The Carter Look on Southern Africa

The Carter Administration has made a quick rhetorical break from its predecessor on southern African policy, setting a more liberal tone in hopes of implementing more effectively a policy that will offer little new. The Administration will press for moderate solutions in southern Africa, trying to capture leadership for the western nations rather than letting the African liberation movements or the Soviet Union take the lead.

Since President Carter has been in office only a short time and no major crises have arisen in southern Africa, substantive policy is just beginning to emerge. Carter's Administration is still preparing a Presidential Review Memorandum (PRM) on southern Africa, as the Nixon Administration began by drawing up the now-famous "NSSM-39". Thus far, Carter has been preoccupied with other foreign policy matters—building a record on human rights, defending a foreign aid program of over $7 billion, and opening SALT talks with the Soviet Union, not to mention his first mini-crisis, in Uganda, and first involvement in an armed conflict, in Zaire.

The Human Rights Analogy

Administration officials have said that they view the problems of southern African in terms of violations of human rights, so it may be useful to begin by looking at how Carter has generally handled his new human rights thrust. He has pursued a carefully-designed policy to gain praise for new rhetoric describing a policy that is actually little changed from Ford's. For two years, Washington liberals have been setting the groundwork to cut US aid to repressive governments. Carter endorsed a concern for human rights only in vague terms in the campaign, but once in office, redirected it toward the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. His initiative was applauded by the foreign policy establishment and the press, which then failed to detect any contradiction when Carter requested continued aid to some of the worst violators of human rights. Now State officials have gone as far as saying that the whole notion of tying human rights concerns to US aid is "negative" and rigid. It therefore appears that Carter doesn't intend to press the human rights issue too hard in countries—like South Africa—where U.S. economic stakes are high.

Southern Africa: New Tone, Same Substance

So too, on southern Africa, Carter began by setting a new tone. Carter has made a point of saying that he supports majority rule not only in Rhodesia and Namibia, but also in South Africa itself. (Ford's spokesmen consistently refused to be pinned down on this point.) He asked Andy Young at the first National Security Council meeting to travel to Africa to demonstrate his strong interest in the region. To give these general statements credibility, Vance and Young pushed successfully to get Congress to repeal the five-year-old Byrd Amendment. They themselves emphasized that their purpose was not so much to put an economic squeeze on the Smith regime as to make a political point to Smith and the international community.

Now the Carter Administration is taking the lead in trying to bring the stalled Rhodesia negotiations started by Kissinger to fruition. (see article on page 3). They must pursue the negotiations route since, as Andy Young said at the UN, their work is "to compete with those people who advocate armed struggle." This goal is probably uppermost in the minds of American policy-makers following the Podgorny and Castro trips to southern...
Africa. Opposition to armed struggle is still a main tenet of US policy, based on the belief that "chaos" will result if radical Africans gain control on the battlefield (with arms from socialist countries), and that "chaos" will solidify Communist power and influence. For example, US Embassy officials in Kinshasa fear that "Shaba's fall could give the Communist bloc the potential for a land bridge across Africa, extending from Angola through the Congo, southern Zaire and Mozambique," according to the March 30 Washington Post. (see article on page 6). This is equally a concern about Zimbabwe, where a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Africa went as far as to characterize the Zimbabwean guerrillas operating from camps in Mozambique as an external force. US policy-makers don't want radical elements to gain control in Zimbabwe and Namibia (or in Zaire), since they know that the political orientation of these governments will make a critical difference to the outcome of the struggle in South Africa itself.

**Trying to Break the Namibia Deadlock**

Secretary Vance admits that, so far, "the Namibia dispute is not moving toward solution." Last year, western nations hoped SWAPO could be persuaded to join the bogus, tribally-based Turnhalle constitutional conference, which South Africa had set up in September of 1975. But this likelihood appears slim. Since the United Nations will never accept a "solution" that excludes SWAPO, the State Department is now saying "we do not believe that an internationally acceptable solution can emerge from the Turnhalle talks."

The common denominator at the UN until now has been an insistence that South Africa allow UN supervised and controlled elections in Namibia. Last January the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 385 requiring South Africa to allow such elections by August 31, 1976. Some African delegates will probably want the Security Council to impose a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa for its non-compliance, perhaps in May. Young has suggested in private that the US might go along with an embargo, but only on those arms that South Africa uses in Namibia—a completely unworkable compromise. He may also suggest another round of negotiations with UN participation.

