The past four years have seen enormous changes in southern Africa, driven by the end of the global Cold War, the exhaustion of the apartheid system under the pressure of sanctions and internal resistance, war-weariness in the battered nations of Angola and Mozambique, and the demand for democratization common to post-colonial regimes throughout the continent.

In contrast to the Reagan era, with its uneasy mix of crusading anti-Communist fervor and halting moves towards negotiated solutions, the Bush administration coincided with a period of stress on conflict resolution. Continuing the trend of the Namibia/Angola settlement of the last Reagan years, Bush's diplomats sought to project a more even-handed posture, accepting the fact that Congress had imposed sanctions on Pretoria and stressing that all parties in the region were weary of conflict.

Despite the skillful exercise of diplomacy on some occasions and a belated willingness to criticize former favorites such as Mobutu, Savimbi and Banda, the Bush team still showed a fundamental unwillingness to confront recalcitrant defenders of the old order. By failing to step up pressure on the de Klerk regime and its regional allies, U.S. policy lessened the chances for establishing a peaceful and democratic post-apartheid and post-Cold War order.

Right-wing pressure, bureaucratic inertia and old prejudices reinforced administration sympathy for the new-look apartheid regime under de Klerk. This was coupled with condescension and suspicion towards the frontline African states and the liberation movement in South Africa.

To its credit, the U.S. continued to supply vital relief and development aid to southern African states. Simultaneously, however, a rigid insistence on World Bank/International Monetary Fund directed Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) and free-market dogma helped to undermine prospects for long-term sustainable development.
Violence and the Quest for Democracy in South Africa

The Bush administration sought to avoid the controversy surrounding South Africa policy which had marked Reagan’s “constructive engagement” and the imposition of U.S. sanctions by Congress over an administration veto. Initially, U.S. officials did not attempt to lift the 1986 sanctions. Once President F.W. de Klerk released Nelson Mandela and legalized the African National Congress (ANC) in February 1990, however, the administration began to work towards lifting sanctions, succeeding in July 1991.

At the end of the Bush term, almost three years after de Klerk’s promises of reform, the white-minority regime was still clinging to power.

The administration consistently gave the de Klerk regime the benefit of the doubt, and showed little urgency in pressing the South African government to move swiftly to create a country in which “all races are permitted free political participation.” It played down abundant evidence of the regime’s covert involvement in promoting political violence. This low-profile and ostensibly impartial approach served as a de facto license for repeated South African delays in releasing political prisoners, in curbing violence and in advancing with good-faith negotiations for a new democratic constitution. The posture of neutral bystander or “concerned outsider,” in the words of Assistant Secretary of State Herman Cohen, precluded active involvement in promoting political violence. This low-profile visit sent the wrong message to the international community, coming at a time when the ANC had asked foreign governments to step up the pressure on de Klerk.

Nelson Mandela’s 10-day tour of the U.S. beginning June 20, 1990 helped to achieve two goals: raising funds for the organization and strengthening Congressional support for sanctions. Mandela spoke to a full house in a joint session of Congress on June 26, 1990. The standing ovations he received reinforced sentiment against premature lifting of sanctions. Nevertheless, Mr. Cohen stated in an interview on July 23 of that year that the president was “quite close” to rewarding de Klerk for reforms by lifting some sanctions.

During the Mandela visit, President Bush made an issue of calling on the ANC to renounce the armed struggle in a public statement made before the two met privately on June 25, 1990. There was no corresponding appeal to the Pretoria regime to abandon violence. Critics such as former House Africa Subcommittee Chairman Howard Wolpe marked the beginning of increasingly warm diplomatic activity between the U.S. and South Africa.

Secretary of State James Baker made a visit to South Africa on March 23, 1990, the first U.S. official of such rank to visit South Africa in five years. The stated purpose of the trip was to urge the ANC and the South African government to negotiate on the country’s future. But since the trip took place before Mandela’s tour of the U.S., and against the request of the ANC, Baker’s meeting with de Klerk was taken as a signal of a U.S. tilt towards the South African government. The ANC stated that this high-profile visit sent the wrong message to the international community, coming at a time when the ANC had asked foreign governments to step up the pressure on de Klerk.

Diplomacy
Nelson Mandela’s release and the unbanning of the ANC and other groups in February 1990
Political Violence

was de Klerk's failure to control or to disassociate himself from the campaign of covert violence in which elements of his security forces were implicated.

The past four years have seen enormous changes in southern Africa

Political Violence

In December 1992, after years of denying any complicity by his armed forces in covert violence in the country, South African President de Klerk dismissed six generals and 17 other officers implicated in illegal activities. Declaring himself "disappointed and shocked," de Klerk still denied that their activities had constituted a "third force" promoting violence. He declined to announce the names of those dismissed, and claimed ministers and top officers had been kept in the dark about secret military intelligence programs.

The ANC and other critics welcomed the dismissal as a first step, but demanded that full details of the operations be made public. They warned that others, such as Military Intelligence head Joffel van der Westhuizen, should also be dismissed.

De Klerk's refusal to acknowledge such involvement had long convinced most independent observers that he either approved or at least tolerated a two-track policy blending reform and negotiations with covert efforts to weaken anti-apartheid forces. Press investigations, the work of the independent Goldstone judicial commission, and a series of leaks had by late 1992 begun to crack the facade, however, with police and military officials scrambling to place the blame on each other.

The three years since Nelson Mandela's release, however, had already racked up horrifying statistics of political violence, with an average of more than nine deaths a day. While the ANC, investigative journalists and independent human rights groups charged the regime with extensive involvement in promoting the violence, de Klerk stonewalled. And the Bush administration consistently gave priority to bolstering de Klerk's political position. Instead of actively investigating the charges, or demanding fuller disclosure, the United States adopted a stance of "see no evil," deploiling the violence on all sides, but claiming the data was pointed out the double standard to which Bush seemed oblivious, noting that the administration had no qualms supplying arms to guerrillas in Central America and Afghanistan, and even in Angola, while deploiring the use of violence by opponents of apartheid.

