SOUTHERN AFRICA
THE U.S. RECORD AT THE U.N.
1972
The UN continued during 1972 to devote considerable time and energy to the seemingly intractable problems of southern Africa. Indeed, 1972 may be noted by future historians as the year in which both the General Assembly and the Security Council reached out -- erratically and sometimes contrarily, even erroneously, towards new initiatives to achieve some action on Southern Africa.

1972 may also be noted as the year in which the US conclusively proved in the UN that, despite its fine rhetoric, it does not disapprove of apartheid and colonialism as much as it fears effective steps to end them. The American position was made explicit in the General Assembly as US representatives repeatedly broke with the majority of the Western European countries to vote with South Africa and Portugal on resolutions opposing apartheid and colonialism.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Despite the US - or perhaps because the Assembly felt it unprofitable to water down resolutions to try to win American acquiescence - the 1972 Assembly took two very significant new steps relating to southern Africa:

1. Following a recommendation of the 1971 Assembly, it admitted representatives of the Organization of African Unity-recognized liberation movements from Namibia, Zimbabwe, and the Portuguese colonies as observers to committee discussions of territory represented by the movement. While this limited status fell far short of the movements' desires, it clearly represented a vital first step in that direction. (Resolution 3051, Namibia; 2918, Portuguese Colonies; and 2945, Zimbabwe) A long second step, probably involving major conflict within the UN, may well be taken when the PAIGC issues its anticipated claim to be the rightful government of Guinea-Bissau in 1973.

2. In a series of resolutions the Assembly "affirmed" the legitimacy of the struggle against apartheid and colonialism "by all available means", thereby effectively giving its blessing to wars of national liberation. The United States, born in revolution, opposed these resolutions approving violence.

Important provisions of the most significant resolutions adopted by the Assembly are summarized below.

**Anti-colonialism Resolutions**

**Resolution 2908 (XXVII) Implementation of Independence for Colonial Peoples**

The key provision of this resolution reaffirms the legitimacy of the struggle of colonial peoples and recognizes their right to achieve self-determination and independence "by all the necessary means at their disposal..." (Par. 6) The resolution also condemns the imposition of non-representative regimes and arbitrary constitutions on colonial territories (par. 7) and requests that states withhold assistance of any kind from Portugal, South Africa, and the Smith regime in Rhodesia. (par. 9)

The US joined France, Portugal, South Africa, and the United Kingdom in voting against this resolution.
Resolution 2979 (XXVII) Activities of Foreign Economic Interests

This resolution reaffirms the rights of people in dependent territories to self-determination and independence and to the enjoyment of the natural resources of their territories (par. 1). It also reiterates that the activities of foreign economic and other interests operating in Rhodesia, Namibia, and the Portuguese colonies "constitute a major obstacle to political independence" (par. 2) and condemns the policies of colonial and other powers which support such interests. (par. 5) In particular, paragraphs 6 and 7 condemn the Cabora Bassa project in Mozambique, the Cunene River project in Angola and all governments which have not prevented their nationals from participating in these projects. The resolution also requests states to end all assistance to regimes which repress the people of colonial territories (par. 9) and calls on the administering powers to abolish discriminatory and unjust wage systems in their dependent territories (par. 10).

The US, sensitive to any calls to restrict private enterprise, and calling the resolution unrealistic, joined Canada, France, Portugal, South Africa, and the United Kingdom in opposing the resolution.

Resolution 2980 (XXVII) Implementation of Independence for Colonial Peoples by UN Agencies

The US also voted against Resolution 2980, which calls on specialized agencies and other international institutions associated with the UN to assist colonial persons in Africa struggling for their independence as well as persons in liberated areas; to discontinue all collaboration with South Africa, Portugal, and the Smith regime until they renounce racial discrimination and colonial oppression; and to ensure the representation of colonial territories in Africa by their national liberation movements "in an appropriate capacity" when dealing with territorial matters.