**South Africa: Dialogue or Withdrawal?**

On South Africa, State Department personnel say one main thrust of the Carter policy will be the concept of "non-linkage"; continued US collaboration with South Africa to try to find an "evolutionary resolution" in Rhodesia and Namibia, without holding back on criticism of South African apartheid.

But Administration officials seem very wary of actually putting pressure on South Africa, fearing this will bring a loss of ability to influence South Africa, on Rhodesia and Namibia and on its internal policies. In phrases reminiscent of Kissinger's, Philip Habib, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, told Charles Diggs' House Africa Subcommittee that the situation in South Africa is more complex than that in Rhodesia and Namibia, and that change cannot be abrupt. Of course, US economic interests are also greater in South Africa. Habib said that "from the standpoint of our own economic and strategic interests...the US has no reason to fear the necessary and inevitable achievement of racial equality and social justice in southern Africa," but that outside pressure to achieve such change could have the "unfortunate effect of engendering greater isolation and resistance to change."

Therefore, Carter's posture may end up being pretty close to the Nixonian "dialogue" policy. William Schaufele, a holdover from the Ford Administration as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, reiterated this view recently: "The presence of this investment does provide a means whereby a commitment to social justice, such as is held by this Administration, can be put into practice."

Carter's policy-makers are giving this old approach a new rationale—their version of "the Atlanta model". Andy Young and President Carter believe that the "problem" of South Africa today is similar to the fight to desegregate the US South in the 1950's and 60's. In their view, businessmen hold the key to the solution in both instances, since it is they who decide (though after the marching and stay-at-home are over) that the economic system must be liberalized. Liberalization in the political sphere will naturally follow, although they can't explain exactly how.

This rationale has several weaknesses. The civil rights struggle in the US South was fought for the attainment of constitutionally-guaranteed economic and political rights for the black minority. But in South Africa, the racial oppression is of the vast majority, and their struggle is not just to gain civil rights, but to regain control of their land. Furthermore, while corporations have responded to church shareholders for several years by saying that their presence in South Africa is a force for change, the wage gap has widened, and South Africa has only increased its repression. More basically, the problem in South Africa is not to integrate blacks, or, as Andy Young intimated in February, to "prepare [blacks] to run businesses and administer a society." The problem is to convince, or force, the white minority to give up control of the government and the economy. With or without a new rationale, there is therefore little reason to think that influence-through-investment will accomplish this task.

Administration sources say withdrawal of US economic support for the Vorster regime is also under consideration as part of the policy review. This option might include further restrictions on Export-Import Bank financing and on the supply of nuclear technology, tightening of the arms embargo, and denial of tax credits to companies operating in South Africa and Namibia. The Administration is probably looking for some concrete step, however small, to announce before June, when the Security Council is likely to discuss southern Africa in earnest.

On the Export-Import Bank, the House may adopt a provision instructing Exim to consider human rights violations by a recipient country before authorizing any transaction. This approach could take the wind out of the sails of a Congressional effort to impose a prohibition on all financing for South Africa, and it would certainly provide a rationale for no South African cut-off by the Executive. However, it is too early to draw a final conclusion.

Andy Young has said several times that the Administration will consider denying companies credit for taxes paid to South Africa against those owed to the US. If
this policy were adopted seriously, without loopholes, it would cut corporate profit to virtually nil, bringing the flow of investment into South Africa to a standstill. So on its surface this approach contradicts the general thrust of Administration pro-investment statements. If the Executive did want to go in this direction, it would have to use a lot of political “chips” to push it through Congress, which it would probably not be prepared to do.

The Test at the United Nations

One policy option the Carter Administration is not considering is agreeing to international sanctions against South Africa. No one, including Ambassador Young, is dissenting, although it is this firm position that is bound, at some point, to set the stage for a US-African confrontation at the United Nations.

The first test of Carter’s southern Africa policy already came at the UN Security Council while Young was in the chair during March. The US goal was, at most, to win African backing for a moderate US initiative, and, at least, to avoid a US veto of a more militant African solution. Young’s having avoided a confrontation is in itself something of a diplomatic victory; last year the US compiled the unique record of voting against ten UN resolutions on southern Africa and failing to vote “yes” on a single one. A veto would have demonstrated from the start that the new Administration will mean little improvement on southern Africa policy.