In September 1990, President de Klerk visited Washington, the first visit to the U.S. by a South African president in 45 years. With political violence raging in South Africa's townships, the ANC called upon the U.S. administration to address the problem with de Klerk on this trip. But the administration barely touched on the issue; the two leaders "did not go into a detailed discussion about the causes of violence." Instead, "the main United States objective for the visit was to congratulate President de Klerk..." (White House, September 24, 1990).

Lifting Sanctions

Mr. Bush said this week that he never thought the sanctions should have been imposed in the first place and added that he would lift them 'cheerfully.'
(Washington Times, July 11, 1991)

On July 10, 1991 the sanctions imposed by the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act (CAAA) were lifted. Justified as sending a clear signal that the U.S. was fully behind moves to end apartheid, the action sent precisely the opposite message. Although democratic change had not yet been achieved, the U.S. was ready and willing to welcome South Africa back into the world community.

Under last-minute pressure from the U.S. to comply with the remaining conditions of the CAAA, the South African government released more than 1,000 detainees from jail and repealed some of the major pillars of apartheid legislation. The Bush administration asserted that the South African government had "technically complied" with the conditions for lifting sanctions.

Anti-apartheid groups charged that the administration adopted lenient interpretations of the conditions, and, most importantly, disregarded evidence that de Klerk was not negotiating in good faith, but was stalling on a rapid transition to democratic rule.

The most significant evidence of bad faith was de Klerk's failure to control or to disassociate himself from the campaign of covert violence in which elements of his security forces were implicated.
insufficient to point the finger of blame.

Because of the secrecy maintained by the South African government, it was indeed difficult to pinpoint precisely who within the security forces was most responsible. And violence in local townships took on its own dynamic, with conflict between the ANC and Chief Buthelezi's Inkatha, between township residents and migrant workers in hostels, and among a variety of local factions. Yet press reports and investigations by human rights groups quickly documented complicity by various government-linked bodies in the escalation of violence which coincided with de Klerk's term of office. Those involved included Inkatha and the KwaZulu police, other homeland governments in the Ciskei and Bophuthatswana, police accused of failure to act or of actually joining in the violence, and special commando units most often linked to the military intelligence apparatus.

In early 1990, President de Klerk appointed Judge Louis Harms to head a commission on unexplained killings in South Africa. Testimony before the commission established the existence of a secret death-squad operation labelled the Civil Cooperation Bureau (CCB) linked to military intelligence. But instead of using the opportunity to expose such operations, the regime restricted the commission's work, allowing CCB operatives to remain anonymous although the unit was ostensibly disbanded.

Simultaneously, violence initiated by Inkatha against ANC supporters escalated and expanded geographically. Whereas previous confrontations had pitted Inkatha, the KwaZulu authorities and the South African police against supporters of the ANC in Zulu-speaking Natal and KwaZulu, in July 1990 Inkatha began launching attacks from migrant worker hostels against residential areas in the Transvaal. In reports in late 1990 and early 1991, Africa Watch and other groups presented extensive evidence of attacks on anti-apartheid activists, the shortcomings of the Harms Commission investigation, and police involvement with Inkatha attacks.

The Bush administration, however, refused to criticize the South African authorities. Even when pressed by reporters on the issue, as at a July 1990 press briefing by State Department spokesperson Margaret Tutwiler, U.S. officials consistently avoided identifying the South African security forces as part of the problem.

In 1991, as the township violence continued in both Natal and the Transvaal, accompanied by unexplained assassinations of anti-apartheid activists and professional attacks on commuters between Soweto and Johannesburg, additional evidence accumulated. At the very least, lack of police action to stop the violence was indisputable. But press reports also forced the South African government to admit that it had provided secret police funding for Inkatha. Defectors provided detailed reports of covert units assigned to work with criminal gangs and with Inkatha to mount train attacks and other raids. In mid-July, instead of responding to demands that lethal weapons be effectively banned from public gatherings, de Klerk introduced new regulations giving Inkatha legal authority to carry "traditional weapons." The State Department, nevertheless, still claimed, in a July 1991 statement crafted to support the lifting of sanctions, that they had "seen no evidence that the South African government entities are supporting black-on-black violence."

By 1992 de Klerk was finally pressured into appointing a new commission of inquiry into the violence, under respected judge Richard Goldstone. In June 1992, the massacre of over 40 people at Boipatong township by Inkatha attackers forced the issue of violence and of government responsibility onto the international agenda. Following a special mission by United Nations envoy Cyrus Vance, de Klerk introduced new regulations giving Inkatha legal authority to carry "traditional weapons." The State Department, nevertheless, still claimed, in a July 1991 statement crafted to support the lifting of sanctions, that they had "seen no evidence that the South African government entities are supporting black-on-black violence."

Right-wing pressure, bureaucratic inertia and old prejudices reinforced administration sympathy for the new-look apartheid regime
solution denounced by the UN as inadequate. A September 1992 massacre of almost 30 demonstrators by the Ciskei government was followed by press revelations of extensive cooperation by South African military intelligence officers with the homeland leader.

In 1992 the House of Representatives passed House Resolution 497, calling on the president to prepare and transmit to Congress a report on the nature of the violence, the role of participants, the impact of violence on the negotiation process, and recommendations for action to be taken by the U.S. to stop the violence. A parallel resolution passed in the Senate.

