June, 1967

RE: U.S. POLICY & SOUTHERN AFRICA BY RICHARD THOMAS

After leaving Oxford, Mr. Thomas spent 1964 in southern Africa. In the United States on a Fulbright Scholarship, he has been acting as a consultant to the American Committee on Africa for the last two years. The views expressed in this memorandum, however, are his own. All comments and reactions to his memo will be most welcome.

T. Wendell Foster
Associate Director

Enclosure.
Topic: U.S. Policy and Southern Africa

Observer: Richard Thomas, Institute for Policy Studies; 1900 Florida Avenue, N.W.

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INTRODUCTION

In this memorandum I have laid out observations from the D.C. scene of the last two months and some conclusions on Southern Africa, American policy and N.G.O. policy. My information was culled from the seminar series I have directed at the Institute For Policy Studies, and interviews with Congressmen, in the State Department and at the British Embassy. I have also been in close touch with journalists, the U.N. Secretariat, black Southern Africans in America, Church organizations, and sections of the Civil Rights Movements.

There is not room enough here, nor do I wish to strain your patience, to describe in detail the two principle studies I am making at the institute: 'blok' analysis and strategy for Southern Africa; Congressional decision-making in potential foreign policy crises (Southern Africa as the example). But some of my analysis juts above the surface in this memorandum. I hope you will allow that the underlying assumptions have been carefully developed, if not fully reported here.

This memorandum assumes that, in spite of Vietnam, Greece, Punta del Este, the Kennedy Round and the Middle East, the reader has found a few minutes to follow Southern Africa.

After the aircraft carrier incident, the Southern Africa issue in Washington has relapsed again into traditional plodding obscurity.

SOUTHERN AFRICA AND PROPAGANDA

The far right has failed to win more than two dozen Congressmen to its Rhodesia cause and the $50-a-plate dinner held by the American Southern Africa Council, May 17th, was a conspicuous failure. In the propaganda field, these diehards of the Katanga lobby, Liberty lobby and Birch Society have a great deal to learn from the South Africa Information Services.

The S.A.I.S., whose propaganda efforts make Goebbels look small and crippled, are concentrating on the 'liberals' in Congress, the State Department and the Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies. S.A.I.S. produces conscience-soothing tracts on the new South Africa. From Vorster's inaugural ("all the peoples of South Africa"), through the new but separate equality on track and field, to handwringing with Lesotho, Botswana and Malawi and independence for Ovamboland -- the image dazzles white liberals. Articles in the New York Times, Washington Post, Africa Report and AMAX notes all reflect the party line, a mirror of CIA liberalism which Ramparts so ineffectually smeared.

The ignorant non-historian can afford to ignore sixty years of torture, racial law topped by six years of police state stability. He can well grab at the straws handed out at 655 Madison Avenue. After all, the hand-outs are effective. (Even a member of the American Committee on Africa, expressed doubt the other day that S.A. was a 'pollee state.' How exactly does one define a system whose...
police officers may arrest any "suspect" without a warrant, and without fear of the detainee coming to trial for at least six months?)

The liberal press carefully ignored the Zambian Minister's wife who, anonymously visiting a relative in Port Elizabeth, was summarily hauled out of her bath and brought to the police station to have her papers checked. The local administration quickly apologized: "If we had known who the lady was, we would of course have given her special consideration."

Postscript. Until the Southern Democrats and California ultras begin complaining about South Africa's change of heart, we might refrain from joining in fulsome praise for the "guys who know best how to deal with the niggers."