African members of the Council offered resolutions finding South Africa’s policies a threat to international peace (which could set the stage for mandatory economic sanctions), and calling for economic disengagement. Young countered with a “declaration of principles” expressing opposition to apartheid but requiring no action by UN members. The first draft of the resolution had a distinctly American ring: calling for peaceful solutions to southern Africa problems and making no mention of the liberation movements, stressing the need to protect minority rights, and focusing on apartheid’s harmful impact on economic developments as much as its intense repression. After two weeks of negotiations, there was general agreement about what South Africa should be called on to do, but an unbridged gap remained over the responsibilities of other states. The Africans insisted that economic co-operation with the Vorster regime should end and support should be given to the liberation movements, but the US, and especially Britain, refused to include such language. Probably no vote will be taken because of this impasse. Some observers believe that the Africans did not intend to force a confrontation during Young’s first months on the job. They are aware that the Administration is still formulating its Africa policy, and probably saw little purpose in forcing an early hardening of the US position against them.

But how long can this last, given the wide divergence between the African and US records? The new Administration will either have to end US concrete support for the minority regimes or find ways to convince the Africans that it is making some progress through persuasion. And recent southern African history suggests that it will take more than persuasion to convince the white minorities to abdicate control.

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ZIMBABWE: Priority No. 1

While the Zaire crisis threatens to involve the Administration in the end of seventeen years of western management of an African country, the Administration’s first planning priority is to arrange for the beginning of a western-managed Zimbabwe under “majority rule.”

Secretary of State Vance’s rationale for concentration on Rhodesia was put this way to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee:

“The Rhodesia situation is of great urgency ... for the extent of armed conflict is broadest and the threat of escalation most immediate ... If the Rhodesian authorities ... persist [in maintaining themselves in power] the inevitable outcome will be a bitter legacy for the future of all the inhabitants of that territory.”

“Intensified conflict in Rhodesia also entails serious adverse economic effects on countries in the region. Furthermore, the possibility of non-African forces interfering cannot be discounted.”

Getting Negotiations Going Again: The British/American Plan

Since the Geneva talks broke down in deadlock in December, Great Britain and the United States have been earnestly trying to find some formula to revive them.

On February 23rd US and British officials held talks in Washington with Ambassador “Pik” Botha, now the Foreign Minister of South Africa, to discuss whether Smith seemed to be moving toward acceptance of majority rule. On March 9th Rhodesia was a topic discussed by President Carter with Prime Minister Callaghan of Britain, as it was also on March 23rd when Carter met with Botha.

The British/American plan involves symbolic gestures toward African sensibilities (repeal of the Byrd Amendment and offering the British Foreign Secretary rather than its UN Ambassador as chairman of renewed talks), new suggestions for how to manage the question of transition (eliminate the necessity of it by proceeding to write a constitution), and a very large carrot intended to pacify white fears (the Zimbabwe Development Fund).

Repeal of the Byrd Amendment

The Administration reasoned that until the Byrd Amendment was repealed neither Smith nor the nationalists would take the US position on majority rule seriously. Repeal was intended to convince the Rhodesian authorities that “under no circumstances can they count on any form of American assistance” in preventing majority rule or in engineering a settlement which ex-
cludes nationalist leaders. Ambassador Young put the other aspect in this fashion: "Repeal of the Byrd Amendment is a kind of referendum on American racism. It is viewed that way by the heads of state of the black majority nations." Further, Young's ability to head off hardline proposals on southern Africa at the UN would be strengthened by repeal.

With the strong support of the White House and fading opposition from the steel industry, the bill to enable the President to enforce sanctions against Rhodesia passed easily. 250-146 in the House on March 14th and 66-26 in the Senate on March 16th.

The Zimbabwe Carrot

After the British consultations in mid-March, the Administration decided to ask Congress to authorize $100 million of Security Supporting Assistance for the Zimbabwe Development Fund in order to help get negotiations back on track again.

As early as June of last year, news stories had circulated that Kissinger, Callaghan and Vorster were proposing a multi-national plan to assure the "stability" of an independent Zimbabwe. The purpose was clearly political, namely, to bring along the white Rhodesians who fear economic disaster for themselves if majority rule came. The details were always a little fuzzy, except to the Smith government. Smith explained the Fund in September as point 6 in the Kissinger proposal, saying that it was an "agreed summary of a longer paper."

