

"strategic" issues in african studies

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The following extracts are taken from a paper presented at a seminar on strategic studies in Africa which was held in October (1969) at Georgetown University. My purpose in presenting the extracts from this paper by Ernest Lefever of the Brookings Institute is to expose Mr. Lefever and the type of research that he advocates as significant obstructions to the self-determination of black people in Africa. It is clear that this is the type of study on Africa that the US government is both supporting and encouraging.

Mr. Lefever's paper can be helpful to the revolutionary movement, however. In it he provides "strategic" information about the military capabilities of the Republic of South Africa as well as many potentially useful economic facts. It also provides a target for CRV action in support of revolutionary movements in Africa.

In his introduction Lefever points out the "strategic" significance of Africa to the US: "Even nuclear submarines and super-tankers must rely on friendly port facilities far distant from their home bases."

Lefever's interest in Africa is motivated (as he thinks the State Department's should be) by the logic of the cold war:

The Communist states provide open diplomatic support, economic aid and assistance to subversive groups on a selective basis in pursuit of their objectives in Africa.

About a half dozen states materially assist or permit to operate on their territories elements of "freedom fighter" forces seeking to harass or overthrow regimes in Southern Africa. These insurgent units are aided by the Communist states, and other militant governments. Rebel movements have also operated against legitimate black governments in the area, notably in the Congo. They have been likewise partially supported by Communist and other militant governments.

Weak and tribally divided, most of these states (of Central Africa) are vulnerable to various kinds of Communist penetration and subversion. US policy in tropical Africa is in part a response to the behavior of the Communist states and their allies.

Lefever also displays a bit of personal racism:

The economic situation would be a great deal worse were it not for the 200,000 or more Europeans who decided to stay on after independence day.

He provides some background on the Republic of South Africa:

In 1963 the Republic's foreign trade exceeded \$3.6 billion, 530.8 million with the US. It is the 13th largest trading nation in the world. About 35% of all US exports to Africa go to the Republic. Her mineral production represents 43% of the whole of Africa. She exports 50 minerals and leads the world in export of gold, gem diamonds, platinum and antimony. She produces 73% of the free world's gold supply. Foreign investments exceed \$5 billion, about 1/7 from the US.

Though formally non-aligned, the Government of South Africa is distinctly pro-West.

In addition, the Republic's 32,700 police are equipped with 430 riot trucks and 80 armored cars. Almost all South African forces are drawn from the European population.

In sum it would appear that the politically, economically and militarily strong state of South Africa is of greater strategic value to the US than the whole of Central Africa, even without the added strength of South West Africa, Rhodesia and the Portuguese areas.

Lefever states the objectives for US policy in Africa:

US policy toward any area of Africa seeks to augment the forces of stability and peaceful change. The absence of armed conflict is regarded as a contribution to the balance of power in the larger world and a prerequisite to constructive economic and political development.

In more specific strategic terms what the US needs in Africa are a few reliable and friendly states able and willing to cooperate and assist both in peace and war.

Lefever asked 51 research centers which were doing research on

1. Strategic significance of Africa or any part
2. Indigenous military forces of African states
3. External military forces in Africa (eg France)
4. External military assistance from US, Britain, USSR, etc.
5. Armed "liberation movements" in Africa

Here are some of the replies

	1	2	3	4	5
U of Cal Berkeley		x			
U of Chicago		x			
Columbia		x	x		
Johns Hopkins, SAIS (DC)				x	
Hoover Inst., Stanford		x			x
MIT		x		x	
(Gov. Sponsored Research)					
CRESS, American U	x				x
Research Analysis Corp	x	x	x	x	
RAND Corp	x				