ANGOLA/MOÇAMBIQUE

For Angola and Moçambique the news and conversation blackout continues. Thank Lawrence Fellows and Kermit Roosevelt for that.
RHODESIA

With respect to the Southwest Africa and Rhodesia-Zambia situations, a quite plausible rationalization of U.S.-U.K. policy is that the two problems are interlocked and U.S.-U.K. are unwilling to look militant on South West Africa while Vorster is pushing Smith back to the bargaining table. By the fall, new talks on Rhodesia will be held, and Britain is expected to slide away from NIMMAR. Perhaps it would be a fitting demonstration of British power to hold these talks, not on that British gunboat of yore, The Tiger, but on Sir Francis Chichester's ketch, Gypsy Moth IV.

a) THE RHODESIAN RESOLUTION

Congressman Fraser and Culver have both visited Zambia recently. The Congressmen were much impressed by the high quality of leadership despite Zambian economic (and hence political) difficulties. The Resolution on Rhodesia which now is being circulated in the House of Representatives, was inspired by Fraser as a result of his trip to Zambia. The Resolution supports sanctions and (on Barrett O'Hara's insistence, no less) NIMMAR. Pressed forward by Rep. Bingham, the Rhodesia Resolution has nevertheless been stalled in its quest for sponsorship because of the Greek and Middle East crises, and, more seriously, by liberal Republican reticence. But co-sponsors are still being collected, with June 15th as the new deadline. It is hoped that one hundred Congressmen will come into the open backing sanctions. A press conference will be aimed at hitting the papers on Sunday, June 11th with news of the Congressmen's stand. 100 signatures, may not be over optimistic, since moderates like Reps. Culver, Hamilton, Anderson of Tennessee and St. Germain have already signed.

Recent Capital Hill lobbying by liberal groups has been almost entirely confined to this resolution. It should soon be possible to analyze the feedback from Congressional offices. To date, the most conspicuous success in lobbying has been from the efforts of "Returned Volunteers" (primarily ex-Peace Corps). The arguments put forward in mailings from these people have been recognized in over a dozen offices which have put through calls to Fraser and Bingham to get more information on the resolution.

Also in connection with the Rhodesia Resolution, personal interviews with Congressmen have been held by the Reverend William Duval and the Reverend Kenneth Carstens of the National Council of Churches, as well as by Collin Gonze and Kotsho Dube. Especially noteworthy is Carstens record: he has talked to 32 Congressmen on the Rhodesian issue over the last five weeks.

On the other hand, while the New York headquarters of the NAACP has urged its chapters to contact local Congressmen and Roy Wilkins has sent personal letters to two dozen Congressmen, no interest is visible at the Washington offices of NAACP or of any other Civil Rights organization. Further, it is ironic, if not dangerous, that the U.A.W. lags behind AFL-CIO (Irving Brown-Jay Lovestone to the fore!) in African efforts.
RHODESIAN STUDENTS IN THE U.S.

Of great interest in Cairo and Dar es Salaam are the large numbers of Rhodesian students in the United States, some 300 in all. And even in Washington, D.C. the opinion is sometimes expressed that, behind their rhetoric, the Africans of Zimbabwe cannot be particularly bothered about the deepening entrenchment of white minority rule, since they appear to be quite absorbed in luxurious education. At the most crucial low in the history of their people, it is argued, these students are away pursuing some utopian dream.

The views above, and those of the students, are obviously dependent upon conflicting analyses of Rhodesian and international politics. By examining the different interests of the Rhodesian people, we might be able to reach a conclusion on this apparent anomaly of the students "sitting it out" in the U.S.

It might be said that the fluctuations of power in Rhodesia have parallels in South African politics of fifteen to twenty years ago. In white Rhodesia the zenith for the business and professional elite was during the middle years of Federation. Later, the Whitehead-Field-Smith trend showed the rise to power of a section of whites representing the interest of farmers, artisans and petty bourgeoisie.

The reasons for the change in leadership were that under Federation, Todd (and Malvern), had pressed business to assist in the development of an African bourgeois elite: with a settled and better educated African labor force, white businessmen could increase productivity without an equivalent increase in the cost of labor, in spite of embryo trades-unionism among the blacks. Of course, as the business and professional whites moved toward this Katanga or New Kenya Party compromise, the interests of the white artisan and petty bourgeois became threatened by African advancement. Most farmers joined this tough white power group as African enfranchisement grew and political control seemed imminent. Disillusionment with the African Nationalist leaders, as well as fear, caused the white business-professional group to withdraw its superficial patronage from the Africans and to move into temporary alliance with the Rhodesia Front.

