 nationalist forces are inside the country, with another 4 - 5,000 training in Mozambique; African estimates go up to 16,000. The Smith regime has increased its regular military forces by 60 per cent since the beginning of the year. The critical question is the depth of the new nationalist unity; if it can last, and direct a significant armed force, the Rhodesian regime will not be able to defeat it.

The Ford Administration's reaction to this prospect is truly alarming. Secretary Kissinger is bent on proving that the U.S. withdrawal from Angola will not

be a precedent for the region. Direct support for the white minority regime on the battlefield is still politically unfeasible, but Kissinger seems to seriously believe that military action against Cuba for any assistance to the Zimbabwe nationalist forces is not. Kissinger's public speeches have conspicuously failed to identify what the U.S. would do to back up its threats to Cuba. But a March 23 Washington Star article by diplomatic correspondent Jeremiah O'Leary, which appeared to be officially "inspired", reported that the U.S. was considering a naval blockade of Cuba along the lines of the 1962 missile crisis action. Other options being considered include reinforcement of the Guantamo Bay base, expansion of the perimeter into Oriete Province, and an invasion or aerial attacks. On March 25 Defense Department spokesman William Greener said publicly that the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the National Security Council are reviewing "possible actions" against Cuba. A group of Senators from the Foreign Relations Committee who met with Kissinger on March 17 felt that Kissinger was "so hung up on the Cubans that it wasn't even funny", and that he was personally considering a Cuban blockade.

At this point, Kissinger probably doesn't expect to deliver on his threat. The Zimbabwe nationalists maintain their right to request help from the Cubans, but the type of military operations now being carried out probably do not require it, and there are no indications that any request has been made. Even Rhodesian Defense Minister van der Byl denies the presence of any Cubans with the guerrillas or training in Mozambique. In a press conference on February 18, he said:

"There is absolutely no concrete evidence whatsoever to substantiate these things that have been said. What is clearly the case is that this is part and parcel of a sort of campaign of disinformation being run by certain interests in Europe ... which are calculated to alarm and frighten the people in this country, and give encouragement to the terrorists."

At a later time, if the war escalates significantly and perhaps pulls South Africa back in, the Zimbabweans may look to the Cubans for assistance. Kissinger's threats are designed to deter the Cubans from entering the war in this eventuality.

Kissinger is threatening confrontation also to serve his larger political game-plan with the Soviets. Counterbalancing the Soviet Union strategically and preventing expansion of its influence has been Kissinger's main preoccupation throughout his tenure. Now he clearly sees southern Africa in this context. In his Dallas speech, Kissinger said that "world power is more likely to be threatened by shifts in the local regional balances ... than by strategic nuclear attack." "It does no good to preach strategic superiority while practicing regional retreat." During the Angola crisis, he threatened a pull-back from detente, but he wasn't willing to sacrifice it for southern Africa. Now he has switched his target to Cuba, which concerns him not only in southern Africa but also in the Carribean. One additional consideration is political. The Administration has to take a hard line "against the Communists" to satisfy the right-wing Republicans and Democrats whose support Ford needs in his current contest with Ronald Reagan and in a possible later one with Henry Jackson.

Apparently the Administration calculates that the American people may stand for military action against Cuba in order to give white Rhodesia more time, provided that it can be sold to them correctly. In Dallas, Kissinger said "we are certain that the American people understand and support these two equal principles of our policy - our support for majority rule in Africa and our firm opposition to military intervention." But this formulation is completely untenable. U.S. opposition to

"military intervention" - the support which national liberation movements in southern Africa have received from socialist countries for more than a decade - in fact gives support to minority rule.

For example, Kissinger's speeches have heartened the Smith regime. His March 4 statement about the Cuban threat drew a thank-you from the Rhodesian Defense Minister: "But I would like to take this opportunity of expressing my appreciation of what the American secretary of state said. One can only be thankful that at least somebody in the Western world is beginning to realize the menace, the threat to the West to the extent of being able to take a positive line on it." The question in Smith's mind will be whether the U.S. can actually be counted on to follow through, as it was unable to do in Angola because of public and Congressional pressure. Kissinger's remarks and the Administration's leaks are surely encouraging him.