"6. Substantial economic support will be made available by the international community to provide assurance to Rhodesians about the economic future of the country. A trust fund will be established outside Rhodesia which will organize and finance a major international effort... The fund will... support the internal and external economic circumstances of the country and provide development assistance, guarantees and investment incentives to a wide variety of projects."

On March 15th of this year in an address to the nation, Smith once again described the Fund. He said that its location outside Rhodesia was designed to remove white fears. He said the object of the Fund would include large-scale financing of the development of the country's resources. He reiterated that the Fund would underwrite guarantees of... "pension rights, the investment of the individual in his own home and/or farm, and the remittances overseas of an individual's liquid resources within levels yet to be stipulated."

By now making the Zimbabwe Development Fund the centerpiece of its plan to get negotiations started again, the Administration must face a host of questions about the political motives behind the Fund as well as its political effectiveness.

In testimony before the Subcommittee on Africa of the House International Relations Committee, Talcott Seelye, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs gave these details of the Fund:

- The Fund is to be administered by the World Bank, which would respond to requests for project funding by an independent Zimbabwe government, only after independence.
- If independence comes by military victory, rather than through negotiation, the Fund would become a "dead letter" and would not be made available to the new government.

The State Department spokesman hotly denied that the Fund represents a scheme to "compensate" or "buy out" whites. According to Seelye, such criticism was a misunderstanding of the true purpose of the Fund: "Our purpose is to encourage whites to stay, not to abandon their jobs or their homes... Where you have moderate and constructive leaders, we believe that whites will be more willing to stay... It is essentially to assure the viability of the economy... If thoughtful whites look round at Zambia, where there is a modern non-racist regime, they could come to the conclusion that they could be very happy in an independent Zimbabwe... Did I say Zambia? I meant Kenya.

"The blacks are not skilled. If they are left on their own, it would all fall apart."

The reaction of the Subcommittee to these revelations ranged from outraged opposition to cautious skepticism. Congressman Stephen Solarz stormed, "I have never heard of a more half-baked, assimine scheme than this one." He reasoned that since the whites now enjoy incomes eleven times greater than blacks, the Fund could not possibly offer them any financial incentives greater than the privileges they already enjoy. Thus it could not serve the political purpose which the Administration alleged to be the rationale: i.e. to encourage whites to accept majority rule. On the other hand, if the purpose was to improve the lot of Zimbabwe's blacks, their needs had to be weighed against the needs of people in Botswana or Tanzania where African incomes are a fraction of the $400 a year which Africans in Zimbabwe earn. Chairman Diggs declared himself adamantly
opposed to any fund which was designed to get whites to stay although he might consider a fund designed to help racist whites to leave.

The Subcommittee was clearly dissatisfied also with the inequalities involved in allocating so huge a sum of money to Rhodesia to solve a political problem created by white intransigence while allocating relatively little to black African states which have suffered the consequences of that intransigence. Botswana’s share of Security Supporting Assistance for 1978 has been reduced to $3 million from $10 million in 1977. Zambia, Tanzania, Angola and Mozambique will receive nothing from these funds, although their economies have suffered a great deal from the effects of the Rhodesian struggle. By putting all this emphasis on the effort to persuade the whites to settle, the Administration seemed also to be punishing the frontline states for their united stand in favor of guerrilla war.

On a more general level, the Subcommittee is quite sensitive to other comparisons. The US is proposing to fund only 20 percent of the Sahel Development Fund, which will also be much smaller in amount than the Zimbabwe Fund, yet the Sahel has a population about four times greater than Rhodesia’s. No African country has ever received in a comparable period any sum remotely close to the $820 million proposed to be allocated for the next five years in Zimbabwe; $820 million represents 11 percent of the total of US economic aid for all African countries in the thirteen year period 1962-75.

When the Subcommittee marks up the bill at the end of April, it may well knock out the Zimbabwe Development Fund and reallocate assistance more equitably to the frontline states who have borne heavy burdens. The full Committee is less liberal than the Subcommittee, and they may therefore be more responsive to the determination which the Administration is exhibiting to push the Fund.

