

THE FUTURE OF THE CARTER POLICY TOWARD SOUTHERN AFRICA

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Kennedy Liberal Era Parallels

Judging by public tone, style and ideological emphasis alone, the casual observer of U.S. foreign policy is impressed by the novelty of the Carter Administration's approach toward southern Africa. Kissinger had stressed America's tangible interests, sought alliances with ideological "enemies" to advance or at least to protect those interests, and operated a clever, manipulative and secretive diplomacy with calculated ambiguity. The Carter Administration now seems to espouse once more American ideals and principles, open diplomacy for announced clearly-stated objectives, and decision-making by consent. But what is really involved is a reversion to the active use of ideology and salesmanship to manage its political and economic interests. It is of a piece with "helping our little brown brothers" in Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Philippines, making the world "safe for democracy" and saving Vietnam from Communism.

A more immediate and relevant precedent may be the Kennedy-Johnson era. The recently declassified Africa: Guidelines for United States Policy and Operation (1963) establishes parallels of intention, orientation, objectives and methods.

Under "Basic Approach" we find the following language:

"1. What we do - or fail to do - in Africa in the next year will have a profound effect for many years... The United States, as a country with no colonial heritage in Africa, has great opportunities... We see Africa as probably the greatest open field of maneuver in the worldwide competition between the [Communist] bloc and the non-Communist world.

3. ... We propose to build up certain areas of strength and of maximum co-operation which can serve as models to influence others in constructive directions. [Nigeria and Tunisia] were identified as possible primary moderate 'bellwether' countries with Tanganyika, Ivory Coast, Sudan and Senegal as second-tier models.]

4. ... The critical factor in African nation-building is leadership. In choosing countries for special emphasis, we propose to make a major effort to help dynamic and progressive leaders who are reasonably friendly without neglecting the unfriendly ones for, in the end today's opponent may be tomorrow's friend.

5. Our revolutionary background and democratic aspirations constitute a basis for sympathy between ourselves and the Africans."

In the section entitled "Background" the following words underline the usefulness of ideological commitment and domestic civil rights:

"the most helpful things we could do to enhance our image and obtain the friendship of the African peoples are (a) to make our commitment to freedom in Africa clear without peradventure of doubt in such cases as Angola, Algeria and South Africa; and (b) to move more quickly to solve our problem of according dignity and equal opportunity to our own African-descended population."

United thirty-one "Objectives" we find:

"15. Gradual emergence or growth of a middle class capable of creating and managing a private enterprise sector in a mixed economy.

16. Encouragement, where appropriate, of private enterprise economies.

23. Gradual and orderly transfer of power to the majority of the African populations during the next few years, with the fullest possible protection of minority rights.

33. Denial to the Sino-Soviet Bloc of military bases, and to the maximum extent practicable, of military influence in any African country."

These high-sounding, peaceful objectives were accompanied by the use of United Nations forces to secure American goals in the Congo.

Furthermore, CIA covert operations, buying of African "assets", assassination and mercenary recruitment were not thought inappropriate means to the promotion of leaders thought to be favorable and popular.

But as the United States was drawn deeper and deeper into the quagmire of Vietnam, the Johnson Administration lost the missionary zeal of the Kennedy years; Africa became once again a "neglected"

area. As the Kissinger-Nixon era opened, hostilities between the Arab states and Israel had broken out, putting two major crisis areas into contention for major effort. Nixon and Kissinger chose to draw closer to the white regimes because they judged that guerilla war was futile and a crisis was not immediately in the offing there: "the whites are here to stay". They therefore chose dialogue over moral lectures, and protection of investments, trade and strategic interests in the white areas rather than sacrificing them in order to protect similar interests in black Africa.

To Kissinger, the Portuguese coup of April 25, 1974, however, demonstrated that there was indeed a crisis that needed management. When Angolan de-colonization devolved into civil war, the National Security Council's covert backing of FNLA and UNITA was a costly failure, yet also a lesson. Further "Angolas" must be prevented. Kissinger therefore launched an all-out diplomatic effort, with the full backing of the Congress, to settle the Rhodesian and Namibian issues before they developed a momentum that would install radical regimes threatening to western interests not only in those countries but, more importantly, in South Africa itself.

