The Secretary of State has just returned from a widely publicized whistle-stop tour of black Africa. Congressional liberals hailed him on his return for initiating a new policy of concern and attention, and for creating an alternative to Communist gains. The right wing, led by Ronald Reagan, has attacked Kissinger for inviting a "bloodbath". Is it new? Will it work? Is it progressive? This edition of Washington Notes tries to analyze the "new" Africa policy and to put the trip and the Lusaka policy speech in context so these questions can be answered.

The Rationale for the Kissinger Trip

The main purpose of the trip was to prevent "another Angola" in Rhodesia and Namibia. In the Angolan war, U.S. actions had been heavily criticized as reactive, secret, divisive, and supportive of South African aggression. By seizing the initiative, Kissinger hoped to provide "our African friends once again with a moderate and enlightened alternative to the grim prospects of violence." It was no moral change of heart which moved Kissinger to embrace black majority rule but the rise of black militancy and an increasing level of successful guerilla war. He told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee:

"Events in Angola encouraged radicals to press for a military solution in Rhodesia. With radical influence on the rise, and with immense outside military strength apparently behind the radicals; even moderate and responsible African leaders - firm proponents of peaceful change - began to conclude there was no alternative but to embrace the cause of violence."

"... We were concerned about a continent politically embittered and economically estranged from the West; and we saw ahead a process of radicalization which would place severe strains on our allies in Europe and Japan."

Kissinger was most explicit as to why the United States must stop "radicalization":

"The interdependence of America and its allies with Africa is increasingly obvious. Africa is a continent of vast resources. We depend on Africa for many key products: cobalt, chrome, oil, cocoa, manganese, platinum, diamonds, aluminum, and others.

In the last two decades, American investments in black Africa have more than quadrupled to over one and one-half billion dollars. Trade has grown at an even faster rate.
The reliance of Europe and Japan on Africa for key raw materials is even greater than our own."

At the same time, Kissinger told the Senators: "We are bound by a moral dimension - cultural heritage of 23 million Americans and the moral sympathy of over 200 million Americans who understand the motivations of peoples who would establish their freedom and prosperity against great odds." But the nitty gritty was clearly continued western control over Africa's trade, investments and raw materials.

Kissinger was faced with an uphill struggle to convince Africans that U.S. advocacy of majority rule in Rhodesia and Namibia by peaceful means alone was not designed to buy off, postpone, delay or subvert the process of revolutionary change which is now underway. The African countries immediately bordering Rhodesia have concluded that armed struggle is the only way now open to achieve majority rule. Guerilla attacks mounted from Mozambique bases have rapidly increased in intensity, frequency and effectiveness, especially in the last two months. Vital railway lines have been cut, deep inside Rhodesia and for the first time. In Namibia, SWAPO attacks using Angolan bases have also increased in their effectiveness and penetration. At the same time, "peaceful means" have never been more clearly seen to be fruitless. The Smith regime has proved intractable even in arriving at a "deal" with the "moderate" Nkomo. United Nations resolutions calling for U.N. control and supervision of Namibian self-determination processes have not been able to secure South Africa's withdrawal from the Namibian territory.

Kissinger's "new" Africa policy

Kissinger laid out most of what his new initiative would entail in a speech delivered at a lunch in Lusaka, given in his honor by President Kaunda on April 27th. It should be remembered, however, that much of U.S. Africa policy was not stated in Lusaka but was stated elsewhere for other audiences and on other occasions, or is a matter of practice not highlighted in public speeches. Because Kissinger was dealing in what he loves to do best, the manipulation of crises, the most explicit and specific parts of his Lusaka speech deal with Rhodesia, which he believes to be the most urgent problem. His ten "element" Rhodesia plan looks at first glance like an impressive program, but a detailed analysis shows that much of the specifics are insubstantial, a refurbishing of old positions or dubious of political impact and implementation.