Peace and Reconstruction in Angola and Mozambique

In Angola and Mozambique, the countries most devastated by the wars of apartheid's last stand, peace settlements were achieved by the end of the Bush years. Washington was credited with a supportive role in the peace process in both cases, culminating in the signature of settlements in May 1991 for Angola and in October 1992 for Mozambique. But the aftermath of renewed war in Angola and the long delay in reaching peace in Mozambique indicated flaws for which U.S. policy was in part responsible.

In Angola the U.S. tried to play the double role of mediator and of partisan for its client UNITA, and accordingly disregarded the potential threat to peace posed by Savimbi's ambition and reluctance to disarm. In Mozambique the Bush administration, restrained by its partiality to the de Klerk regime and possessed of no sense of urgency, refused to target for exposure or pressure the continued support for RENAMO coming through South Africa, Malawi and Kenya.

Flawed Peace Process in Angola

The United States played a supportive role in the talks leading to the May 1991 peace treaty in Angola, although the central part in hosting the talks was played by Portugal. One key breakthrough came as a result of joint Soviet-U.S. pressure when UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi agreed in late 1990 to a merger of the two armies before elections.

Persistence in promoting the negotiations was followed by a slow post-cease-fire trend toward greater neutrality. A 1990 push in Congress to limit aid to Savimbi signalled a shift in balance of opinion on the controversial rebel leader. And more direct experience at working with the various parties in Angola raised questions even among Unita partisans within the administration. The U.S. worked with Portugal, Russia and the United Nations to sustain a cease-fire interrupted by only isolated incidents. By fall 1992, the U.S. was projecting an image of concern for the election process rather than for the victory of a particular candidate, contributing to the relative calm and order of the election days themselves.

Yet the aftermath, in which Savimbi's troops immediately withdrew from the formally united national army once election results seemed to be going against him, revealed fundamental problems with U.S. policy. They were related, above all, to an unwillingness to question the legitimacy of Cold War client Savimbi, or to discard the assumption that the process must lead to the overthrow of the Angolan government, the traditional Cold War enemy. Whether this was the result of internal administration policy, or of the substantial clout of the UNITA lobby in Washington, the result was a significant tilt away from impartial support for the peace and election processes.

After the 1988 agreement on independence of Namibia and withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola, which U.S. officials agreed was scrupulously implemented by the Angolan and Cuban governments, Luanda expected greater flexibility from the United States in considering diplomatic ties and reduction in military aid for UNITA. Angolan peace proposals advanced in 1989 were premised on bringing UNITA into the government, much as previous FNLA opponents had been incorporated, rather than competitive winner-take-all elections. The proposals required the temporary withdrawal of
The renewed war in Angola and the delay in reaching peace in Mozambique indicated flaws for which U.S. policy was in part responsible.

In 1990, the Angolan government, despite its suspicion that Savimbi would never stop short of absolute power, conceded to the demand for elections. Luanda felt agreement was necessary, with Cuban military support no longer available, and prospects of continued Soviet aid fading, while UNITA continued military escalation with the help of GIA supplies through Zaire. But Angolan leaders also contended that elections could only be genuinely free of intimidation if they were preceded by formation of a non-partisan national army and by a unified national administration, which would take time. UNITA, reluctantly agreeing to the principle, argued for a short time-period. The compromise 18-month period the agreement specified proved inadequate, even in practical terms, for integration of the armies.

UNITA showed little urgency to complete the process in time for the elections, preferring to keep unilateral control of areas under their military authority and to preserve their separate command structures intact. Although the small UN monitoring force had neither the mandate nor the resources to identify all the violations of the peace agreement, the decisive fact was that only the United States had the possible clout to insist that UNITA comply. Despite belated insistence on election neutrality, U.S. officials were still reluctant to criticize their traditional client.

For his critics in southern Africa and elsewhere, Savimbi had long been discredited by his collaboration with the apartheid regime, which built up his military strength in southern Angola and joined the United States in backing a wider guerrilla war as well. As long as Cuban troops were present on the other side, the apartheid alliance was easily excused by U.S. cold warriors. As the anti-Cuban rationale for backing Savimbi was disappearing, evidence also began to reach the outside world of Savimbi’s totalitarian control and violent purges of rivals within UNITA. But neither the initial reports from UNITA exiles surfacing in 1988 and 1989, nor even confirming revelations by Savimbi’s previously admiring biographer Fred Bridgland, jarred the Bush administration into going beyond statements claiming insufficient evidence. Far from launching serious investigations, the U.S. even failed to save the life of former UNITA Washington envoy Tito Chingunji, who was killed in UNITA captivity after the May 1991 cease-fire agreement.

As in the case of accusations of complicity in violence by South African security forces, Washington allowed political bias to induce an ostrich-like response, ignoring repeated indications that Savimbi’s commitment to democratic ways was a facade for outside consumption.

Following the September 1992 elections, U.S. officials were dismayed by Savimbi’s violent rejection of the results, which were accepted as generally free and fair by the UN and almost all other observers. Acknowledging that failure to insist on demobilization of the separate armies was a mistake, and that Savimbi was primarily at fault in breaking the peace, the administration still declined to grant the promised diplomatic recognition to the Angolan government. Moreover, Washington refused to consider more than diplomatic condemnation as a means of pressure on Savimbi, and played down evidence that new supplies were still reaching UNITA from South Africa.

Many officials accepted privately that Savimbi could not be trusted to accept peacefully his defeat nor to cooperate in a runoff to complete the election process. But the U.S. still clung to an ostensibly even-handed support for the process, without any provision for penalties for non-compliance. At the end of 1992, restoration of peace in Angola seemed again a distant prospect.

Lack of Urgency on Mozambique

In the final year of Reagan’s first term, the U.S. took credit for facilitating the Nkomati Accord
between South Africa and Mozambique. The text of the accord promised an end to South African sponsorship of violence against Mozambique, in exchange for Mozambican restriction of the ANC to a purely diplomatic presence in Maputo. Yet RENAMO’s terror campaign continued for eight more years, while successive U.S. administrations tolerated South African failure to implement the agreement.