The Carter Themes

This cursory summary of the Republican years is intended to suggest that it is the threat to western interests which has now rescued Africa from "neglect". The pursuit of American idealism, in this context, should, then, be seen not as an abstract philosophical preference but as an ideological weapon in a very real conflict in which the United States acts to protect very material benefits. While it would be foolhardy to predict outcomes at this stage, we would like to sketch out certain themes which seem to be emerging

as characteristic of the Carter approach.

1. The Promotion of Capitalism and Non-Violence as more Revolutionary than Revolution and Socialism.

The most brilliant political choice of Jimmy Carter's career so far has been the selection of Andy Young as his Ambassador to the United Nations. A man of charismatic charm, aptitude and eloquence, Young is no mere preacher. He is a living advertisement that non-violent political struggle can advance blacks in America into the political elite.

His main role has been designed to be a pastoral ministry to developing countries in order to create trust in American concern and good intentions. Carter put it this way:

"Third World nations / now look on the United States as having at least one representative ... who understands their problems, who speaks their language... I think we have a new sense in the minds of those kinds of peoples of caring about them and to a major degree it is because of their trust in Andy Young."¹

The way in which Young goes about the creation of that trust is to use his own experiences as proof that America's recent past has equipped it to lead a struggle for revolutionary ends.

At the United Nations conference on Zimbabwe and Namibia held in Maputo in mid-May, 1977, Young took the offensive. The United States had a policy which represented "something of a revolution in the consciousness of the American people." "We have known those struggles /against racism, colonialism, and imperialism/ ourselves and somehow we have been able to come through them."

In Young's view, the use of boycotts to fight racism ultimately succeeded because they affected and drew in the multinational cor-

porations. Later, in Johannesburg, he encouraged South African businessmen to believe in their own power to overturn apartheid:

"when in Atlanta, Georgia, five banks decided that it was bad business to have racial turmoil, racial turmoil ceased."

Young's apostleship for capitalism is based on a belief that it is so fundamental, so irreversible, so pervasive and so powerful that it amounts to a law of nature, whose inevitability is also, conveniently, beneficial:

"... the places where I see the naked being clothed, the places where I see the sick being healed are in places where there happens to be a free market system."²

2. Building a Moderate Zimbabwe and Namibia: Disarming the Militants.

The key problem for the United States is how to promote a gradual transfer of power to African leadership favorable to western economic investment, development patterns, trade and political needs while at the same time avoiding the appearance of intervention in revolutionary processes.

The history of the struggle for freedom in the Portuguese colonies suggests that a prolonged period of guerilla struggle may be necessary to establish a unified political ideology favorable to socialist development and a common experience of co-operation capable of overcoming regional, ethnic and personal divisions. On the other hand, the same history suggests to the western powers that they must create a quick solution by devising processes that will delay or short-circuit the armed struggle, put it at a political disadvantage, or transform it into processes subject to western management.

Clearly there are limitations on what can be done by the West.

The Congress in the post-Vietnam period has demonstrated that, at this point, it does not favor the use of U.S. funds for covert military, guerilla or paramilitary activities. Given the degree and nature of legitimacy accorded to SWAPO and the Patriotic Front, the western powers cannot easily support "internal solutions" such as the Turnhalle Constitution or various Ian Smith proposals. Such a course would, in effect, be a choice of white rule's continuation through a palpable sham. Agreeing to a Muzorewa-style referendum to choose a single leader with whom Smith could negotiate would ignore the security arrangements under which such an election would be held. The necessity therefore emerges of inserting a "neutral" force capable of claiming a type of legitimacy and power which would be a substitute for militant white and guerilla forces.