The ten elements of Kissinger's alternative for Rhodesia

1. Acceptance of British Prime Minister Callaghan's proposal that majority rule be achieved not later than two years after conclusion of settlement talks. Smith rejected this proposal out of hand and neither the militant Zimbabwean army nor external ANC politicians would be likely to accept anything short of immediate majority rule. But Nkomo has shown willingness to be flexible about a transition period if blacks are given parity in cabinet and parliament. With "immediate majority rule" and "never in my lifetime" the rallying cry of the warriors on either side, the relevance of the two-year transition to majority rule formula is dubious.

2. No U.S. diplomatic and material help to Rhodesia until a settlement. In Dallas on March 22d, Kissinger warned against "practicing regional retreat" and said that U.S. policy is based on "two equal principles": support of majority rule and no "military intervention", especially by Cuba or the Soviet Union. The Rhodesian Front took comfort from Kissinger's warnings; it believes that when push comes to shove, the U.S. will find ways of redressing the military balance by the use of mercenaries or U.S. naval or air power. While in Lusaka, Kissinger played up his advocacy of majority rule, but to his Senate Foreign Relations audience he used diplomatic code language reminiscent of his Angolan war statements to demonstrate his cold-war commitment to
the second Dallas principle: "Soviet or Cuban military intervention would raise the gravest questions."

While Mozambique and ZANU, the Zimbabwe movement with the most guerillas in the field, have relied heavily in the past on Chinese military and economic assistance, there are signs that the Soviet Union may be more heavily involved in the future. Samora Machel, Joaquim Chissano (Mozambique's foreign minister) and the Mozambican defense minister have all recently been to Moscow to discuss economic aid, military training and equipment requirements, presumably not only for themselves but for their Zimbabwean proteges as well. On the issue of Cuban troops, Machel has categorically stated that "the Zimbabweans will defeat Ian Smith without Cuban participation." Furthermore, the deputy premier of Cuba, Carlos Rodriguez, recently declared in Tokyo that the Rhodesian revolution should be carried out without the use of foreign troops. There are continuing reports of a small number of Cubans involved in training the guerillas.

At no point has Kissinger drawn the line as to what intervention by the Soviet Union or Cuba would be unacceptable. So long as he keeps warning against it, Smith and his Rhodesian supporters are bound to calculate that the western powers will not allow radicalization by arms to take place. Kissinger never mentions Chinese aid to the Zimbabweans. It is at least conceivable that Kissinger would see the Chinese participation as a way of keeping the Soviet Union out of Mozambican and Zimbabwean affairs. The Chinese do not have the airlift or arms supply capability of the Russians and they do not have a fleet in the Indian Ocean. But Kissinger clearly is against "radicalization" and would certainly favor the accession of moderates such as Nkomo if that is possible.

3. Repeal the Byrd Amendment and press others to adhere to sanctions. Reagan's right wing challenge means that Ford must woo conservative politicians. He is therefore most unlikely to round up Republican votes in the House of Representatives, which is the critical branch of Congress on this issue. Until and unless he does, Democrats will rightly pin the blame on the President and introduce but not move on the repealer. Meanwhile, the Administration is showing its customary double-mindedness on the issue. Treasury Secretary Simon has said repeal would raise chrome prices while Deputy Commerce Secretary Sherwin testified in April that he hoped South Africa would be able to carry Rhodesian chrome exports after the Mozambican border closure. Thus Kissinger's Lusaka promises on the sanctions issue are no more credible thus far than similar statements he made to the African ambassadors at the United Nations last fall two days before the repeal attempt failed in the House of Representatives, an attempt which the White House did nothing to support.

4. Clear and direct communication from the U.S. to the Salisbury regime of "our view of the urgency of a rapid negotiated settlement leading to majority rule." The Administration believes that the Rhodesians are dangerously isolated and therefore self-deluded as to U.S. intentions. This scarcely seems possible. The Rhodesian Information Office, one of two in the world, is very much a part of the Washington scene and knows very well what is being said and done on Capitol Hill and in the State Department. Nevertheless, an emissary will soon be sent from State to see Smith and explain the position. The British on their own account have done this before, to very little effect.

