
WASHINGTON
NOTES ON
AFRICA



Edited By
GARY GAPPERT

AMERICAN
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1. Nixon's Non-Policy Becomes More Non.

Even though a definitive Nixon policy towards Southern Africa has yet to be articulated, there have been a number of recent statements or events which hint perhaps at a return to more fervent "normality" in relations with the white regimes.

Let us note:

On October 15, Congressman Coughlin noted that in spite of the arms embargo against South Africa, military export sales to South Africa have been around \$35 million since 1962. According to Oliver Crosby, Director for southern African affairs, these sales have consisted mostly of Lockheed transports and spare parts plus "nominal" munitions list items such as radio receivers and test equipment, destined for South African Airways and other "non-military" end uses.

At the United Nations the U.S. abstained on resolutions concerning Namibia and the Portuguese territories.

The U.S. voted no on a resolution which would have widened sanctions against Rhodesia and supported more effective British action including force.

The U.S. also voted against an apartheid resolution for the first time in many years, objecting that however deplorable racial policies were, they did not constitute a threat to international peace. Instead we merely urged "those in power in South Africa (to) accept this offer to negotiate, accept this invitation to a dialogue" with reference to the Lusaka Manifesto.

At another U.N. vote, in the Security Council, we abstained from a vote censuring Portugal for its shelling of a Senegalese village. In 1963 and 65 the U.S. did join in unanimous votes against Portugal for incursions into Senegal.

At another event, Secretary of State Rogers, addressing a group of Reace Directors, said:

"The U.S. as a nation is entirely self-sufficient without the continent of Africa. Therefore, our policy goals are short term; a commitment to the protection and promotion of American interests on the African continent. We shall revise this policy only under crisis conditions."

And of course our consul remains in Salisbury.

Carl Rowan recently said:

"Africans keep asking me what has happened to America's conscience, to America's sense of justice."

Let us ask as well: What has happened to our sense of the future?

2. Shifts in U.S.-Nigeria-Biafra Policy.

There has been three contradictory shifts in U.S.-Nigerian-Biafran policy. The first came on November 12 when Secretary of State Rogers called for "the earliest negotiated end to the conflict and a settlement that will assure the security and peaceful development of all the people involved" without first invoking the "one-Nigeria" formula.

Second, the U.S. later somewhat testily urged Biafra to accept Nigerian assurances that it will not take military advantage of daylight flights.

Third, in spite of Biafran protests and Rogers' shift to "neutrality" from early pro-federal statements, AID-Africa is proceeding on building a highway north from Calabar to Enugu. Presently Enugu is supplied over a much further distance from Lagos. Evans-Novak charged that the Calabar road is one more example of "the mindless devotion that some foreign service and AID officers have for their client countries, despite the risk of U.S. involvement."

On December 12, Senator Goodell had planned to offer amendments to the Foreign Assistance Act restricting new development loans to Nigeria but he was dissuaded by a number of his colleagues who, albeit sympathetic, thought it was bad to legislate specific prohibitions.

But he did state:

"Risk lies in the possibility that the Nigerian Government will use this road for military operations.

"Risk lies in putting American engineering and construction personnel in a potentially explosive military situation."

Senator Brooke objected to Goodell's remarks, claiming that the road would provide no military advantage as it would not be finished until 1972.

Earlier, on November 12, Senator Kennedy called for a re-evaluation and change in our policy towards Nigeria and Biafra. He again urged that the President appoint a special representative to pursue the question of peace as a compliment to the activities of Clyde Ferguson, the special co-ordinator on relief. He also objected to some of the AID projects to Nigeria which might have military significance.

The new Nigerian Desk Officer in State, Bill Brubeck, considers that the unnoticed statement of Secretary of State Rogers of November 12 implicitly conveys notice of an expanded U.S. diplomatic initiative. Brubeck himself clearly reveals a much more dynamic understanding and interest into the political aspects of the Nigerian crisis. Further, he speaks of the issues in such a way that not only does he communicate his understanding of the issues, but also his determination that his listener perceives the relevance of the various underlying assumptions.

3. One Small Retreat for South Africa:
One Giant Victory for Anti-Apartheid Forces.

OR,
All That Gold Doesn't Glitter.

In late November the Finance Minister of South Africa revealed that his government was not going to ask for the renewal of a \$4 million line of credit provided by eleven American banks. The credit line was originally established at \$10 million in 1949 by four banks. The credit arrangements, brokered by Dillion Read and Co., were due for renewal on January 8.