The Reagan and Bush administrations never agreed to far-right demands to shift towards supporting RENAMO, and built good diplomatic and economic ties with the Mozambican government. But as in the case of the violence internal to South Africa, U.S. officials consistently refused to call Pretoria to account for security force or private-sector South African involvement with RENAMO. Nor did the U.S. address the murky networks of private U.S. and other support for RENAMO channeled through Malawi and through Kenya.

Instead of increasing pressure on RENAMO with serious efforts to cut off its outside sources of supplies, the primary U.S. posture was to seek ever greater flexibility and new concessions from the Mozambican government. This allowed RENAMO to drag out the war and repeatedly delay the peace negotiations, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of thousands more Mozambicans than if the war had been terminated earlier.

When the cease-fire was finally signed, in October 1992, South African journalists visiting a key RENAMO base close to the Mozambican border with South Africa reported that RENAMO commanders admitted receiving regular supplies from the South African military until the very end. Through the years since the Nkomati Accord, Mozambican intelligence sources and occasional press reports cited continued South African support. Occasional U.S. government statements admitted the fact of South African aid. But never was it taken as grounds for more than quiet diplomatic protest.

Once President Botha was replaced by de Klerk in South Africa, Mozambican leaders judged that South African support for RENAMO was shaky enough that it was time to begin direct negotiations with RENAMO. Formal talks began in mid-1990. By then Mozambique was formally moving to a multi-party constitutional system, had accepted World Bank economic restructuring, and enjoyed a solid reputation with the U.S. as well as other Western diplomats for serious diplomatic efforts to bring peace.

But quiet U.S. support for Mozambican diplomacy, as well as exasperation at RENAMO’s intransigence, was not matched by serious efforts to squeeze RENAMO’s supply lines from outside. That would have entailed confrontations with South Africa, Malawi, and Kenya, as well as with right-wing groups in the United States. But for the Bush administration, falling out with old Cold War friends—for the sake of a country led by a government with a Marxist past—was simply not on the policy spectrum.

**Dictatorship and Democracy in Zaire and Malawi**

Two of the longest-surviving dictators on the African continent—Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire and Hastings Kamuzu Banda of Malawi—faced strong pro-democracy movements during the Bush years. The Bush administration moved, in rhetoric at least, towards support of democratic reform in these countries. But U.S. policy remained reactive and repeatedly stopped short of significant pressure to nudge the aging despots from power.

Especially in Zaire, where the U.S. has long been identified as the primary patron of Mobutu, Washington lagged behind other members of the international community in calling for change. Low-profile and cautious responses signalled tolerance for continued human rights abuses and delay in democratization. The lack of U.S. leadership helped to prolong Mobutu’s and Banda’s tenures, reduced the chances of peaceful transition to democracy in their countries, and, collaterally, provided continued sanctuary for UNITA and RENAMO troops to disrupt Angola and Mozambique.
Tiptoeing Away from Mobutu

Mobutu's reputation as a corrupt and wily dictator who has bankrupted his country is not new. But until recently, most policy-makers were persuaded by the Cold War argument that he was necessary to preserve U.S. interests against leftist threats in neighboring Angola and more generally in the region. Suppression of the new wave of opposition, which emerged in the 1980s most prominently in the Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social (UDPS), met with little protest from the U.S. The Bush administration continued this tradition, as Mobutu became the first African leader received by the new U.S. president, in June 1989. It was Congress, not the administration, that took the lead in calling for cuts in U.S. aid and other pressures. Mobutu's 1989 visit to the U.S. was met by protests, including over a thousand demonstrators at a talk scheduled at Harvard University.

Finally in 1990, as economic collapse exceeded even the patience of the World Bank, and international talk of democratization made the Mobutu regime appear ever more anachronistic, the U.S. did urge Mobutu to accept demands for a multi-party system. Secretary of State James Baker visited Kinshasa in March 1990, explaining to Mobutu that he would have to at least make some gestures towards democratic reform. In April Mobutu announced acceptance in principle of a multi-party system. The gesture was sufficient for the Bush administration, and for FY 1991, the administration proposed $56 million in military and economic aid to Zaire.

In September 1990 that request was turned down by Congress, which rejected administration arguments that Mobutu's good intentions and strategic value should take priority over democracy and human rights. Congress was responding to events in Zaire such as the massacre of over 200 university students at the university of Lubumbashi on the night of May 11, 1990. The incident, which provoked widespread coverage and reaction in Europe, particularly in Belgium, was virtually ignored by the U.S. media and by the State Department. The lack of administration reaction was taken as a signal that Washington still had confidence in Mobutu.

Mobutu's initial commitment to elections by April 1991 quietly lapsed. Instead, he agreed to the convening of a national conference on August 7, 1991, to chart the transition to a new political order. The over 5000 delegates were chosen from diverse sectors of society, but with significant input from Mobutu.

Surprising Mobutu, the conference elected a leadership committed to democratic reform, chaired by Archbishop Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya. But Mobutu refused to allow the conference to function freely, packing it with his supporters and surrounding it with troops. The impasse culminated in a crisis in September, when unpaid troops mutinied and rioted, foreigners were evacuated from Kinshasa, and what remained of Zaire's economic structure went into a tailspin. Mobutu briefly conceded to appoint opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi as prime minister, but dismissed him a few days later.

At this critical period, a strong U.S. stance against Mobutu could have been decisive. Instead, the administration stressed that Mobutu should still play a key role in the transition. President Bush repeatedly refused critics' pleas for a public statement calling on Mobutu to give up power. Mobutu exploited this U.S. ambivalence, and found excuse after excuse to delay his departure.