South Africa - Apartheid Resolutions

Resolution 2923E Situation in South Africa

This resolution inter alia, condemns South Africa for intensifying the implementation of apartheid and its "Bantustan" policy and for exporting apartheid to neighboring territories, especially Namibia; and it demands an end to repressive laws and persecution of opponents of apartheid (pars 1-5). It calls on all states to fully implement the UN arms embargo against South Africa, reaffirms its belief that only sanctions can change the situation in South Africa, and requests the Security Council to consider adopting such measures under Chapter VII of the Charter (pars. 6, 7). It states its support of the internal opponents of South Africa (par. 9) and reaffirms the "legitimacy of the struggle of the oppressed people of South Africa to eradicate apartheid and racial discrimination by all available means..." (par. 10)

The US, again declaring its adamant opposition to violence, including wars of national liberation, joined Portugal, South Africa, and the United Kingdom in voting against the resolution, while most of western Europe abstained.

The US did support three resolutions on apartheid which required no substantial action; but it abstained on three other, almost equally innocuous resolutions
relating to the work program of the Special Committee on Apartheid, the dissemination of information on apartheid, and on an International Conference of Trade Unions against Apartheid. (Resolutions 2923 C, D, and F)

Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) Resolutions

Resolution 2945 (XXVII) Question of Southern Rhodesia

The preamble to this resolution "notes with satisfaction" the African rejection (as reported by the Pearce Commission) of the (Goodman Commission) "proposals for a settlement" between the United Kingdom and the Smith regime in Rhodesia. The first operative paragraph reaffirms the principle of no independence before majority rule in the territory and calls for full participation of popular leaders in any settlement and for approval by the people of the territory. Subsequent paragraphs condemn the presence and intervention of South African troops in Zimbabwe (par. 5); they call on the United Kingdom to refrain from treating the Smith regime as sovereign (par. 2), to convene a national constitutional convention of genuine popular representatives to work out an acceptable settlement, and to assure that any future constitutional arrangements should be determined by universal adult suffrage on the basis of one-man, one-vote.

The US voted with Portugal, South Africa, and the United Kingdom against the resolution, claiming that it required too much of Britain.

Resolution 2946 (XXVII) Question of Southern Rhodesia (Sanctions)

This resolution deplores the refusal of the United Kingdom to take measures to end the illegal regime in Zimbabwe (par. 1); condemns South African and Portuguese collaboration with the Smith regime (par. 2); condemns generally violations of mandatory sanctions against Rhodesia (par. 3), and, in particular, importation of Rhodesian nickel and chrome by the United States (following enactment of the "Byrd Amendment".) (par. 4)

The US joined Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, South Africa, and the United Kingdom in opposition to this resolution. US representatives bitterly attacked that they considered undue attention to American violation of sanctions under the Byrd amendment while others engaged in far more extensive sanction-busting.

Portuguese Colonies Resolutions

Resolution 2918 (XXVII) Territories under Portuguese Administration

This resolution was the only one directed specifically to the Portuguese territories although several anti-colonial resolutions were concerned primarily with the same areas. After condemning Portuguese colonial policy and the "continued collaboration" of South Africa and the Smith regime in Rhodesia (preamble) it affirms that the national liberation movements are the "authentic representatives of the true aspirations" of the people of the territories and calls on UN agencies and organizations, when dealing with matters affecting the territories, to ensure their representation by the liberation movements. (par. 2) Paragraph 3 calls on the Portuguese to end repression in the colonies and to treat captured freedom fighters in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva Conventions of 1949. The next paragraph requests material and moral
assistance for the colonial people to help them continue their struggle for self-determination and independence, and paragraph 5 requests governments, particularly NATO members to withdraw all assistance to Portugal which enables it to continue colonial repression.

The US, maintaining its reactionary stand and unwilling to concede that NATO weapons which it supplies to Portugal were being used for colonial repression, joined Brazil, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, and the United Kingdom in opposing the resolution. Canada, the Scandinavian, and other western European states joined the majority of the Third World in supporting the resolution, while Belgium, France and Italy abstained on this vote.