Economic sanctions have failed to create more than a fissure in this alliance, for South Africa's assistance led many businessmen to believe that they could "get away with it." Vorster, however, has by now realized that South Africa's interest in a Rhodesian border or buffer state would have been served best if Smith had accepted the Tiger constitution. After all, it would have been 10 or 15 years before Rhodesia would have gained majority rule. If a troublesome African Government appeared to be coming to power at the end of the transition period, South Africa could always have encouraged a reaction to white minority rule. At least international opprobrium would be averted for a decade.

So Vorster is pushing Smith back to the bargaining table, presumably to a Tiger-like solution. If the Africans of Rhodesia are prepared to accept that type of constitution, they must firmly cement an alliance with the white business-professional group over the decade after a Smith Wilson settlement. Only in that manner can a reaction be prevented and the irony of a repeat
It is my contention that even this moderate African solution can only be attained by the real threat of force, although paradoxically this factor might seem to be a certain way of driving the whites against once more. There is no doubt that had ZAPU or ZANU been prepared to use extensive terror or sabotage in the twelve months after UDI, a settlement, perhaps more favorable to the Africans than the Tiger constitution, would have been reached by Smith and Wilson. But accepting that ZAPU and ZANU are deeply split and likely to remain so for the near future, one must presume that they have been using the months since UDI, to prepare, separately, for an Algerian-type conflict.

Terror, sabotage and guerrilla activity can be still used before a Smith-Wilson settlement. The latter will be hastened by Vorster realizing that instability might produce an African Nationalist regime hostile to South Africa. Thus before the abolition of UDI, force would be used to avoid a compromise settlement. But it would be essential that this force not be dispensed until majority rule and independence. During this transition period, force and the threat of force would have three political uses: Firstly, the white business-professional groups would appreciate the potential chaos if ever they permitted the artisan-farmer-shopkeeper group to regain the upper hand. Secondly, the so-called 'elite' African group, which has hardly severed its tie-party ties with the business-professional whites, would have their own bargaining power increased with those whites, so that the most extreme (pardon the word) neocolonialist or Lberman solution would be avoided. Thirdly, those parties organizing force would at the same time raise their own price vis-a-vis that African 'elite'; eventually the elite itself would settle for ZAPU/ZANU-type leadership.

In addition it might transpire that ZAPU and ZANU would not be deserting the other African parties of white-dominated Southern Africa, for they could be firm with the Portuguese in Mozambique and not overly friendly with South Africa. In Rhodesia nonracialism would be programmed from an African base; ultimately the demonstration effect of viable cooperation between the races in Rhodesia could promote change in South Africa.

There are a few of the Rhodesian students in the U.S.A. (20%) who might with integrity pursue their elite role playing at the feet of A.A.I. and American companies with Central African interests. It is at the same time patently obvious that the cadres being prepared in Zambia and Tanzania for the violent struggle are suffering from lack of morale and leadership. This is not surprising, considering that the Zimbawians in Lusaka and Dar know that there is an elite class of young men being prepared by the U.S. (and U.K.) to pick the fruits of their own violent struggle. The argument that unless the bureaucracy is trained now, an independent Zimbabwe will collapse in administrative chaos, is untenable. Rhodesia today has a larger group of white-collar Africans (some in detention,
some in exile) than most African countries on the eve of independence.

So here is a Rastafarian analysis for American Zimbabweans. Certainly the existence of two equally inefficient nationalist parties is counterproductive. But they are all that the American Zimbabweans have. And both parties can only improve by the return of a potential leadership group to take part in the armed struggle. From the A.A.I. to Dar, to Lusaka and thence to Salisbury.

It is all very well to sit over cups of tea talking strategy in New York and Washington, to curl up in the lap of State Department programs. But why then, other than accepting the blame, should Americans care about the struggle for Rhodesia?
The real departure from the trend in U.S. - Southern Africa policy was not America's backsliding in the U.N. Ad Hoc Committee On South-West Africa, nor her final abstention in the special session of the General Assembly in May. Rather, it was the flicker of hope when Goldberg voted for the October resolution removing the administration of the Mandate from South Africa. In his speech accompanying this divergence from the British and American policy consensus on Southern Africa, he noted that this was "a time for action." If Goldberg had won permission for his vote after hard bargaining with Washington, his speech was certainly more of a personal expression than a marker in an overall policy plan. (A specialist in the State Department, now with six months work behind him trying to get U.S. policy back off this "action" hook, thinks that Goldberg, new to the U.N. job, imagined that he could use labor arbitration tactics to get a large measure of agreement on the South-West Africa question. 'F' for innocence.)