5. U.S. citizens will be advised against entering Rhodesia and American residents urged to leave. The U.S. embassy in South Africa carried out this directive on May 13th. There is little evidence that these actions will end the scandal of U.S. tourism which has produced as much as $16 million per annum for Rhodesia in
foreign exchange. According to the New York Times, a dozen Americans in Rhodesia who were interviewed responded with "everything from diffidence to anger." Only missionaries in the country seemed to be thinking of leaving. The warnings are dependent ultimately on the state of the guerrilla war for their efficacy and they have little independent value. But it may serve to change perceptions created by Rhodesian official reassurances.

6. Compensate Mozambique $12.5 million for closing its border with Rhodesia. The sum in question comes from already appropriated funds for fiscal year 1976 economic aid. It could go in the form of PL 480 food in part and could be channeled through multilateral agencies if Mozambique prefers. The total was arrived at by computing what could be promised without going to Congress. (Right wing Senators are currently filibustering authorization for $25 million in new money to help compensate countries closing borders with Rhodesia on the ground that it might go to a Marxist government.) A five-person UN commission has just completed a three week tour of Mozambique and found that the compensation for the border closure which Mozambique needs amounts to $165 million in the first year, with larger amounts in successive periods. $12.5 million is a rather small contribution to such a need, especially in view of U.S. imports of chrome and nickel worth over $60 million to Rhodesia in 1975.

7. The U.S. is ready to alleviate economic hardship for any countries which decide to enforce sanctions by closing their frontiers. Only Botswana and South Africa, of the four countries ringing Rhodesia, have not formally closed their border. But Zambia and Zairean copper exports have been reportedly sent through Rhodesia because of the disruption of Angola's Benguela rail line. So there are four possible recipients.

The Congressional Black Caucus had suggested helping Botswana and Kissinger is said to have picked up the idea to try to please them. But Botswana's railroads are owned and operated by Rhodesia. Replacing rolling stock and personnel would be costly unless Botswana grabs the equipment without warning. Even so, South Africa would need to be co-operative, for Botswana needs to sell milk and meat to South Africa and receive food and manufactures in return.

Is the U.S. prepared to compensate South Africa if it closes its border with Rhodesia? The issue is very unlikely to arise. Vorster has recently reiterated that he opposed sanctions and border closure against Rhodesia. Such a move by South Africa would be unprecedented; Vorster knows that boycotts could be turned against South Africa as a tool to achieve majority rule. He has enough internal opposition to withdrawal of South African military help to Rhodesia. The Rhodesian and South African economies are deeply intertwined and the South Africans are not prepared to write off Rhodesian assets yet.

8. Humanitarian aid to Rhodesia refugees. Most such refugees are in Mozambique. The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees has not yet made an official request, but it studying the situation.

9. Aid to an independent Zimbabwe and aid to transition to majority rule. This proposal is linked to the first proposal which defines what Kissinger sees as a possible scenario: expeditious negotiations; then a transition period of up to two years; then majority rule; and finally, after that, independence. The aid offer was made to induce negotiations, and naturally those who follow U.S. political purposes and are willing to negotiate will get the rewards of aid. But this does not necessarily mean that Kissinger will wait until negotiations start again to initiate aid. A representative of the Nkomo wing of the ANC has recently visited
State and Congress and a $2 million program is reportedly being studies seriously. It would be administered through the African American Institute and one or more African countries such as Zambia. The training would include such practical skills as aircraft piloting, which could prove indispensable if moderate blacks are to be able to fight off "radicalization". AAI is understood to have already concluded preliminary plans to administer these programs. In a section of his Lusaka speech entitled "a vision of the future" Kissinger laid out his plan: "For Namibia and Zimbabwe, training programs for administrators and technicians should be intensified now so that needed manpower will be ready when majority rule is attained."