Although the credit has not been drawn upon for the last three years, a Committee of Conscience Against Apartheid, headed by A. Phillip Randolph, has spearheaded a campaign against it, charging that it established a world-wide credit rating for the morally repugnant regime of South Africa. The most recent development in this campaign came on October 31 when two Congressmen from New York, Ogden Reid and Jonathan Bingham, led eight other Congressmen in sending a letter of protest to each of the banks in the credit consortium. The letter, urging abstention from any further participation in the line of credit, stressed "the grave consequences in the years to come with our relations with free Africa". There was also a veiled reference to domestic unrest and the consequences of "further alienation along racial lines" if the banks continued to underwrite South Africa's international credit position.

How and why South Africa reached its decision not to seek renewal of this credit arrangement is not clear. We claim that the banks went to the club rooms, saying, "Look fellows, don't ask us to renew this thing."

The South African version is, "Because of the Republic's strong gold and foreign exchange position, the credit has not been used for some time, and it was not deemed necessary to incur the expenses of extending it."

Since the anti-apartheid forces in this country would like to see this small retreat of South Africa as a giant victory for themselves, it is necessary to examine South Africa's "strong" position.

Since March of 1968, when the Western nations led by the U.S. agreed that it was no longer desirable to buy newly mined gold for their monetary reserves, South Africa has been lobbying for an agreement which would once again allow its gold to move to central banks and into the IMF. A part of this sought-for agreement would establish

an automatic buying position when gold reached a floor price of \$35 an ounce. The U.S. under the Johnson Administration, holding the line against speculators, considered any such agreement as sabotaging the two-tier system.

Since January the Nixon Administration, although not retreating from the two tier system, has indicated that it was prepared to be more flexible with gold prices if the free market did sink to the monetary price of \$35.

On December 8 the price of gold in the free market in Zurich dipped to \$34.95, the lowest since President Roosevelt pegged the price in 1934. In the last 20 months, South Africa, effectively boycotted from any substantial monetary sales, has accumulated over \$1 billion in gold reserves.

Since gold itself can seldom be used conveniently to facilitate foreign exchange accounts, and since South Africa in 1969 had a sizable inflation-propelled import bill while exports have leveled off (estimated trade deficit for 1969 is \$960 million), it now faces an awkward foreign exchange position unless it capitulates to the Western monetary position. The Economist is predicting "real payment difficulties sometime next year, involving the usual rigamarole of import quotas and other direct controls".

The necessary capitulation on monetary policy might be sweetened by a U.S. compromise on the question of a \$35 support price. Treasury Department officials do not regard this with dismay.

However, Congressman Henry Reuss, one of the few shrewd economic minds in the Congress, is leading an effort to oppose "any kind of compromise" which would allow monetary support for a free market. Reuss' policy is based upon a view of gold as a commodity no different than tin or sisal. He asks: "Why should we give this racist country a floor for its gold when the poor countries cry for, and do not get, stabilization for cocoa, coffee and other commodity prices?"

In the face of these anticipated difficulties the strength of the South African position is not so readily apparent. Certainly all that gold doesn't glitter quite so brightly. The line of credit from the ten leading banks from the world's leading economic power may not be crucial but certainly was desirable. The cost of it (commission etc.) was not large and could have been negotiated downwards. But South Africa, like Miles Standish, was afraid of being a rejected suitor.

4. Soapy Williams Skids with New Book.

At a reception at the Foreign Service Club, G. Mennen Williams greeted his guests with copies of his recently published book, Africa for the Africans (Wm. B. Erdmans, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502).

Unfortunately the book is not very successful from the standpoint of the Africanist community. At the most, it might be called a good to adequate book for the general reader.

There are several objections to his effort.

With respect to anecdotes he has all the wrong ones. For example, rather than citing the wide-spread billboards advertising "Aspro" in East Africa, he discusses the Chadian cabinet minister who never heard of aspirin.

He has very little describing the dynamics of policy formation below the platitude level. For instance, the decision-making around the controversial Stanleyville airdrop is not even hinted at in a short three paragraphs of text.

With respect to analysis and policy orientation, his perspective is relevant to the liberal outlook of 1959-60. He offers no new ringing perspective for the 70's. That is too bad because one is sorely needed. Indeed his perspective is so outdated that it is almost conservative.

He picks Kenya, Ivory Coast and Tunisia as the "bright spots" in African development. Kenya's most serious political trouble is described as its border dispute with Somalia. The annual 25 percent industrial growth in the Ivory Coast is not attributed to sole non-Ivorian ownership.