In regard to Zimbabwe, the Administration has worked with the British to devise a package complete with ready-made constitution, development fund and a security arrangement to manage the transition to one-person, one-vote parliamentary elections by the end of 1978. Where the Kissinger plan called for the present white regime and the nationalist movement to co-manage the political transition, the present plan calls for a temporary but total restoration of British rule under a retired Field Marshall conveniently equipped with dictatorial powers. The liberation movements are left out of the transition. A U.N. force composed primarily of Nigerians would be inserted between the opposing armies, whose key units would be de-mobilized.

In Namibia, the United States has been able to use the collective pressure of the five western members of the U.N. Security Council to move South Africa a surprising distance toward elections and toward withdrawal of its forces. The remaining disagreements seem

to center on the size and nature of the United Nations control over the political process leading to elections. This success is in part due to the brilliance of Don McHenry, Number 3 under Andy Young. In part it is due to South Africa's need to cut its losses and in part it is due to SWAPO's willingness to compromise on points such as Walvis Bay, a compromise which some Namibia experts regard as dangerous and perhaps unwise.

3. The Protection and Preservation of a Private Enterprise Economy in order to Expand the Interests of International Capital in Zimbabwe and Namibia.

The present Zimbabwe economy, partly under the spur of sanctions, has developed into a more diversified economy than existed before UDI. Small national industries have developed using retained earnings, but growth has been slow and exports of minerals and tobacco have remained key elements in what is still largely a dependent peripheral economy.

To capitalize on Rhodesia's growth potential, Britain and the U.S. have proposed an international fund of \$1 - \$1.5 billion which would promote heavy inflow of foreign capital for private investment, retain existing managerial, technical and other skills and expand African access to "better" jobs and "better" land. The model of development uses traditional capitalist mechanisms:

- encouragement of "commercial capital flows, especially in extractive, processing and manufacturing industries, supported as appropriate by national export credit and investment insurance agencies;"
- balance of payments support; and
- encouragement of skilled labour and managerial personnel to "contribute to Zimbabwe development" and "effect a smooth transition to a more balanced pattern of access to ownership of farms, houses and businesses."

The proposed new Constitution guarantees the right of private property.

It forbids "expropriation except on specified grounds of public interest and even then only on condition that there is prompt payment of adequate compensation ... and that compensation may be remitted abroad within a reasonable period."

The purpose of the Fund is not primarily developmental. The Fund is in fact intended to benefit, directly and indirectly, the interests of international capitalists who have been largely excluded from Rhodesia's potentially profitable economy during the last decade.

Giovanni Arrighi points out that it was this same conflict between international and national capitalists which partly underlay African decolonization during the 1960's:

"The 'colonial preserves of European imperialism' were opened up to American capitalism, in which the oligopolistic corporation plays a more central role than in French or British capitalism. More important still was the outflow of small-scale, competitive capital that accompanied independence. In fact, de-colonization was, among other things, the result of a conflict between the dynamic elements (the big companies) and the backward elements (marginal enterprises, small planters, small trading houses, small semi-artisanal workshops) of colonial capitalism."⁴

The Namibian economy, on the other hand, is not nearly as industrialized or diversified as that of Rhodesia. It is very largely dependent on the economy of South Africa. Western mining firms are eager to expand their exploitation of Namibia's copper, zinc, uranium and other minerals. As yet, however, the western governments do not seem to have evolved an international plan similar to the Zimbabwe Development Fund to promote the interests of the multinationals. However, the reaction of the five western powers to the issue of Walvis Bay suggests that South Africa's continued domination of the Namibian economy is not contrary to western interests.

On August 31, South Africa announced by proclamation that it was annexing Walvis Bay, the only viable deep-water port in Namibia, the

center of one of the most productive fishing industries in the world and a naval and military base which dominates the Namibian littoral. Despite western deploring of these actions, informed U.N. sources speculate that the West, for its own reasons, is not unhappy with South Africa's seizure. Misleading comparisons are drawn to Goa. American spokesmen say that Namibia will get Walvis Bay in the end. Perhaps. But meanwhile Walvis Bay constitutes a critical strangulation point that could make an independent Namibia as dependent on South Africa's economy as it now is. Or as Botswana is. Furthermore, there is another reason for South Africa to hold onto Walvis: oil and gas discoveries which are reported to have been made in offshore waters of the enclave.