10. Assistance to "a secure future" and "civil rights" for whites in Rhodesia. Clearly, this promise is designed to allay white fears that a settlement would threaten their lives, property or security. It might mean physical protection by means of a peace-keeping force combined with an evacuation airlift. It could mean compensation to be paid white farmers and small businesses whose land or property could be redistributed to Africans. Some Rhodesians now want to leave but cannot afford to take losses. It could mean legal assistance in working out a code of civil rights to protect white interests from rapid expropriations or nationalization. Administration officials have picked up on this theme and are characterizing the "new" policy as putting equal emphasis on majority rule and protection of minority rights.

Kissinger's Line on Namibia
Kissinger's statement on Namibia indicates a significant softening of the U.S. position vis a vis self-determination under United Nations auspices. In January, the United States supported a Security Council resolution calling for U.N. supervision and control of political self-expression and elections in order to achieve Namibian self-determination. Kissinger deliberately dropped the word "control" from his Lusaka speech. By implication, he sanctioned a continuation of South Africa's illegal presence in Namibia. By urging South Africa to set a timetable for self-determination and to include "all people and groups of Namibia" in political discussions, the U.S. was trying to persuade South Africa to broaden the fraudulent "TurnHalle" Constitutional talks to include elements of SWAPO, and other organizations which have boycotted the talks. According to Senator Percy, Vorster is open to including SWAPO although he thinks they are "born in sin" and "filled with Communists". Although he labeled Percy's remarks as "sensational" and "misleading", he seems willing to let the leadership at the Constitutional talks take the responsibility for inviting SWAPO or others. There seems to be a move afoot to find some moderate elements in SWAPO willing to take part in the talks, which SWAPO has consistently denounced as impossible to join so long as South Africa remains in control of Namibia.

South Africa: The Crux of the Policy
On South Africa itself, Kissinger was mild and vague. There are clear signs that South Africa is viewed by the U.S. as a key to the "moderate" solution.

Kissinger described apartheid as racial discrimination which has been "institutionalized, enshrined in law, and made all-pervasive." He said that South Africa must recognize that the world will continue to insist that the "institutionalized separation of the races must end." He asked for a "reconciliation" of all races. All of this seems like a mild and restrained formulation of the South African "problem" which has been described by the United Nations as a "crime against humanity". But most interestingly, he did not call for majority rule in South Africa but for a "clear evolution toward equality of opportunity and basic human rights for all South Africans." He said that South Africans were not colonialists but Africans. He failed to say anything about South Africa's move to legitimize its bantustan
policy by granting independence to the Transkei, failed to call for a release of political prisoners, a dismantling of the policy state apparatus, or to deal with a host of other issues.

His silence on these issues is understandable, since Kissinger hopes to use South Africa to bring about a settlement in Rhodesia and in Namibia:

"In the immediate future the Republic of South Africa can show its dedication to Africa - and its potential contribution to Africa - by using its influence in Salisbury to promote a rapid negotiated settlement."

Immediately on his return to the United States Kissinger met with Ambassador Botha for 40 minutes; President Ford said on television that a meeting with Vorster himself might be a distinct possibility; Kissinger acknowledged to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that South Africa was a key to a moderate solution and that the U.S. would soon engage in "serious discussions" with South Africa over South Africa and Namibia. South African radio and press were quick to make the most of these moves to the right, claiming that Kissinger's trip had given him new insight into the positive role South Africa could play. The question therefore emerges: what is Kissinger willing to offer to get South Africa moving?

Congressman Andrew Young speculates that if South Africa abolishes the "cruder realities" of apartheid, gets Smith to step down and sets a timetable for self-rule in Namibia, the U.S. might consider abolishing the arms embargo, advocate softer monetary policies in the World Bank and IMF, extend Export-Import Bank loans and recognize the Transkei. This approach is already foreshadowed in the Lusaka speech which promises U.S. relaxation of trade and investment restrictions concerning Namibia (such as they are) "once concrete movement toward self-determination is underway."