Events in Zaire, with belated and mild urging from the U.S., forced the process along. After Mobutu's troops opened fire on a church-led pro-democracy march in February, killing over 42 people, Mobutu was forced to allow the National Conference to resume in April. But only after weeks of church-led protest activity against Mobutu did President Bush write a private letter to Mobutu calling for the National Conference to be reconvened. U.S. public statements were still equivocal, stressing that "We do not support Mobutu or any other political personality." In June administration officials received National Conference Chair Archbishop Monsengwo on a visit to Washington. But, as critics such as Senator Paul Simon noted at the time, the White House was still disinclined to a clear-cut condemnation of Mobutu.

In August 1992, the National Conference elected Tshisekedi as prime minister. Under pressure from congressional critics and from U.S. church leaders, the administration gave nominal support to the new government. But Washington still failed to respond energetically to Mobutu's
continued efforts to sabotage the process.

In response to Tshisekedi’s selection, Mobutu, with his deposed prime minister, Nguza Karl I Bond, orchestrated attacks against Tshisekedi’s ethnic group in Shaba province, resulting by early 1993 in more than 350 deaths and the flight of over 100,000 refugees. There was little reaction from Washington.

In December, following repeated refusal by Mobutu to allow the new government to assume control of Zaire’s central bank, and a new attempt by Mobutu to dismiss Tshisekedi as prime minister, the U.S. government issued a joint statement with France and Belgium supporting the Transitional Government.

Even then, the response was late. In September rival delegations appointed by Mobutu and Tshisekedi visited Washington for discussions with the U.S. government and with international financial institutions. Both delegations were received, and there was no clear signal supporting the Transitional Government.

Only three weeks later, Mobutu sent armored vehicles and troops to the central bank, effectively blocking the dismissal of the incumbent central bank governor Shabani, a Mobutu appointee. The news of Shabani’s dismissal had an immediate positive effect on Zaire’s hemorrhaging rate of inflation which fell from 2.5 million zaires to the dollar to 380,000 in less than a week. But the ongoing stalemate delayed outside economic support for the Transitional Government.

As the Bush administration left office, the impasse over control of Zaire’s central bank was still not resolved. President Mobutu still clung to the central levers of power, economic and military.

Inconclusive Pressure on Life President Banda

Pro-democracy pressures on Malawi’s Hastings Banda, who has dominated the country since independence in 1964, have been late in coming. Until recently, the country attracted virtually no international attention. Its pro-Western diplomatic and economic policies insured it virtual immunity from official criticism, and gained it praise from international economic agencies. In October 1990 Africa Watch issued an extensive report documenting numerous human rights abuses, including rigid censorship, killings of protesters, detention without trial, abuse of political prisoners, and assassinations.

Africa Watch credited the United States with criticizing the detention of Jack Mapanje, Malawi’s most famous poet, but noted that Washington simultaneously increased military assistance to the Banda regime. As late as 1991, the administration was still presenting proposals for military assistance to Malawi for fiscal year 1992.

In early 1992, public opposition within Malawi finally surfaced. In March Catholic bishops issued a statement criticizing the regime for human rights abuses. In April exiled trade unionist Chakufwa Chihana returned and was immediately arrested while calling for a national conference on democracy. In May a strike by textile workers burgeoned into wider protest. Troops suppressing the protests killed at least 38 people. Protestant as well as Catholic church leaders spoke out openly in favor of a transition to democracy. Malawians, long intimidated from any expression of dissent, began to criticize more openly.

The U.S. joined with other international donors, at their regular meeting in Paris just after the May strikes, in approving a six-month suspension of aid to the Banda regime. But later news revealed numerous loopholes, including the continued provision of World Bank aid. In June the World Bank approved a $55 million loan as part of a total package of $125 million dollars to build a hydroelectric dam in southern Malawi, while Malawi was also provided with interim finance during the six-month period.

In response to the pressure, Banda agreed in October to hold a referendum on multi-party rule, currently scheduled for June 1993. But the imprisonment of dissidents continues and laws limiting the freedom to assemble and limiting the access of opposition parties to the airways remain on the books. Most importantly, Banda insists on a yes and no ballot box in each locale and that the boxes be located in a public place, thus insuring no voter confidentiality. In response, the main opposition groups have issued demands to ensure fairness, and have threatened to pull out of the referendum.

The lack of U.S. leadership helped to prolong Mobutu’s and Banda’s tenures
process if the government does not respond. As in Zaire, the old order in Malawi is now discredited. But Banda and his key lieutenants still hold the levers of military and economic power. If there is to be a peaceful transition, international pressure must be sustained and consistent. So far that does not appear to be the case.

**Graceful Exits Require Active Diplomacy and Real Pressure**

After decades in which support for dictatorial regimes like those in Zaire and Malawi was rationalized by their support for Western strategic and economic interests, the Bush years saw the disappearance of these justifications. Reluctantly responding to the changed world context and to rising criticism, administration officials came to accept the necessity for change.

The administration argued, however, that peaceful transition can best be fostered by a conciliatory stance to the defenders of the old regime, that criticism should be low-key and that assurances should be given to assuage the fears of the rulers on the way out. The evidence accumulated in the case of Zaire, and beginning to add up in Malawi as well, is that this argument is fatally flawed. The result of equivocation is to encourage stalling.

Opposition leaders may, as administration officials argued, sometimes exaggerate the capacity of the United States and other Western countries to bring instant change. But a posture of active diplomacy and pressure would provide evidence that U.S. support for democratization applies to former clients as well as to former opponents. The odds of success, moreover, are far greater than if policy remains stuck between half-hearted support for democracy and misguided loyalty to former Cold War clients.