So everyone is gung-ho for "dialogue." But nobody is quite sure what there is to talk about. Rumors of a U.S. - U.K. - S.A. treaty began in Congressman O'Hara's office a week ago. They appear to be quite unfounded. And if thought is given to what a treaty could contain, it will be realized that any trilateral agreement would gain little support from the U.N. or the bulk of international law.

Moreover, it would be consistent with previous policy trends that as long as the U.S., the U.K., and S.A. think they may find something to talk about, the U.S. will refuse to become one of the eleven nations on the U.N. administering Council set up under the May resolution.

In Congress the South-West Africa question is too far from the International Court of Justice and too near to the Republic of South Africa to be of much interest. I accompanied Mr. Sam Nujoma, President of SWAPO, on one of his senate visits. The Senator in question has an outstanding liberal record. "Well, I'm pleased to meet you, Mr. Nujoma," he said, waving us toward armchairs. "So you're from South-West Africa?" "Yes, that's right, Senator," replied Mr. Nujoma. The Senator smiled politely. "But which country are you from?"

Somewhere, someone is working on the strangest constitution imaginable, a confederation of Bantustans, a loose framework to cover a more equitable partition of South-West Africa than that proposed in the fifties. Until his memo is completed (and perhaps after), South-West Africa will confound the domino strategists of black revolution in Southern Africa. For the potential for violence in South-West Africa is minimal compared with that in the Portuguese territories and Rhodesia. Thus, the Ovambostan will be yet another black square in the checkerboard of Southern Africa, a patchwork created by the white power structures delegating authority to black-conservative traditionalists. Include Malawi, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, and the Transkei, and the Alliance for Progress has come to Southern Africa.
Southern Africa policy is now under review in the State Department. Such a process occurs every two or three years, though minor revisions may occur at any time. There is no doubt that the many tactical suggestions put forward by ACOA will be considered. Thus the usefulness of action on Tracking Stations, Sugar quota, U.N. Trust Fund, naval refueling, etc., will be determined and then placed in the whole policy framework.

The "Engagement - Disengagement" argument is being given some priority. That has been one of the positive results of the "Banks Campaign" in New York. A high-level conference in Virginia was scheduled for June. Government officials were invited along with number one tycoons, Ford, Rockefeller and Engelhard and number one civil rights leaders, Wilkins and Randolph. Papers were due to be read, including one on economic engagement-disengagement by Prof. W. Hance, the Columbia University geographer. Though the conference has been postponed, Columbia University Press is to rush out a four chapter book including the paper by Hance.

My analysis would be that there is an all-out effort to lay disengagement to rest once and for all. (The theory is a little alarming to U.S. private enterprise abroad, not only in South Africa.) It is a pity from an ACOA point of view that no academic of standing has been attracted to present the strategy of political-economic disengagement from South Africa, in terms of a total Southern Africa strategy. The disengagement thesis is currently misrepresented as being:

a) limited to economic disengagement
b) a total pull-out of U.S. business in South Africa
c) effective in the first round as a strike against the economy of South Africa

Furthermore, the economic engagers seem to limit their discussions to the potential and beneficial economic effects of foreign business upon the black population of South Africa. The logic of consequent social and political change spreading from economic engagement is spread thin.

In spite of all these myths the liberal scholars and the liberal businessmen are having a field day. Perhaps ACOA could convene a conference (and publish papers) of academics like Friedland add Morse of Cornell, Friedman of Syracuse, Franck of NYU, Wallerstein of Columbia, Kilson of Harvard et alia. Vernon Mackay might even write on political disengagement. At least ACOA might send out a few copies of "Industrialization and Race Relations" ed. Guy Hunter, a bad book for engagers.
N.G.O. FIELD WORK

I have now made three major field trips, speaking and organizing on Southern Africa issues. Last fall, I was in New Jersey, Massachusetts and Connecticut for two weeks; over Christmas I travelled around the U.S. for four and a half weeks (nineteen speaking engagements plus TV and radio); just recently, I spent a few days in Ohio.