Assessment: Will it Work?

Very little of this "new" policy is really new, but it is a very significant reworking of old themes. In the notorious 1969 NSSM 39, Option 2 (the option selected) advocated easing of tensions by drawing whites and blacks together in the region. The option proposed that the U.S. should talk to the South Africans and relax the U.S. restrictions "selectively" to promote reforms short of majority rule, while giving aid to black states so as to encourage them not to harbor guerilla movements. The latter half of this proposed "balancing" of interests was never really implemented. Now, however, in a belated recognition of African realities forced upon him by recent events, Kissinger is ready to pay greater attention to the black African states. In fact, he is prepared to use aid as a primary political weapon to achieve a moderate solution.

The economic carrots which Kissinger can dangle before the eyes of southern African black states are quite substantial. We have already touched on the border closure compensation promised to the states surrounding Rhodesia. Security supporting assistance at a level of $30 million is being opened up not only for Zaire but also a like amount for Zambia in hopes that its possible radicalization can be averted by "stability". FL 480 food, commodity credits and Ex-Im credits are other carrots.

Elsewhere on the continent the U.S. is using military credit sales and aid lavishly to buy political influence. Kenya will probably get $60 million, Ethiopia $175 million, Zaire $30 million. Thus a tragic arms race is underway on a continent for which Congress set a $40 million ceiling still theoretically in
effect. (The ceiling was lifted at the President's request in the 1976 military aid bill which Ford then vetoed.) It is idle for Kissinger to warn against outside military intervention and to foster a unified peaceful African approach while arming a moderate bloc. In many cases the arms are used to suppress internal revolt by populations rebelling against corrupt and wealthy elites who favor western interests.

The Secretary retains sticks as well as carrots with which to deal with the black states. He remains determined to deny MPLA the fruits of victory in Angola. In Dakar, he repeated that no U.S. recognition would be considered until all Cubans left Angola. At the United Nations he threatened to veto Angola's admission. Meanwhile the guerrilla war continues in Mozico, Cuando Cabango and Cabinda. While MPLA leadership is under internal attack from leftwing elements for making too many concessions to multinational corporations, FNLA is drumming up support in Portugal for a war of revenge.

Has Kissinger succeeded in forming a coherent block of moderate African regimes to stop radicalization and armed struggle in southern Africa? He told the Senators on the Foreign Relations Committee that his trip had raised the distinct possibility that "moderate African leaders can take the lead away from the 'men with the guns'." His plan is thus a design to sidetrack, if not derail, the liberation train.

By dealing with the four "Frontline" Presidents as a bloc through which aid to liberation movements must go Kissinger hopes to isolate Mozambican radicalism. To make such manipulations possible he will use aid to those of the four willing to co-operate politically. The vulnerable economies of all of the states makes such aid a more plausible weapon. At the same time aid can be supplemented by South Africa's economic leverage on the four states. Botswana is a hostage to South Africa's economy and is virtually surrounded by white-ruled territory. Mozambique's economy is also linked to South Africa's through the Cabora Bassa dam, the export of South African cargoes via Maputo (formerly Lorenzo Marques), and mining jobs for Mozambicans. South African technology and credits are important to Zambia.

President Kaunda was said to be moved to tears by Kissinger's speech and declared that it went beyond his wildest expectations. Zambia played a key role in arranging South Africa's detente initiatives. It has played a police role in supervising and attempting to control military elements of ZANU and SWAPO. It acted as a conduit and cover for CIA and Lonrho company support for UNITA during the Angolan war. Kaunda has a deep personal commitment to majority rule and Christian "humanism" but he is not adverse to taking a tough stand against leftwing elements. He favors moderates such as Nkomo and aided Nkomo's negotiations with Smith by lending him Zambian legal experts.