Liberal Congressional critics such as Senator Dick Clark, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa, are saying that Kissinger's tactics can't work. Clark does not challenge the Administration's concern about the Soviet and Cuban presence in southern Africa, but says that the U.S. "should take the initiative away from the communist powers in southern Africa ... /by/ encouraging peaceful change." His approach is a purely pragmatic one:

"... the worst southern Africa policy the United States could adopt would be one based on the old formula: back the side the communist powers are opposing. That would put the United States on the side of racial domination. It would be disastrous for our relations with Africa, our international prestige, and our view of what this country stands for in the world. It would also put us on the losing side, which is hardly a good way to counter communist intervention."

NAMIBIA

The momentum toward independence in Namibia is also accelerating, but the obstacles to be overcome are greater than in Rhodesia. South African Prime Minister Vorster has always been more sophisticated than his Rhodesian counterpart. While Ian Smith said just last week that he would not accept majority rule - "not even in a thousand years" - Vorster has spent the last year developing hand-picked black "leaders" to negotiate in a constitutional convention for an independent, federated Namibia under South African economic domination. The military balance is also less favorable in Namibia. The South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) will be strengthened by the victory of the MPLA, which has pledged it political, moral and material support. But during the war in Angola South Africa also gained significant military advantage. While South African troops invaded southern Angola, they attacked SWAPO camps and members. South Africa also made a major military build-up along the northern Namibian border, while international attention was more focussed on its invasion on the other side of the border.

In Namibia, the U.S. strategy basically depends on the success of South Africa's own plan. Both South Africa and the United States want a moderate government in an independent Namibia, preferably brought in through a "peaceful transition". The U.S. is pressing South Africa diplomatically to move more quickly, to increase the chances that their compromise solution will work before SWAPO consolidates its strength. For example, the Ford Administration wants South Africa to bring SWAPO into the constitutional talks (even though SWAPO has refused to be part of the South African - initiated conference). Officially, the U.S. backs elections in Namibia

supervised by the United Nations, to ensure free political organization by all parties. But the U.S. also maintains that the constitutional conference could be a preliminary step to the elections. If SWAPO joined the talks, and most of the conferees adopt a constitutional framework within which the elections could be run, the U.S. suggests that it would find it acceptable. The U.S. plan is designed to undercut SWAPO. If it refused to join the talks, it could be labelled intransigent; if it joined and raised a dissenting voice, it could be dismissed as a minority.

Liberals see Namibia much the same way as Rhodesia : the U.S. cannot win by backing an illegal minority regime. Instead they think the U.S. should exert more pressure on South Africa, beyond mere diplomacy, to withdraw. For example, Senator Clark is making several specific policy proposals he has not embraced before. One, the U.S. should support a Security Council declaration that South African occupation of Namibia is a threat to the peace under Chapter 7 of the Charter, and impose a mandatory international arms embargo against South Africa. Second, Congress should pass (and the Administration should urge) legislation prohibiting U.S. corporations from getting credits for taxes on their Namibia operations paid to the South African government.

SOUTH AFRICA

The Administration appears to think that the famous opening line of Option 2 of the 1969 NSSM 39 still applies to South Africa: "The whites are here to stay and the only way that constructive change can come about is through them." The U.S. strategy for South Africa has been to press for quicker reforms in apartheid, to get rid of the more objectionable policies which have made full support by the West politically difficult. The assumption is that this can somehow be accomplished; western capital continues to go into South Africa, and high profits keep coming out.

The South Africans have a different strategy, though, which they are working hard to get the West to back. Instead of reforming apartheid, they are trying to take apartheid to its supposed conclusion - "separate development" of the homelands. The Transkei is scheduled to become the first "independent" bantustan in October, and South Africa is counting on major western nations to recognize it. Two men who will represent the Transkei are already stationed at the South African embassy in Washington, and they have impressed middle-level State Department officials with their political sophistication.

Administration officials say that they haven't made up their mind on recognition, but that their decision will depend to some extent on what African states do. It is very unlikely that the OAU would accept the bantustan scheme. But South Africa and the U.S. could use their economic leverage on some African states to recognize the Transkei, and then the U.S. could follow in their wake. Whether the U.S. will choose this route depends on how significant the issue appears at the time. The Administration might decide to duck the recognition question. But the U.S. wants some moderate Black leadership it can back, and it may decide that the bantustan leadership is the only acceptable kind South Africa will allow to emerge.