If the Administration is requesting the Zimbabwe Development Fund to create another Kenya, it is by no means clear that the Patriotic Front would be willing to oblige by accepting such a capitalist model of development. The New York Times reported November 5th that Robert Mugabe, one of the two principal leaders of the Front, had declared: “We would have nothing to do with it. To us it seems as if its purpose is to bind Zimbabwe politically and economically and it would compromise our independence.”

If Not a Carrot. Then What Kind of Stick?

Now that the Byrd Amendment has been repealed as to Rhodesia, the Administration is legally in a position to implement sanctions, if it chooses to, in order to squeeze Smith into a settlement.

One of the most serious loopholes in sanctions is the supply of petroleum products to Rhodesia by multinational firms such as Mobil, BP, Caltex, Shell and Total. The oil they use is transported to Africa in Western-owned ships, and funneled through various intermediaries to Rhodesia via South Africa. Kenneth Kaunda charged in January:

“They have kept Smith afloat and have caused great damage to our economy through their continued support for the rebellion . . . Yet those same companies are asking for the cooperation of Africa . . . We cannot accept that they are independent subsidiaries. There are no oil fields in Rhodesia or South Africa. The companies are multi-national corporations.”

When charges against Mobil that it was dealing with Rhodesia were leveled by the United Church of Christ last June, Mobil and the Treasury Department promised to investigate. Mobil claims that it cannot find out from its own South African subsidiary whether or not Mobil South Africa has been dealing with Rhodesia, because the subsidiary would be violating South Africa’s Official Secrets Act if it discussed its actions. Mobil also claims that under South African law it cannot impose conditions on the sale of its products so as to prevent further shipments to Rhodesia. While Treasury’s investigation is complete, its results when announced will be probably equally inconclusive.

Given the political will to achieve a settlement, by using the oil weapon, there are several courses which the West could take.

1. The US could tighten sanctions regulations so that they apply to subsidiaries of US companies wherever they may be located. Regulations enforcing the Trading with the Enemy Act are so worded. Rhodesian sanctions regulations are not; they apply only to corporate subsidiaries in Rhodesia. If the US could put pressure on Canadian and Argentine subsidiaries of US companies to stop dealing with Cuba in order to enforce an unpopular unilateral blockade, how can it claim to be incapable of putting pressure on the multinationals and on South Africa to enforce a sanctions program which has worldwide acceptance?

2. While the Western countries are now urging South Africa to prod Smith, it is urgent that they put pressure on South Africa to cut off Smith’s supplies. South Africa did develop “congestion” at its ports which caused Rhodesian exports to pile up last summer. It could bring Smith’s government down in a very short time by withholding vital oil and munitions supplies. Western multinationals control the sources of oil and the capital which Vorster’s regime needs to keep itself going. There is therefore no doubt that it has the tools to pressure Vorster to act against Smith, or at least to co-operate passively in Western tightening of sanctions.

Though putting the squeeze on US corporations in South Africa and on the South African government may be the only way to get a negotiated settlement in Rhodesia, there are few signs that the Administration will be prepared to take such decisive action.

Prospects for a Negotiated Settlement Now

While the West clearly wants a settlement, talks to obtain one seem farther away than ever.

Blaming Smith for rejecting the path to a peaceful settlement, the frontline states gave their unreserved backing to the Patriotic Front on January 9th. Since war was now the order of the day, the African states must support the Patriotic Front – ZIPIA because it is they who are waging the war. Bishop Muzorewa hurled angry charges against the frontline states for choosing leaders for Zimbabwe, a charge which President Kaunda countered in this way:

“We are dealing with war. This is Africa’s priority today. We cannot start bickering about premier-
ship even before victory has been achieved . . . .

As a result of the visits of President Podgorny of the Soviet Union and of Premier Fidel Castro to the frontline states, there will unquestionably be an increase in the supplies and training these two countries furnish to the Zimbabwean guerilla forces. The warmth and cordiality with which the Zambian government greeted Podgorny is some indication of the seriousness with which Kaunda has turned away from the Western strategy of negotiation and toward support for the Nkomo wing of the Patriotic Front in its new emphasis on a rapid buildup of armed struggle. Mozambique and ZIPA will unquestionably get defensive material such as anti-aircraft weapons that will enable them to protect the civilian population against Rhodesian air incursions. They also need training and equipment to help cope with Rhodesian raids against Mozambican villages, transportation, bridges and other vulnerable targets.