4. The Use of Carrots instead of Sticks to Build Areas of Support in the Front-Line States and in South Africa.

A. Throwing money at the Crisis. One time-honored American method of dealing with a crisis is to create client states whose political inclinations are re-enforced by dependencies on outside money. During the Kennedy-Johnson years of 1962-68, for example, the United States put some \$350 million of its economic and military aid into Zaire. When the crisis eased, aid fell to relatively modest levels. But with the Angola war and the Shaba rebellion, and large arrears in Zaire's international debt payments, aid is once more rising.

Similarly, as the crisis mounts in Zimbabwe and Namibia, the United States is planning to spend unprecedented amounts of political money to underwrite the states which border on Zimbabwe, Namibia or South Africa. For the first time, Congress is authorizing large programs of "Security Supporting Assistance" for southern Africa. This category of aid is designed to be used at the discretion of the Presi-

dent to "promote economic or political stability," and was first poured into Indochina, then the Middle East. In FY 1978 Congress has authorized the following sums⁵:

Botswana	\$18 million	Zambia	\$30 million
Lesotho	\$20	Zaire	\$10
Swaziland	\$15.5	Regional	\$21.5
		(training, refugee aid, and AID studies)	
		TOTAL	<u>\$115 million</u>

At the same time Congress announced its intent to fund the Zimbabwe Development Fund if the progress of negotiations warranted such a step, which would mean another \$100 million or so per year for five years. In short, what we may be seeing in the next few years is security aid at a level of \$200 - 250 million in order to create or support moderate governments in the six above-mentioned countries during the period of crisis.

B. Encouraging the South African Liberals. In the Kissinger era, very little was done publicly to support the opposition parties in South Africa. Kissinger saw moral lectures as doubly counterproductive. On the one hand, the Nationalists would harden their attitudes, withdraw into their "laager" and be unco-operative in dealing with American business and political interests. On the other, the African states would be encouraged to demand sanctions which the United States would not support. The same argument has now been made by George Ball. The center of the foreign policy establishment is now reasserting itself.

The Carter Administration's initial approach was a gingerly but nevertheless visible public posturing against the South African regime. Carter declared at Notre Dame in May that America was committed

to majority rule in all of southern Africa. At the same time, Mondale was telling Vorster that while America had no road map or timetable, South Africa had to move away from apartheid or suffer deterioration of its relations with America. The options that were being considered were symbolic, designed to support rather than compel a shift away from racism.

South Africa's response was to scream bloody murder, and to lobby American businessmen saying that Carter was trying to promote suicide for South Africa, and that the United States is South Africa's No. 1 enemy. The response of the Americans to this attack of paranoia has been reassurances of U.S. desire not to punish or isolate South Africa, and to continue dialogue. Repeal of the Byrd Amendment in March has not been followed by any form of pressure on the multinational oil corporations operating from South Africa or on South Africa itself to close off Rhodesia's supply of petroleum. Ambassador Young has aggressively defended a posture against any form of substantive economic disengagement at U.N. gatherings both in Maputo and Lagos. And the United States and four western members of the Security Council have vetoed the relatively moderate African resolutions calling for an end to further investments and loans and trade promotion.

Even the apparent U.S. confrontation with South Africa over its nuclear testing in August, 1977 appears to have served South Africa's interests. Carter publicly welcomed as a commitment Vorster's assurances that South Africa does not have and does not intend to explode nuclear devices, despite U.S. intelligence reports to the contrary. Vorster later denied that his statement was in fact a promise. The U.S. has now rejected an African call at the U.N. to end nuclear col-

laboration, on the grounds that the U.S. must retain a nuclear relationship in order to have influence to urge the South Africans to sign the Nonproliferation Treaty. Vorster meanwhile uses the possibility of South African development of an atomic weapon as a lingering political threat to prevent African states from supporting armed struggle.