**Resolutions concerning Namibia**

**Resolution 3031 (XXVII) Question of Namibia**

The first paragraph reaffirms the inalienable right of Namibians to self-determination and independence and the legitimacy of their struggle "by all means" against the illegal occupation of their territory. The next emphasizes the territorial integrity of Namibia. Paragraph 6 deprecates support given South Africa by states and "interests" operating in Namibia, and paragraph 7 calls on states, inter alia, to refrain from all relations with South Africa where it purports to represent Namibia. The resolution also calls on states to refuse to grant recognition to any rights or interests acquired in Namibia under South African authority since the termination of the mandate.

Paragraph 9 reaffirms the authority of the Council for Namibia as the administering authority and specifies certain functions and responsibilities the Council should discharge. Paragraph 10 requests cooperation by states and UN agencies and institutions with the Council, and the next paragraph invites the Security Council to take effective measures to implement the resolution.

Paragraph 12 enlarges the membership of the Council, a proposal informally discussed for some years but not formally made until there was some certainty that new members would be forthcoming. The People's Republic of China immediately indicated its willingness to serve on the Council and this generated a quick revival of interest in membership. The USSR, reversing its previously cautious attitude to the Council, sought membership, as did Poland and Romania. Burundi, Liberia, and Mexico completed the roster of new members, adding seven to the original roster of eleven (Chile, Colombia, Egypt, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Turkey, Yugoslavia and Zambia).

The United States abstained on this resolution.

**SECURITY COUNCIL**

While most of the initiatives relating to southern Africa originated in the Assembly in 1972, the Security Council and the Council for Namibia both took important steps as far as Namibia was concerned. It appears that countries sympathetic to South Africa played an important role in developing several of the Security Council moves.

**Resolution 309 (1972) Secretary-General Contacts**

At the Security Council meeting in Addis at the beginning of 1972, the Argentine representative urged another attempt at negotiations with...
toria concerning Namibia. The French representative is reported to have generated support for this proposal by suggesting that, if South Africa remained adamant, the French government would change its position on Namibia. Paragraph 1 of resolution 309, accepted on this basis by the African members of the Security Council, "invited" the Secretary-General "to initiate...contacts with all parties concerned...to enable the people of Namibia...to exercise their right to self-determination and independence..." He was to report back by the end of July.

The American Committee on Africa, condemning the move to engage in dialogue with South Africa over Namibia pointed out that this was a step backward from the previous UN position which, by terminating the South African mandate, had ended completely all South African authority in the territory. "The fact that South Africa has expressed a willingness to allow a special representative to make occasional trips to Namibia may seem to some to indicate a new liberality in South Africa's policy. To us it indicates instead the meaninglessness of the proposal which South Africa can accept because it makes no demands for a change in policy. At the very time that this proposal is being worked out, the South African regime is tightening up its apparatus for control in Namibia."

The United States gave its full support to this move as a constructive and bloodless approach to the problem of Namibia.

Resolution 310 (1972) Illegal Occupation of Namibia

In order to gain broader acceptance for the proposals embodied in resolution 309, the Security Council also adopted at Addis a resolution reaffirming the right of Namibians to self-determination and independence with national unity and territorial integrity. The most significant provisions are found in paragraph 5, which calls on all states whose nationals operate in Namibia despite UN resolutions, to ensure that such nationals hire Namibian workers in conformity with the basic provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (This was particularly aimed at contract labor.)

The United States voted for this resolution. In so doing it seems to have tacitly accepted the legal proposition that the Declaration -- which has not yet been ratified by the American government -- is part of the constitutional law of Namibia.