On the other side, Smith seems to be toying with an "internal" solution that would involve the "moderates" whom the frontline states did not accept, especially Bishop Muzorewa. While Smith has remitted through his Parliament, by a narrow margin, measures designed to open European agricultural areas to black purchases, to legitimate integrated private schools, etc., south Africa's Financial Mail called them "cosmetic changes that leave white privilege intact." At the same time, Smith has jailed five leading members of the Zimbabwe People's Movement in order to harm their organizing work for the Patriotic Front.

To legitimate his own claims to leadership, Muzorewa has been promoting a referendum under British or international supervision to determine who shall lead a majority-rule government. After the referendum, Smith would resign and turn over the government to the winner of the referendum.

But, while Smith favors a referendum to settle the black leadership issue, he has no intention of letting Britain or any outside force control or supervise the process, and even less of turning over the government to the winner. He insists that he will negotiate with the winner ironclad constitutional guarantees for the white minority: police protection, maintenance of an armed forces that would be independent of politics, maintenance of all civil service contractual obligations, free enterprise, private property and equality of opportunity in jobs.

Thus the United States and the West are on the horns of a dilemma. If they allow the guerrilla war to proceed, they fear that the leadership that will emerge from that struggle will re-orient the country along socialist lines, disrupt or mismanage the economy and give support to guerilla warfare against South Africa, where western interests are much more substantial. While the Rhodesians and the South Africans look to lump all the external nationalist leadership together as Communists, the United States and Britain know that Nkomo and Mugabe are comparatively pragmatic as compared to the leadership that they fear will emerge from ZIPA under Mozambican tutelage.

The US is keenly aware that an "internal" settlement that does not include the Patriotic Front is a "non-starter". It cannot work because it will not bring peace. On the contrary, it might well escalate the level of fratricidal bloodshed.

The only real path to a negotiated transfer of power lies in bringing down the Smith government, either by force of arms or by a real tightening of sanctions. The first option is support for guerilla war, which the West has always rejected. The second option is theoretically possible, but there are few signs now that the West is prepared to grasp the nettle of danger boldly enough to choose it.

Aid to Mobutu Raises Questions

Events in central Africa are now threatening to develop into a crisis in which the Carter Administration will have to choose either to disengage from a long-time client dictator or risk its projected image of concern for human rights by intervention. If the US continues to supply one side of a civil war, as it did in Angola, it may jeopardize a western-engineered settlement in Rhodesia and Namibia.

On March 8th, Katanganese "gendarmes" entered Zaire from Angola and captured a number of towns in southwestern Zaire. They were "coming home" rather than invading, since they are almost entirely Lunda people from Shaba district who had been living with their ethnic kinfolk in Angola since 1964-67, when they were forced to flee because of their opposition to the Mobutu government.

So far the Zaire military of 40,000 has offered little resistance to the Katanganese, whose armed personnel number no more than 5,000. The rebels now reportedly control at least one-third of the Shaba province.

Mobutu Calls, Carter Responds

In view of his peril, Mobutu immediately called for and received western aid. President Carter himself ordered the dispatch of two planeloads of supplies, including rations, medicines, fuel bladders, load-bearing
equipment, water tablets, aircraft spare parts, parachutes, and communications gear. These materials did not require formal Congressional approval, since there is still $36 million in the pipeline for Zaire from previous military authorizations. Belgium and France were reported to be sending arms and ammunition.

The Administration is clearly trying to stabilize the situation. Both Carter and Vance have been careful to state that they have no "hard evidence" of Cuban involvement, although lower-level officials called the Katangan march an external invasion. Ambassador Young used his friendly relations with the Nigerians to urge them to mediate the dispute. Mobutu had approached the Nigerians earlier, on March 11th. Angola, on the other hand, told a Nigerian emissary that mediation between the two countries would not affect the Shaba fighting, since that is an internal dispute, in which Angola is not involved.