My most basic conclusion from these trips is that there is a keen local interest in learning more about the Southern Africa issue and U.S. policy. This interest is expressed most widely by local civil rights-oriented groups, e.g. NAACP and the Urban League, and by local churches. Interest shown by ADA locals, labor and colleges is more scattered.

There are three ways of mobilizing this interest into a recognizable political force:

a) Working with the New York (or Washington) headquarters of civil rights, church, liberal and labor groups and, for colleges, through the UCM or SDS or NSA headquarters. This is the present method of ACOA and is dependent for its success wholly upon personal contact and persuasion at the top. Thus, the method can and does get fouled up at the level of the various national headquarters, by differing national priorities and by the bureaucratic red tape which often prevents directives, information or campaigns from effectively reaching the local chapter level. The method is useful when the leadership can take direct action; e.g., in the aircraft carrier incident. (success in the aircraft carrier case, however, was partly due to the unusual coincidence of the meeting of Negro leaders in Washington at that time for a discussion on Africa. Such an opportunity for quick, direct communication within the relevant leadership group on a relatively low priority issue is rare).

b) Working at the local level with the chapter organization of existing groups. So simply and broadly stated, this method of mobilization could seem to involve a vast spread of personnel, paper and coordination. On the contrary, the coordinating or resource organization, such as the ACOA, needs to do little more than contact (but remain in personal touch with) real local leadership. The latter would organize functionally, for example, in electoral politics, with corporations, or to further local education. In many areas there is already a loose confederation of local organizations. The coordinating or resource organization can merely assist in relating them to a national program and thence to the international issue.

However, it is important simultaneously to retain links with the various national headquarters, since they generally wish to remain in touch with their own chapters on all issues. Meanwhile, they in turn can give chapters the official go-ahead; lend valuable resources, including materials and money; and perhaps enjoy being relieved of a sizeable volume of work, while getting kudos for
The diagram below illustrates organizational links in this type of program.

**NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**
e.g. NAACP, ADA, etc.

**RESOURCE, COORDINATING**

**OR SPECIFIC ISSUE ORGANIZATION**
e.g. ACOA

**DISENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS**
i.e. Banks/Corporations

**FIELD**

**EDUCATION**

**ELECTORAL**

**COLLEGES**

* ← is an expression of the ratio of flow of information (educational and action-oriented) i.e., ratio of 2:1.

In order for such an approach as this one to yield significant results, it would be feasible to have two or three field workers (at a cost of $8,500 each), and it would be crucial to have no fewer than two or three. For real advantages would accrue through reaching a certain critical level of organizational force. At that point, to use a D.C. example, politically significant numbers of Congressmen could be moved to adopt intelligent and public positions on Southern Africa issue. For instance, the Rhodesia resolution presently being circulated in the House of Representatives could have:

1. urged stronger sanctions,
2. taken an unequivocal position for NIBMAR,
3. and still won 100 cosponsors — if efficient work had been done by means of local pressure. Such local pressure will not be forthcoming until issue-oriented groups get down to the local level via skilled field workers.
Similar reasoning applies with regard to the Disengagement campaign. Local pressure will be necessary if ever we are to get past the 'symbolic' corporations to those which are the real miscreants in South Africa and elsewhere.

c) Creating a single-issue chapter organization. While this type of approach would, like (b) above, gain favorable results, the problems in attracting a broad membership on a low priority issue in foreign policy seem virtually insurmountable. Most of the people who would be attracted are already involved in several other organizations and thus any chapters would be inefficient, ill-informed and highly amateur. In any case, while it is possible that groups, like the Pittsburg Group, may in the future desire to form around the South Africa issue, that does not destroy the need for field workers. (Moreover, it should be kept in mind that the purpose of field workers is not to organize groups, but rather to get action from existing groups.)