With respect to the Portuguese territories he urges talks between the Africans and the Portuguese, believing that a timetable for "self-determination" should be prepared. He indicates that we are not attempting to force the Portuguese out of Africa. He calls Portugal "an old friend and close NATO ally" and cites the "warm ties" between us. He doesn't mention the Azores at all in discussing U.S. policy. He mentions that many of "her finest sons and daughters" have become "citizens of our country" and discusses the other migration - the slave trade - with only a phrase. (His general attitude here is the kind that leads to one, two, maybe three Saigons).

With respect to South Africa, although he indicates that "we have pursued every opportunity of individual and joint diplomacy" with "no substantial success", he wants us to continue to "work with South Africa and the rest of the world" to persuade South Africa to change its mind. He indicates that we must act with "determination" but doesn't refer to the sugar quota subsidy.

Beyond these objections the overall treatment is not bad, it is extremely sympathetic for the most part and the general selection of topics is good. The book provides a good backward glance at Africa as the 70's begin.

The most significant part of Williams' book and career comes in a sentence near the end.

He writes, and I think it symbolizes his success as a Birthday Party Ambassador in those early years:

"Our prompt welcome of the new nations to the world community and setting up embassies with their own ambassadors contributed heavily to our successful African policy."

Were it only that the U.S. would have followed this early, easy attitude with a few hard policy decisions after 1963.

5. Copper and Zambia

Zambia supposedly has reached an amiable understanding with Roan Selection Trust and American Metal Climax on the transfer of copper mine ownership. Zambia has agreed to pay 51 percent of the estimated book value of the properties in the form of negotiable, guaranteed bonds. The bonds will be retired through 16 semi-annual payments in U.S. dollars, ending in 1978. The companies will also be paid a fee for the continual management of the mines.

Although all the copper company officers have been quoted about the need for "political realism", at least one New York based executive has vowed economic war against President Kaunda. The transfer of ownership to Zambia means that the major western copper producers outside the U.S. are all controlled by the government of Chile, Congo (K) and Zambia.

This comes at a time when the Consul General of Sierre Leone, Tinga Seisay, has warned the U.N. General Assembly that the tendency of the U.N. to allow rich nations to dictate to the poor "is a grave mistake and a great injustice". He noted that the industrial nations are now using financial power to continue to control what previously had been controlled by force.

6. Rhodesian Hearings

Amidst a steady flow of right wing Congressional support for the removal of sanctions against Rhodesia, the hearings on Rhodesian-U.S. relations have not been continued. The published record is available from the office of Congressman Diggs, Room 2464, Rayburn House Office Building (202-224-2161).

The hearings concluded on November 19 with statements from Dean Acheson, G. Mennen Williams and Fred G. Burke.

Williams gets the award for the quote of the hearings with his remark that "Rhodesia is as much a threat to the peace as would be the establishment of a 'Whites Only' bar in Harlem."

Acheson, urging the reversal of U.S. policy, warned that the U.S. needs "friendly ports" in southern Africa. His voice has been the most prestigious among many urging that President Nixon recognize Rhodesia and remove sanctions. A number of Republican Congressmen attended the last day of hearings so as to fawn over Acheson. Only fiery John Culver (D-Iowa) was prepared to treat Acheson on the shallowness of his view and not on the length of his vitae.

7. Relief for Tunisia

A private group, the Committee of American Citizens for Aid to Tunisia in the Flood Emergency, has been formed by the American participants in the African-American dialogues held in Tunis on October 22. Congressmen Diggs, Culver and Reid are members.

Responsible for its organization have been Mrs. Arthur Krim and Frank Ferrari.

8. State Prepares Green Light for Business in South Africa.

In anticipation of the long awaited conclusion of the southern African policy review of the National Security Council, some members of the Africa Bureau are discussing preparations for a conference to explain the new policy to American businessmen. Since it is held likely that American business in South Africa will be praised for its "progressiveness", such a conference has to be seen as a green light and not a red light. At the very least it would be hoped that someone will flash the amber now and then.

9. Lefkowitz Hits South African Airways.

The Attorney General of New York, Louis J. Lefkowitz, has filed a complaint with the State Division of Human Rights against South African Airways for racial discrimination.