Zaire-Angolan relations have reached a low point. A year ago, Presidents Mobutu and Neto agreed to normalize relations by, among other things, repatriating each other's internal enemies. Angola was to send back the 6,000 Katangan gendarmes and Zaire was to kick FNLA out of Zaire. Instead, relations between the countries got worse. Mobutu could draw encouragement from the fact that the US not only did not recognize Angola, but continued to regard it as a threat to Zaire. Especially in the last two months, Angola has been contending that Zaire has violated the agreement by allowing FNLA, FLEC, and MOLICA to operate from Zaire bases against Angolan villages. Two recent raids are alleged to have resulted in the massacre of over 70 civilians. Angola also alleged a western-backed plan to destabilize Angola by a mercenary-led invasion of Cabinda in September, 1977. Zaire contended that these allegations were a smokescreen to mask the Katangan "invasion".

US Interests in Zaire

The US regards the Mobutu government as a "friend" and a leading "moderate." The US poured into Zaire from 1962 to 1975 $446.8 million in economic and military assistance, making it one of the largest US aid recipients in Africa. In 1976 and 1977 increasingly large sums have been spent to make Zaire "stable" by increasing its military power. An additional $32.5 million is being requested in the 1978 military aid bill. This huge strategically-placed country has vast mineral resources and untapped water power which are a powerful magnet for future US investments, which total $1 billion already.

If the Katangan gendarmerie cuts the rail line to the north or captures the mines of Shaba, Zaire's precarious ability to pay back its $500 billion debt to US banks will be nil, since two-thirds of Zaire's foreign exchange is earned by exports of Shaba copper. Furthermore, it will be unlikely to get the $250 million in new financing projected under a financial reform plan worked out with its creditors. Zaire may well collapse economically, destroying what western countries and the IMF had hoped would be a model for avoiding default by other third world countries.

The West Expands the War

However the US and its allies may not be able to rescue Mobutu by sending arms, equipment and supplies alone. The Congressional Presentation Document for Security Assistance for FY 78 states that Zaire's army had to be reassessed after its "poor performance in Angola." "There will be a protracted period during which Zaire will have to concentrate on training and infrastructure before it can absorb more than these limited amounts of military equipment."

Are the western powers prepared to rescue Mobutu by sending in mercenaries or covert military units, as they did in the 1960's? This is the question Rep. Clarence Long raised over and over with State Department witnesses on March 24th.

First of all, today's Zaire is not the Belgian Congo of the '60's, and the Katangan rebels are not the old Moise Tshombe policemen revived. They are a small force which probably has been influenced politically by its recent alliance with the MPLA and its Cuban trainers. They are certainly seasoned and well-motivated and disciplined by comparison with Mobutu's army. They are now linked in a National Liberation Front of the Congo (FNLC) with the Lumumba-ist party, MNC, headed by Antoine Gizenga, and with the Marxist-Leninist Popular Revolutionary Party, which operates in eastern Zaire's Kivu region. The Front aims to topple Mobutu and establish a socialist government. Its ability to achieve this aim may depend on the extent to which the Zaire army joins in the uprising.

Reports from knowledgeable journalists in this country and in Britain indicate that mercenaries are being actively recruited for service in Zaire both here and abroad. This comes as no surprise, since the Congo crisis of the early '60's was the occasion for one of the largest mercenary operations in African history. David Bufkin, who has recruited mercenaries for FNLA in the Angolan war and for the Rhodesian government, is reported now to be seeking 450 Americans and Britons to fight in Zaire (according to the Los Angeles Times). He is reportedly able to recruit mercenaries for FNLA in the Angolan war and for the Rhodesian government, is reported now to be seeking 450 Americans and Britons to fight in Zaire (according to the Los Angeles Times). He has recently placed an ad for recruits in the Fresno Bee. Bufkin told the Times that he was working with a Briton, Chet Akins, who acts as paymaster, and with a Colonel Mizuki of the Zaire Army. Bufkin boasted in January that he had infiltrated an alleged Cuban spy school in Ottawa on behalf of the CIA. The CIA, predictably, denies that it is involved in any way in recruiting mercenaries for Africa. As usual also, the Justice Department claims to be monitoring the current situation to see if US mercenary-recruiting laws are being broken.

In addition, the US is becoming involved indirectly through client states in Africa which are coming to Mobutu's aid with more disciplined troops. On April 7th, Zaire announced that Morocco (whose principal arms suppliers are France and the US) and "another African country," believed to be Egypt (according to Robin Wright of the Washington Post) would send troops to assist. Each country will reportedly send a battalion (1,500 men) to help Zaire suppress the Front forces. While Egyptian participation has not yet been confirmed, Egyptian President Sadat has just met with President Carter and his advisers, and his pro-US and anti-Soviet line makes him a natural ally.