In Tanzania, Kissinger got a restrained but cordial reception. Nyerere and Kissinger took the measure of each other's intellect and personality, assessing realistically the limits which bound each of them to certain policies. The upshot seemed to be a respectful agreement to disagree on the issue of the necessity of armed struggle. While in Tanzania, Kissinger met with Mozambique's foreign minister, Joaquin Chissano, who was on his way back from Bulgaria. Clearly, Kissinger fears Mozambique as being "very radical". It is certainly unlikely that Mozambique, or Tanzania, for that matter, will be deterred from supporting mounting liberation struggles in Rhodesia.
Kissinger has not significantly added to the list of moderate states that supported U.S. Angolan policy. Nigeria, which Kissinger regards as the most economically advanced country in Africa, refused to let Kissinger visit primarily because of America's intervention in Angola and because Nigeria views U.S. support for majority rule by peaceful means alone as hypocritical in view of mounting U.S. investments in South Africa. (Ghana followed suit, withdrawing its invitation to Kissinger.) U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria, Donald Easum, has recently warned Kissinger that if the U.S. grants $250 million in Ex-Im guarantees for two General Electric nuclear reactors for South Africa's ESCOM power plant on the Cape and for a similarly huge contract which Fluor Corporation has to build the SASOL II coal gasification plant, Nigeria will conclude that the U.S. policy is not determined by its high-sounding moral principles but by corporate greed. Kissinger sees Nigeria as deteriorating toward radical leadership under Soviet and Libyan influence, because he does not understand that commitment to liberation through armed struggle is a product of African nationalism. He hopes to edge Nigeria back to the West with development programs.

The more immediate question is whether Kissinger can affect the Rhodesian situation. If South Africa were prepared to slow Rhodesian traffic on its rails to a trickle, the Rhodesians might see the handwriting on the wall and negotiate a transfer to moderate blacks such as Nkomo. Such a transfer of political power would leave largely untouched the control of major economic resources still in white hands: the minerals, the rich farmlands, etc., and would short-circuit the socialist revolution which many guerrillas feel they are fighting for. While Africa has not yet furnished an example of a successful guerrilla campaign against black neocolonial regimes, it could well be that a prolonged period of fighting between radicals and moderates could follow technical "majority rule" in Rhodesia. That is why Kissinger's promises of aid and training to the moderates he favors and protection of white minority rights are so important.

If negotiations do not start in earnest again, and the guerrilla offensive continues to gather strength (particularly as the fall rainy season starts), the U.S. could conceivably become more intimately - and perhaps even militarily - involved in the Rhodesian struggle. The London Observer reports that "sources" in the Kissinger party stated that if approached by an African liberation movement, "America would be prepared to consider giving support through an independent African state such as Tanzania or Zambia." The most likely circumstance which could produce such U.S. intervention would be a situation marked, like Angola, by deep divisions between African nationalist movements. According to BBC reporter Tony Avirgon, Kissinger said that "massive" Soviet support for one faction could cause the U.S. to consider arming an anti-Soviet group. Kissinger is clearly leaving open his options for handling Rhodesia.

In the United States, liberals like Senator Clark and some members of the Black Caucus are challenging Kissinger to implement the policy he has laid out. But challenges need to go beyond implementation and strike at the basis of the policy itself. To reward South Africa now for making moves in Rhodesia and Namibia, which are called for by South Africa's own self-interests, will mean that the U.S. is throwing away whatever leverage it has on the crucial issue of apartheid. And it is committing itself further to the maintenance of that system in the process. In fact, trade with and investment in South Africa have risen at a faster rate than with black Africa in the last year. Kissinger is again throwing his support behind Vorster's southern Africa "detente" strategy, just as he did in the 1969 NSSM 39. Thus, the United States still sees South Africa not as the heart of the problem, but as the key to securing U.S. interests in the region.