Resolution 319 (1972) Continued Contacts with South Africa

The South African government immediately invited the Secretary-General to visit Namibia, and he accepted the invitation. At the end of July he issued a very hopeful report, indicating progress and recommending continuation of his mission, with the appointment of a special representative to deputize for him. Although the Africans voiced fears that no concrete results would emerge from the Secretary-General's contacts and expressed some concern that further negotiations under the terms established by Pretoria might be construed as tacit recognition of some South African rights in Namibia, they bowed to Western pressure, appearing sensitive to the accusation that a failure to agree to the extension of the Secretary-General's authority would be cutting off fruitful possibilities for peaceful settlement. He was thus given until the end of November to continue his contacts, and the authority to appoint a representative to help him.

The US supported the Secretary-General on the basis that the talks appeared promising and voted for the resolution.
Resolution 323 (1972) Further Extension of Discussions

It is reported that the South African government vetoed several emissaries proposed by the Secretary-General before he finally named Ambassador Alfred Martin Escher of Switzerland to represent him in continuing discussions. Ambassador Escher also made a trip to Namibia and South Africa. On November 30 he submitted a report which in effect accepted the South African Bantustan policy which Vorster had rechristened "regionalism", and attempted to disguise with a proposal for a token Advisory Council for Namibia. The report was so bitterly attacked that it and its author were dropped. But the African states were still unwilling to accept the onus for ending the mission, which was continued once more till the end of April 1973.

The United States supported resolution 323, extending the Secretary-General's powers to continue contacts. (Since that time the Council for Namibia, which the Secretary-General had not treated as a "concerned party" and had not consulted, has recommended that the Secretary-General's authority be terminated; it pointed out that while the discussions were going on, without tangible results, South Africa continued to expand its "homeland" program in Namibia and to victimize its opponents.)

COUNCIL FOR NAMIBIA

In its first years of existence, the Council for Namibia was able to accomplish very little. However, in 1972 it also began to take some new initiatives.

Southeast Atlantic Fisheries

Early in 1972 the Council learned that an organizing meeting of the Southeast Atlantic Fisheries Commission was to open shortly in Rome under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organization, which had initiated the international convention under which the Commission had been created. It was apparent that the Commission would deal primarily with fishing in and near Namibian territorial waters, which were claimed by South Africa, and that South Africa would in effect represent Namibia at the meeting. The Council asked the Commission to be allowed to represent Namibian interests. When the Commission turned down the Council's proposed intervention, the FAO withdrew its assistance to the Commission in a step which served to acknowledge the validity of the Council's claim to represent Namibia. The US was not a member of the Commission and apparently was not aware of any of the action, all of which took place in about a week.

Investigation of Working Conditions in Namibia

As the general strike of Namibian workers, which began in December 1971, stretched into the spring of 1972 and unverifiable reports of victimization of strikers filtered out of the Territory, the Council sought first-hand information on working conditions in the Territory. Consequently the Council requested the presidents of Newmont Mining Co. and American Metal Climax Corp., which manage and jointly dominate Tsumeb Mining Co., the largest copper mine in Namibia accounting for 80% of all the base mineral production in Namibia and is the largest single private employer of labor, to meet with the Council and discuss working conditions in the Territory. The corporate officers refused. The Council thereupon requested US Ambassador Bush to assist it in obtaining the presence of the corporation pres-
Ambassador Bush's refusal was phrased as if it had been drafted by the corpor-ations: It denied the authority of the Council to take such action, pointing out that the US had not supported Assembly resolution 2248 (S-V) (1967) establishing the Council. Further, the Ambassador attacked the Council for picking on the American companies when employers of other nationalities, with, he claimed, probably worse labor practices, had not been asked to meet with the Council. He did not acknowledge any duties on the part of the US under resolution 310.

Thus the United States has continued to reiterate its verbal support for human rights and self-determination on Southern Africa at the United Nations in 1972. At the same time it consistently opposed all attempts by the majority of the world's nations to initiate actions which would accelerate the struggle for liberation. Defending its stance by a stated abhorrence of violence as a weapon of change, the U.S. chooses to ignore the violence constantly perpetrated against 30 million black people by the white colonial and minority rulers of Southern Africa.