**AID and Its Impact in Southern Africa**

Since the formation of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in 1961, foreign assistance policies have been shaped by U.S. national interests. The most significant rationale for foreign aid programs in this regard has been the containment of Soviet expansion and influence; and priorities in Africa reflected these strategic concerns. Between 1962 and 1992 the six leading recipients of U.S. aid to sub-Saharan Africa were Sudan, Zaire, Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia and Liberia.

In the 1980s, largely as the result of congressional initiatives, U.S. aid was increased to the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (renamed in 1992 as the Southern African Development Community - SADC). Legislation creating the Development Fund for Africa set developmental rather than geo-strategic objectives for aid.

Attention to southern Africa grew in the late 1970s and 1980s, along with the conflict in the region. Total U.S. assistance to sub-Saharan Africa reached its highest levels in fiscal years 1991 and 1992 at $800 million. Of that total, $430 million went to the southern Africa region. The U.S. also became deeply involved in relief efforts, particularly in war-ravaged Mozambique which by 1990 was the leading recipient of U.S. government funds in sub-Saharan Africa.

After the failure of most foreign-advised and local development approaches in the 1970s, the stress during the 1980s was on International Monetary Fund stabilization programs, World Bank structural adjustment guidelines, and sectoral adjustment plans. Both the Reagan and Bush administrations joined in this focus on export-led economic growth, development of the private sector, and austerity for public sector programs.

As elsewhere in Africa, southern Africans recognize that there must be adjustments in economic policies. Over-reliance on state ownership and central planning, unrealistic exchange rates and food subsidies that build growing budget deficits—to name only a few targets of outside critics—must go. But imposing indiscriminate cuts, privatization and austerity measures while focusing on export promotion is not a recipe for success even in
Aid in Southern Africa... Perverse Consequences

► Zimbabwe

In response to the drought of 1992, U.S. relief efforts were mobilized effectively. But the region's own capacity to respond had been undermined by earlier lack of support for SADC's regional food security plans. Zimbabwe, a country with food surpluses, was designated by SADC to maintain reserve stocks and plan responses to emergencies. But storing the surplus was expensive, requiring government subsidies. AID along with other foreign donors advised selling off the grain on the world market. The U.S. declined more than token support for Zimbabwe's triangular trade proposal, which would supply maize (corn) to Mozambique in exchange for American wheat for Zimbabwe. Instead the U.S. pushed increased supplies of U.S. yellow maize to Mozambique, which assisted in reducing U.S. surpluses.

The U.S. also urged Zimbabwe to cut prices for maize to reduce the surplus, and increase prices for tobacco, an export crop. Following this short-term market logic, Zimbabwe's economic planners succeeded in reducing farm production of maize. When the drought came, Zimbabwe was unable to help its neighbors and had to pay higher prices for imported grain on the world market. (For more discussion of U.S. policy and the drought see Washington Notes on Africa for Summer 1992, as well as the paper by Carol Thompson cited on page 12).

► Mozambique

In Mozambique, the U.S. has become one of the leading donors since 1984. Relief aid supplied by the U.S. has been critical in the survival of Mozambique against RENAMO attacks. Yet the structural consequences of dependence on outside funding have radically reduced the country's options for independent decision-making. The U.S. in particular has often used its leverage to undermine the capacity of the government and impose U.S. policy views giving priority to the free market often at the expense of public welfare and long-term self-reliance.

A recent Swedish study of aid relief in Mozambique, for example, charged the U.S. agency CARE, which has advised the Mozambican national relief agency, DPCCN, since 1984, with taking over rather than supporting the institutional development of Mozambican institutions. The study quotes a USAID official as saying "it has never been the USA's political and aid-related intention to go in and strengthen Mozambican public administration by helping to establish a national, state organization to counteract emergencies. Quite the opposite; the faster such attempts erode, the easier it will be for private interests and non-governmental organizations to assume responsibility."

By providing food aid to be sold in local markets, with receipts deposited in a special account that can only be spent with U.S. approval, the U.S. has come to control "counterpart funds" almost equal to Mozambique's total tax revenue. The funds in turn give leverage over the government agencies they support, such as the Ministries of Agriculture and Health. The U.S. has stressed support for private commercial farmers at the expense of cooperatives and peasants. And instead of building on Mozambique's positive experiences with primary health care, legalization of private medicine was one of the objectives of U.S. policy in this area.

While many of the specific programs provided by the U.S. and other donors may be necessary and useful, the stress on privatization and cutbacks have drained the public sector of many of its small number of skilled Mozambican workers. Payments for some 3,000 foreign experts cost some $180 million in 1991, three times the total wages for the entire Mozambican civil service of 100,000, including teachers and community health workers.

► Tanzania

In Tanzania, over six years of an IMF-imposed structural adjustment program reveal some ironic contrasts. Opening up import regulations has allowed import of luxury goods, including expensive foods and cars, but the capital does not have potable water. Nor can one drive the streets at more than a snail's pace because of the potholes. With budget cutbacks, there is little money for road repair. Tanzania's exemplary primary health and education systems have been crippled by cuts. The costs of inadequate infrastructure and reduced investment in human resources hamper private enterprise as well as public welfare.
purely economic terms. As even some World Bank studies have concluded, cuts in investment in government capacity and human resources may cripple the prospects for economic recovery.

**Aid and the Southern African Region**

In the 1980s and early 1990s, the independent states of southern Africa now grouped in SADC focused on cooperation for development that would strengthen regional integration and enhance independence from South African dominance. U.S. aid to SADC projects has totalled roughly $50 million a year in recent years. U.S. involvement in famine relief played a central role in Mozambique from 1984 on, and elsewhere as well, particularly during the unprecedented drought of 1992.

But the lives saved and constructive projects supported were also accompanied by a number of perverse consequences, particularly in imposing a U.S. agenda that at times undermined African independence and prospects for long-term development.