C. Building a Black Middle Class. As a substitute for a redistribution of wealth in South Africa or U.S. disengagement, Ambassador Andy Young argues that South Africa's businessmen need to draw blacks into the free market system by making them consumers:

"When blacks became a part of the free enterprise system in the South ... blacks had very much a stake in it... The tragic irony is that nothing was taken from the whites but the income gap between whites and blacks actually expanded. But blacks were so much better off than they ever thought that they would be."⁷

America has been using its own black bourgeoisie to build support for such a strategy. The Urban League, PSUH, NAACP, OIC and a host of other black organizations are being mobilized and harnessed to support the program. State's Bureau of Cultural and Educational Affairs and AID will expand studies and programs that will involve blacks Americans as consultants. Budding technicians, community action specialists, professionals and other aspirants to middle-class status will come to America from Africa for "enrichment", to make contact with consultants who can help them create programs in southern Africa, or to get education and skills, with an emphasis on "development" and technology. African American Institute scholarship programs will be greatly expanded. Crossroads Africa is developing a network of contacts for African visitors.

But now with the banning of virtually every black organization in South Africa, even the most moderate and middle-class, traditional American organizations of the black bourgeoisie are backing the Black Caucus in demanding economic disengagement.

WILL IT WORK?

History has a way of changing human consciousness. To revert to methods, objectives and techniques of an earlier day may simply be to ignore what has been learned in the interim. Ending colonialism in southern Africa by reviving the models of 15 years ago is therefore not a particularly promising approach.

The people of Africa know very well that it was the liberal, morally idealistic Kennedy and Johnson Administrations which intervened massively and with unparalleled violence in Vietnam. A number of the Carter Administration's top policy executors such as Secretary of State Vance and Defense Secretary Brown filled high posts in the Vietnam years. Those who opposed the war at least in part, such as State Department Policy Planner Anthony Lake, were involved in discreet disagreement over details, and criticized "rigidity" in application rather than America's principles. As mentioned above, American promotion of African nationalism in the Congo had its dark manipulative aspect.

Conversely, liberation movements in the Third World have demonstrated in Indochina and in Africa that they can be a major force in transforming the world. Their victories show that western technical prowess and power can be overcome by ideological awakening and the organization of popular, mass-based resistance. The victories of the liberation movements in Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique

gave to the people of Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa a great resurgence of hope, and hence a willingness to suffer and to sacrifice.

At the same time, in other countries of Africa, the fruits of western-managed de-colonization have proven to be hollow forms of majority rule. As Colin Leys has shown us, Kenya, the country which the Carter Administration holds up as a model for Zimbabweans, continues to suffer from gross inequalities, dependency on foreign capital and underdevelopment. By 1970, 44 percent of the Africans who had purchased white lands through a large foreign-financed settlement scheme were in arrears in paying their debts for acquisition. The poorest were using 70 percent of their incomes to pay for an unproductive expenditure, an asset transfer, which would ultimately go to former European settlers. At the same time, large-scale farms came into the hands of a wealthy and politically powerful elite, as the poorer farmers defaulted on their loans. Payments to Europeans meant an outflow of capital and re-investment in foreign-controlled enterprises in industry and tourism.⁸

Countries such as Tanzania, which emerged from colonialism without an armed struggle but with a vision of an African socialism, are leading voices in a chorus of Third World protests against continued foreign domination over terms of trade, technology and the right to nationalize or expropriate resources. It is thus apparent that offers of foreign aid simply do not address issues that have emerged from post-colonial experience.