In the meantime, U.S. economic support for South Africa is taking a sharp increase. Significant new private investment is being planned, which would increase

American commitments in South Africa by over 30 per cent. U.S. banks participated in a recent \$200 million loan to the South African Electricity Supply Commission, ESCOM. And the Administration may soon decide to extend much wider financing arrangements for transactions involving South Africa, through the Export-Import Bank.

Last year, Fluor Corporation of California requested a \$225 million loan and a guarantee in an equal amount from Ex-Im to the South African government-owned coal gasification program, Sasol II. Current Ex-Im policy prohibits all financing directly to the South African government and all direct loans for transactions involving South Africa. The White House came under heavy pressure from the right to end these restrictions. Twenty-one Senators wrote to the President calling for the change (and also for an end to the arms embargo), and at least one journalist says that Ford personally supports weakening the policy.

On March 13, David Binder wrote in the New York Times that the White House had decided not to change the Ex-Im Bank policy. But the State Department issued no statement on the policy decision, and the Ex-Im Bank received no written directive, so Fluor's request is still pending. The South Africans are saying informally that they are not worried about the supposed decision, figuring that Ford will loosen the restrictions when the issue is getting less attention. Liberal members of Congress have opposed the change, but they will have to keep up the pressure just to maintain the status quo.

There are still too many variables in the South African political situation to determine how the situation will develop and what role the United States will play. At the moment, the Ford Administration is giving us plenty to worry about just with its threats about Zimbabwe. However, Kissinger's bellicose threats are creating an opportunity as well for the public and the Congress to come forward with a strong stand on Zimbabwe and southern Africa, at an earlier stage than was the case in Angola. Ford made a drastic miscalculation in thinking that the American people and Congress would accept covert U.S. intervention in Angola. Let us hope that he is making the same mistake now, and that people won't stand for U.S. support for minority rule, by actions in southern Africa or in the western hemisphere.

REPORT FROM U.S.- MPLA SEMINAR IN HAVANA

Ted Lockwood, the director of the Washington Office on Africa, was one of 26 Americans who attended a seminar with the MPLA held in Havana, Cuba from February 26 - March 1. The 19 American organizations which were represented included church groups, coalitions supporting the MPLA, trade union representatives, and several left political organizations. Six members of the black press also went.

The Cuban government arranged the meeting at the request of the People's Republic of Angola (PRA), but stayed very much in the background. The head of the Angolan delegation was Commandante Dibala, political commissar of the Eastern Front and a member of the MPLA Central Committee. He was assisted by Olga Lima, in charge of political affairs in the Foreign Ministry, and by Zinga Baptiste Pedro, representing the foreign affairs section of the MPLA. Commandante Dibala was from the east, Ms. Lima from sa da Bandeira, and Mr. Zinga from Sao Salvador.

Here is a brief summary of what the Angolan government representatives said

on current issues. Wherever possible, we have quoted from the simultaneous translations of the statements from the PRA representatives.

FOREIGN RELATIONS: The PRA will follow a policy of non-alignment. It will not allow foreign countries to establish military bases in Angola nor will it take part in any military bloc. It believes in the principles of mutual non-interference in internal affairs and of conducting relations on a reciprocal-benefit basis. "We love independence and democracy, but we are not blind." The efforts of the MPLA were helped very much by the unity they had with similar movements such as PAIGC, FRELIMO, and the Sao Tome movement. "If the Socialist camp had not helped us, our struggle would not have been possible. We pay especial tribute to the pages of heroism written in our history, with blood, by Cuba. We have been encouraged by progressive trends in the United States to prevent further criminal adventures."

Relations with the United States: The PRA is definitely interested in being recognized by the United States, but will not beg for it or abase itself. They would like to have specific kinds of foreign aid, including agricultural aid. They would like to have exchange of group visits between the two countries. They stressed that having relations with a broad spectrum of countries was important to their implementation of a policy of non-alignment.