The Congress is Cautious

Congressional reaction to US action thus far reflects worry and irritation with traditional rationales, but also
a reluctance to challenge the President prematurely. Rep. Don Bonker, who led opposition to funds for Zaire during the Angolan war, told Vance that the US was still compensating Mobutu for losses incurred in Angola and that it was unwise to continue shoring up a regime which had a record of mismanagement, aggression and violation of fundamental human rights. He left open the possibility of an over-riding security interest: "I am not arguing that one can or cannot be demonstrated .... A case must be laid out clearly before Congress." Senator Dick Clark, chairman of the Senate's Africa Subcommittee, also stressed the need for caution "until the nature of the crisis is clarified." "I have serious doubts about the effectiveness of aid in the crisis, in light of the unstable situation in the country and the disorganization of the government's forces." Congressional concern about supplying the military of countries which violate human rights was not allayed by the State Department's own report on Zaire: "From time to time, there are allegations of brutal treatment of political prisoners, extended incarceration without trial, and even of death of prisoners under interrogation ...."

If Carter greatly escalates US involvement in Zaire, deciding that national security considerations are more important than human rights violations, Americans may well ask whether his basic decisions do not represent after all a protection of US tangible interests in the fashion preferred by Henry Kissinger rather than a devotion to American ideals.

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**NEWSBRIEFS**

Twelve American corporations operating in South Africa recently announced a six-point "Statement of Principles" aimed at improving the working conditions of their black employees. Though the statement differs slightly from the 1973 State Department guidelines for US business in South Africa, both have similar objectives: wage equality, job training and promotions for black workers. The businessmen's statement goes further by calling for non-segregation of facilities in factories and offices. However, it fails to deal at all with the question of trade unions for blacks.

Prior to issuing the statement, the leaders of the companies involved had met with Secretary of State Vance, who is a former member of the board of directors of IBM. The Carter Administration has endorsed the statement as a step in the right direction, though finding fault with its silence on black trade unions.

The plan, however, is seen more as tokenism than substance. As the Financial Mail of South Africa states: 

"There is a genuine question whether the apartheid gesture by the US firms was aimed more at the White House and liberal American stockholder groups than at the Vorster government and its policies."

The US gave Angola $12 million in foodstuffs in early March. The grant, part of PL 480, is to be distributed by UNICEF and the World Food Program based in Rome. This is one of the few aid channels which can be used for countries whose governments the US does not recognize.

The Carter Administration is requesting $500,000 for a contribution to the UN Education and Training Program for Southern Africa for FY 1978. This is a tenfold increase from last year. The Fund is to be used for training Namibians and Zimbabweans, and is to "provide the needed skills when majority rule is attained in these territories."

Senator Clark and Congressman Solarz plan to offer an amendment authorizing the same amount for the Namibia Institute, since Carter did not include a contribution to this agency in his budget.

A recent Transnational Institute report by Michael Klare provides specific details of a triangular venture in which Italian firms, owned or licensed by US corporations, have been supplying aircraft to the South African Air Force.

Aermacchi, partly owned by a subsidiary of Lockheed Corp., has sold 20 AL-60 light transport planes to the SAAF. The AL-60 is in fact the same plane as the Lockheed-60 and is produced under Lockheed license. Reportedly most of these planes are now being used by the Rhodesian Air Force to supply anti-guerrilla units. Aermacchi and Aeritalia have jointly produced and sold to SAAF AM.3C utility monoplanes which are based on the same Lockheed-60 design. The AL-60 is also being used as the base for the South African Atlas Aircraft light transport known as the C-4M or Kudu, produced in South Africa.

Another US company, Avco-Lycoming Division of Avco, supplies the designs for the engines of all three of these planes. Piaggio of Italy produces the Avco-Lycoming GSO-480 for the C-4M and the GSO-B156 for the AM.3C under license from Avco. Piaggio also produces the Albatross, a twin-engined maritime surveillance plane, which is powered also by Avco-Lycoming engines. The SAAF has purchased 20 from Piaggio.

Although foreign firms are prohibited from selling US-designed arms to any country, such as South Africa, which is on the US embargo list, in practice it is easy to get around these restrictions because the US rarely monitors the arrangements.

Copies of the report can be obtained from TNI, 1901 Q St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.