Even though the discrimination occurs through the visa-issuing policy of the South African Consulate, Lefkowitz claims that since the airway is operated by the government of South Africa, it cannot shift responsibility for racial discrimination to the consulate, a branch of the same government. SAA lawyers, Covington and Burlington, are meeting with State Dept. to head off this legal move.

10. Other Notes

A very rare occurrence in U.S. journalism occurred when the Washington Afro-American published an article on November 22 lauding post-revolution progress in Zanzibar.

The fiery black Congressman from St. Louis, William Clay, has begun to find his voice on foreign policy.

On November 20, he charged:

"...the American government with hypocrisy of the highest order. Our troops are dying in Asia to prevent a colored minority from determining the future of a colored majority and at the same time this government is supporting white minorities in African countries who are forcibly dominating black majorities."

In 1968 the U.S. became the leading buyer for Uganda goods. We imported almost 25 percent of Uganda's total exports, coffee being the principle item.

The new access to South America for South Africa provided by the New York to Rio to Joburg route of South African Airways has lead to a breach in the U.N. arms embargo against South Africa. A South African businessman, visiting Brazil and Argentina by the new route, concluded a deal with arms manufacturers in those countries to supply South Africa with extensive supplies of pistols, shotguns, and rifles and ammunition.

Fawcett Publications (Greenwich, Conn.) is now reprinting a number of contemporary African novels. Among them is the famed Jagua Nana by Cyprian Ekwensi which is a great account of pre-coup Nigeria.

Besides the stir created by Swedish attempts to provide aid to North Viet Nam, a smaller incident has been caused by reports of Swedish aid to liberation groups in southern Africa. In particular, the Swedish government is granting financial support to the budget of the Mozambique Institute to establish hospitals and primary schools in liberated zones of Mozambique. More political aid has come from the International Solidarity Fund of the Social Democrat Party which has awarded a total of \$24,000 to the different liberation movements in the Portuguese territories, South Africa and Rhodesia. This report has renewed interest in Washington as to the proper U.S. posture towards the liberation movements in the Portuguese territories. With refugees figures rising, (361,400 from Angola, 30,150 from Mozambique, and 61,500 from Bissau), there is likely to be several legislative initiatives next spring with respect to Portugal's colonial wars.

The U.S. is sending two C013 aircraft from the U.S. Strike Command to the government of Chad to deliver U.N. supplied foodstuffs to stricken areas as famine conditions increase in central and north-central Chad. The planes were to be in Chad only 7 days, and were coordinated with French relief. There have been recent articles in both the Washington Post and Evening Star concerning the fact that a handful of French paratroopers and foreign legionnaires are bogged down in the struggle to end the guerrilla rebellion in Chad. According to Andrew Borowiec of the Star:

"President Tomnalbaye's downfall would expose French influence in Africa to additional threats and would challenge the value of France's accords with its other African allies."

The new AID-Africa director, Samuel Adams, has stated:

"The extent to which we are aware that there is black interest in Africa and recognition that U.S. interests are identifiable will determine the amount of support that Africa gets."

The Wall Street Journal reported on December 11 that:

"American companies with operations in (South Africa) often prefer to avoid mention of them back home."

According to one official:

"We don't want to call attention to our activities in South Africa and cause a whole mob of black militants and radical students to picket our office in the U.S."

Hightower Gets ACOA Post

Charles Hightower, a 34 year old Afro-American journalist and teacher, has been appointed as Washington Director for the American Committee on Africa. Hightower will take over from Gary Gappert in mid-January.

Hightower most recently has been teaching at Brooklyn College. Previous to that, he was a correspondent in Paris for several years. He has visited North and West Africa extensively.

More on Rhodesia.

It has been reported that the Rhodesian Air Force is helping to protect the Cabora Basa Dam site in Mozambique. It is also said that there has been considerable friction between Rhodesians and the South African troops in Rhodesia. The South Africans feel that the Rhodesians are "soft" on their "natives". Rhodesians complain that ill-treatment by South African officers has caused their "informers" to clam-up.

ASA Pulls A Co-op.

The African Studies Association, in an apparent violation of the Burke proposals at Montreal, has arranged to reduce the constitutional review committee to 10 from 30. It is alleged that the 5 from the black caucus will be brought in by John H. Clarke and the 5 whites will not be elected by the membership but selected by Gray Cowan, President of ASA. Further details of this co-option will be reported in Habari, the newsletter of the Washington Task Force on African Affairs (P.O. Box 13033, Washington, D. C.).

AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON AFRICA
711 14TH STREET, N. W., SUITE 700
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20005

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