Relations with Namibia: "We Angolans are not the ones that will go to Namibia to liberate Namibia. No one came to Angola to liberate the Angolan people... We ourselves took weapons in hand; we organized ourselves; we fought, dying in the fields, to achieve this independence... The independence of Namibia would not be a correct or complete independence if Namibians themselves would not die for that independence."

Now SWAPO can count on us; the people of Namibia can count on the Angolan nation... There is no kind of legal or political problem in regard to the material, moral and political aid that we are able to offer to Namibia to liberate itself."

Relations with Zaire and Zambia: The PRA is convinced that Zaire and Zambia will not be able to mount any rearguard support movement for FNLA or UNITA. Good relations with these states will rest on a realization by Zambia and Zaire that their own internal security needs require a policy of non-interference in Angola.

"We consider that revolutions are not exported... but we know that examples are followed. And if the example we give, and we are certain that it is a good one, if the African people wish to follow this example, this will prove that we are following the good path and that we are in the real path of history."

Zaire and Zambia have political independence, at least they have a black President and a flag of their own, unlike Namibia. We are not going to export revolution to those countries. "We should not be afraid of having an Angolan invasion of Zambia... We will not allow our territory to serve as a base for foreign invasion of other countries."

THE DOMESTIC SITUATION IN ANGOLA:

UNITA: UNITA can only logically count on Namibia as its rearguard area, but such an association with South Africa will deprive it of any legitimacy with the people, whose support is necessary for maintaining a guerrilla struggle internally. Zaire is required to give up its support for FNLA as a condition

of relations with the PRA. The leadership of UNITA and of FNLA is regarded as guilty of criminal activities which must be punished, but the rank and file of the two groups are at liberty and, after turning in their arms and equipment, are already at work reconstructing the country.

MPLA and its own political strength and identity: The PRA said that the Western press had created a monster as if the MPLA is a "red devil". MPLA is a broad people's liberation movement, a front embracing people of various ideologies including Marxists, liberals, progressive church people and others. The MPLA, as the vanguard, has the duty of organizing the power of the people. Workers and peasants must take part in all that is being done. A People's Assembly will be formed with representatives from all over the country.

Development priorities: The PRA is realistic. Without technicians they know it is not possible to guide modern industry. The multinationals, if they are willing to be progressive in their attitude and in their co-operation with the new labor code, can continue production, as Diamang has done. The PRA does expect to negotiate for transfers of technical skill and management over resources to Angolans, but this is not an immediate priority. Thus they want Gulf Oil to resume production since the revenues from the production are important to the needs of the country at this time. Agriculture is a first priority. The peasant "carried the main burden of the revolution" and now lives in many cases below subsistence levels. The PRA does not intend to practice any rigid form of development. "We are convinced that many Americans have had a great deal of experience in the development of African agriculture and could be of assistance to us."

Another priority is medical care and public health. Only a small number of doctors stayed on after independence. Doctors from Cuba, Yugoslavia, Algeria and other countries have arrived or soon will. Training of medical and sanitary personnel is imperative. Traditional forms of medicine must be replaced by ~~xx~~ modern scientific methods. The third major priority is education. Ninety per cent of the population is illiterate and has been victimized by Portuguese "obscuritanism". Political education will be undertaken through people's committees on a block-by-block basis in the cities and in the villages as well. The armed forces, in which all people between the ages of 18-35 will serve, will also serve as a way of teaching the new values of co-operation and sacrifice for the common good and building a new society for all Angolans, rather than for a privileged few.

The delegation from the United States agreed to undertake the following program as a response to the request of the PRA:

1. Promote the recognition of the People's Republic of Angola by the United States at the earliest possible moment.
2. Assist in the provision of medical aid, agricultural fertilizers and equipment, and educational aid.
3. Help to dispell myths about the MPLA and the Angolan situation.
4. Avert a U.S. economic boycott of Angola.
5. Facilitate visits by Angolans to the U.S. and of U.S. citizens to Angola.
6. Seek to avert U.S. military aid to Zaire and to South Africa.

In order to carry out this program, a working conference of all interested groups will be held in Chicago toward the end of May. If your group is interested in attending, let the Washington Office on Africa know and we will see that you get further details from the person who is doing the co-ordinating.