Budget cuts and the free-market alone cannot create economic advance in African countries any more than they can in the United States. In U.S. domestic policy there is an increasing recognition of the need for strategic public investment in infrastructure, environmental protection and human resources. But U.S. policy towards African countries does not yet reflect such priorities.

Particularly critical in southern Africa is the restructuring of the economic relationship between South Africa and the region as South Africa moves to a democratic constitution. South Africa accounts for over three-quarters of the region's gross domestic product. Despite SADC's efforts, Pretoria's traditional regional dominance was accentuated in recent years by the destructive military campaign it pursued against its neighbors. Regional transport routes, a major focus of SADC programs, were prime targets.

Regional integration on purely market terms would benefit primarily the strongest economic forces in the region—the South African business community. Both SADC and the ANC have declared their support for negotiated regional cooperation which would take into account and try to compensate for the gross economic disparities within the region. But the U.S. has not been sympathetic to this approach, and has put pressure on SADC to stress more market-oriented approaches to regional economic integration.

With the rationale of supporting SADC as a counterweight to apartheid South Africa becoming obsolete, questions are being raised within AID about continued support. Recently Ted Morse, the head of the USAID regional office, questioned whether SADC members were ready for "the good governance, transparency, accountability, and rule of law that has to be present for economic integration to take place" within the region.

As with countries elsewhere in Africa, most opinion leaders in SADC member states do not disagree with general principles of good governance. But they question whether USAID's prescriptions of reliance on the market and its own internal difficulties in accountability and management qualify it for decisive influence on the region's economic integration and development plans. If development efforts are to enhance both growth and equity, then the successes and failures of outside aid as well as local governments must be transparent and accountable to the emerging civil societies of southern African countries.

**USAID in South Africa**

AID programs in South Africa, as many of the private U.S. ventures of assistance to South Africa, began as attempts to provide alternatives to the sanctions demands by anti-apartheid forces. They were stepped up under President Reagan's constructive engagement policy, despite criticism that they might be used to mask the deep structural problems of apartheid and postpone pressure on the minority regime. When Congress passed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act in 1986, limited sanctions were joined with substantial aid provisions for victims of apartheid.

*Many of the arguments and illustrations in this section are taken from papers by Carol Thompson, currently a senior research associate at the University of Zimbabwe. See particularly Beware the Hand that Feeds You: U.S. Aid in Southern Africa (Africa Fund, 198 Broadway, New York, NY 10038) and Southern Africa after Apartheid (Africa Recovery, Room S-3362, United Nations, New York, NY 10017).*
The precise shape of U.S. assistance programs has been shaped by this uneasy compromise heritage. Their contribution to ending apartheid and to alleviating its heritage of inequality is still sharply debated within South African and international anti-apartheid circles.

Development assistance to South Africa was minimal until fiscal year 1982 when Congress appropriated $4 million for higher education scholarships for legally disadvantaged South Africans. Congress stipulated that funds to South Africa should be channeled through NGOs to facilitate the end of apartheid and the development of a non-racial democracy. USAID programs in South Africa targeted the areas of education, human rights, labor, private enterprise and community development.

Prior to 1990, the small scale of the program, as well as congressional insistence on sanctions, limited the possible impact of aid in delaying the transition. In FY90 Congress appropriated $38.1 million in aid to South Africa, and in FY91 that aid was increased to $40 million. Ten million dollars was also set aside in economic support funds for the "promotion of democracy", but quickly became involved in a controversy which delayed its expenditure. The CAAA prohibited U.S. government financial support from going to "organizations or groups which are financed or controlled by the Government of South Africa." But despite revelations about South African government funding of Inkatha, the eventual allocation of the Transition to Democracy funds included $2.6 million for Inkatha as well as $4.8 million for the ANC. In FY92, after lifting the sanctions in the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act, President Bush doubled aid to $80 million.

The issues raised by U.S. aid include its use as a diversion from the need for a political transition to a democratic system, and the impact of particular programs on the legacy of inequality left by the apartheid order.

Of funds allocated to particular sectors, two-thirds of all aid to South Africa has gone towards relatively uncontroversial education objectives. In addition to the initial scholarship program, USAID also managed a program to prepare black South African students with their matriculation exams. The goal of this program was to help students pass their secondary school exams and become eligible for admission to U.S. universities. Other AID programs have supported students at South African universities and community colleges. While such funds contributed to the advancement of individual black South Africans, they set no precedent for dealing with the structural issues of racial inequality in education.

Since 1979, USAID has provided small amounts of financial support to protect human rights in South Africa. Funds totalling some $1.5 million a year since 1986 have been channeled through NGOs to finance legal services, support legal education, support research on the impact of apartheid and human rights abuses and to contribute to organizations working to challenge apartheid laws.

USAID’s "Labor Union Training Program" has trained union members in organizing, recruiting, engaging in collective bargaining and addressing occupational health and safety issues. Administered by the AFL-CIO's African American Labor Center (AALC), this program was strongly criticized in its early years for bias towards rivals of the ANC-linked Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). Although it later expanded its ties with COSATU, AALC's objectives in 1990 still included encouraging "black unions to remain politically independent and sensitive to the benefits of a market-oriented economy." Such language raises fears of continued U.S. efforts to sideline radical views within the labor movement.

Aid for community and institutional development has focused on agriculture, education and marketing cooperatives. Leadership training and organizational management skills are provided to members of numerous local and regional community-based organizations. Although "community consultation and accountability" is officially one of the criteria used in assessing funding proposals in South Africa, critics charge that in fact USAID has relied on a small cadre of black leadership, rather than consulting with a broad range of participants. The emphasis on the programs, in turn, has emphasized formation of an elite rather than the promotion of participatory and accountable democratic organizations.