Furthermore, when Africans examine the domestic record of the United States, they must inevitably question Andy Young's advocacy of boycotts, black consumerism and non-violence as a sufficient nostrum for the ills of colonialism, racism and imperialism. Over

14 percent of black Americans looking for work are unemployed (double the white rate). In the cities, the figures for unemployed black youth average over 40 percent and in some areas, such as New York City, are more than double that figure. The domestic priorities of the Carter Administration so far do not reflect the demands of even those blacks who are alleged to have picked Carter. Furthermore, the veto of even the modest economic disengagement from South Africa contradicts the advocacy of boycotts by South Africa's blacks as an effective tactic. Blacks with starvation wages have far less economic leverage than U.S. corporations, since their purchases are essentially necessities.

If the Carter Administration is aware of these contradictions, it is showing few signs of candor or determination. On the contrary, its spokesmen seem indifferent, insensitive or unwilling to confront the depth and reality of African determination to use militant methods. A white South African professional who had heard Ambassador Young's May address in South Africa told the author: "I couldn't believe it. He was talking about things that were talked about in the twenties or in the time of Jabavu. Good will. Things like that."

At the U.N., Ambassador Young's charisma may be wearing a bit thin. The United States has now shown its determination to outmaneuver the militant African states by using power tactics. It has assisted Nigeria and Gabon to replace Benin and Libya on the Security Council, notwithstanding a strong OAU backing for Niger and opposition to Nigeria which had already served on the Council.

These power tactics and the quintuple veto on economic restraints

are a reminder of American determination to defend its tangible interests when push comes to shove. In regard to the western initiatives on Namibia and Rhodesia, it needs to be recalled that the Patriotic Front and SWAPO have not rejected discussion or even compromise if essential demands are met. Quite aside from their own goals, they are under tremendous pressure from the Front-Line states, whose pragmatic interests necessarily are different from those of liberation movements. Angola would like to be able to concentrate on UNITA without having to deal with South Africa as well, a possibility that would be enhanced by even a "moderate" solution in Namibia. Mozambique's economy is struggling against dependency on South Africa, Rhodesian aggression and severe organizational and technical problems. Support for the Zimbabwe struggle is extraordinarily costly in money terms, in personal losses and in destruction of infrastructure. Zambia has similar problems. Tanzania is bone poor, dependent on western aid. Botswana is a hostage of the white states. Under the circumstances, what is surprising is the unity and depth of commitment to liberation among the Front-Line states and not their understandable prudence.

The foregoing analysis is not meant to support the view that if Zimbabwe or Namibia were to become free soon, their economies would necessarily be socialist. On the contrary, it is probable that the new states would retain many present arrangements while attempting to gain a greater measure of control over mineral resources, agricultural land and productive facilities. And yet people, having taken up arms, or even rocks, to risk their own deaths in order to be free will not meekly surrender the freedom, the camaraderie, the unity and the vision that comes from persistence in a growing struggle that seeks profound transformation of an inhuman system.

For our part, we need to study and implement the concrete steps that must be taken to support that struggle and promote U. S. disengagement.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ See President Carter's press conference text, The Baltimore Sun, June 14, 1977.
- ² U.S. Mission to the United Nations Press Release USUN 30 (77) May 27, 1977, Statement of Ambassador Young to South African businessmen, Johannesburg, South Africa, May 21, 1977.
- ³ See United Kingdom, Rhodesia, Proposals for a Settlement, with Annexes A, B, and C. U.N. Security Council document 2/12393, 1 September, 1977, pp. 23, 24.
- ⁴ See Giovanni Arrighi, "Foreign Investment in Tropical Africa," in African Social Studies: a Radical Reader, edited by P. Gutkind and P. Waterman (N.Y.), 1977, pp. 168-69.
- ⁵ See Conference Report to accompany H.R. 6884, International Security Assistance Act of 1977, July 15, 1977. Report 95-503, pp. 23-25.
- ⁶ Zaire is also getting \$20 million in foreign military credit sales and \$2.5 million in military training.
- ⁷ See statement of Ambassador Young cited in footnote 2.
- ⁸ See Colin Leys, Underdevelopment in Kenya, (Berkeley), 1974, especially pp. 78-79, 83-98.