The U.S. has no ready-made formulas or solutions which can be applied to South Africa's even more daunting heritage of racial inequality.
Evaluating the critics’ claims in detail would require an in-depth analysis of specific proposals accepted and requested, but there can be no doubt that USAID’s vision of desired changes in society differs significantly from that of the grassroots anti-apartheid organizations concerned with redistribution of resources and participatory democratic structures.

In congressional guidelines, such objectives as promotion of development that is “equitable, participatory, sustainable and self-reliant,” benefiting the “poor majority,” stand side-by-side with mandates to promote private-sector development and reduce the role of central governments. In practice, these diverse objectives may compete or contradict each other, and will inevitably be the subject of political disagreements. That is why many grass-roots South African activists fear that U.S. government priorities for influencing the political and economic contours of a future South African society may have damaging effects, particularly as the sums involved expand.

This is reflected in the current emphasis on training of black entrepreneurs in South Africa. Beginning with a small program to promote basic business skills in FY83, this program was expanded to support the black-owned African Bank of South Africa, provide credit to small-scale enterprises, support corporate affirmative action programs and train black accountants and financial managers.

The issue is not whether support should be provided for such activities, but how much emphasis they should receive as contrasted with more broadly-based community programs. Emphasis on affirmative action for a market-oriented elite can only benefit a small minority of South Africa’s black population. The U.S., which has not resolved this issue for its own inner-city and rural poor, should recognize that it has no ready-made formulas or solutions which can be applied to South Africa’s even more daunting heritage of racial inequality. To make a positive contribution, it is not only desirable but necessary to build in effective structures for consultation with a wide range of grass-roots actors in South Africa.

### Lessons and Questions for Future U.S. Policy

In the new post-Cold-War era, there are as yet few reliable guidelines to orient policy priorities. In the final months of the Bush administration, as direct U.S. intervention under UN auspices got under way in Somalia, an interagency task force drew up National Security Review 30 to guide U.S. policy towards Africa in the 1990s.

The review, as outlined in a confidential summary published by *Africa News* (December 21, 1992), called for an activist policy promoting “peaceful change and the resolution of conflict, democracy and improved governance, sustainable development, and resolution of transnational issues.” An activist policy, the paper argued, “presents no risks to our national security and can save resources by confronting problems before they become costly to ameliorate and intractable to resolve.” The directive, noted *Africa News*, may shape the initial Africa policy of the Clinton team.

The issues raised by the review, and by the new global and African context, require significant debate before one can judge what they may mean in practice for the continent, or for southern Africa in particular. But one can list briefly a few negative lessons and questions from the Bush era that merit reflection as southern Africa enters 1993. It will be a critical year for the region, with decisive negotiations over a transition to democracy in South Africa, the prospect of finally seeing Mobutu and Banda exit their life presidencies, sustaining or restoring peace in Mozambique and Angola, and shaping a new regional political economy.

### On Conflict Resolution

During the Bush years, conflict resolution in South Africa, Angola and Mozambique was hindered by U.S. partiality towards two of the principal sources of violence: the South African regime and UNITA. Skillful U.S. diplomacy was at times deployed to promote...
peace agreements. But in the guise of even-handed condemnation of violence on all sides, Washington refused to identify or to support penalties for those parties involved in the most serious violations. As a result, international reaction failed to serve as a deterrent to continued violations.

Questions:

(1) How can standards and means of pressure be identified for U.S. and international involvement to deter the principal perpetrators in a conflict, without adopting a new partisanship or substituting rhetoric for diplomacy?

(2) What criteria should be adopted for deciding where the U.S. should take an active direct role in conflict resolution, and where the U.S. should provide constructive support to efforts by African or other international efforts?

On Democratization and Human Rights

During the Bush years, support for democratization in Africa and around the world won nominal support from virtually all parts of the political spectrum around the world. In practice, however, resistance to democratization and failures to protect human rights were often regarded with tolerance when the culprits were U.S. clients or friends.

Questions:

(1) How can the U.S. and the international community best promote formal electoral democracy, without imposing impossibly rigid conditionalities determined by outsiders or biasing the electoral arena themselves by playing favorites?

(2) How can the U.S. and the international community support African grassroots demands for participatory institutions and rights for civil society, rather than concentrate support on political and economic elites?

On Economic Governance, Equity and Sustainable Development

During the Bush years, as earlier, the U.S. used its bilateral influence and leverage within international agencies to promote rigid free-market doctrines. It combined support for legitimate and necessary economic reforms with advocacy of policies which undermined the welfare of vulnerable groups, eroded the capacity of African governments to control their own economies and diminished the prospects for sustainable development.

Questions:

(1) How can D.S. policy be more sensitive to African concerns that free-market efficiency be balanced with the demands of equity and sustainable development?

(2) How can legitimate demands for more effective and transparent governance in African countries be combined with parallel demands that the decisions of international and bilateral aid agencies be transparent and democratically accountable?
The Washington Office on Africa Educational Fund (WOAEF) has been planning a wider role, particularly concentrating on identifying key policy issues, bringing in grassroots perspectives, and making information and analysis accessible to a broad range of U.S. constituencies. Newly renamed the Africa Policy Information Center (APIC), we are currently planning for expanded information activities beginning sometime in the second half of 1993.


Late in the process, we discovered that African Policy Information Center was also the name of a program of the African-American Institute (AAI) in New York. Both organizations are anxious to avoid confusion between the two, which despite the identical name, have different functions, locations and affiliations.

The African-American Institute's Africa Policy Information Center (APIC), which is administered by Africa Report magazine, is a unique resource consisting of a daily updated library of clippings from over 200 African, American and European sources, dating back to 1974. It is located at AAI's office in New York, and is an invaluable resource for researchers and historians on the latest developments. It is open to the public by appointment.