NATIONAL SECURITY STUDY MEMORANDUM 39 AND THE FUTURE OF UNITED STATES POLICY TOWARD SOUTHERN AFRICA

by Edgar Lockwood

For observers of U.S. policy toward Africa, this has been the fall of the "Nissem." Newspaper and magazine articles by Tad Szulc and Jack Anderson, based on the text of National Security Study Memorandum 39 of 1969 (NSSM 39), have popularized an alleged Nixon "tilt" toward Southern Africa's white regimes, stemming from a preference for protection of U.S. economic interests over ideals of democracy and decency. The State Department, embarrassed and flustered by the leak of another secret document, has tried to downplay its significance (calling it merely a preliminary study), and has disclaimed any change in policy.

For some, the revelations contained in NSSM 39 simply confirmed old news. As early as 1970, Ken Owen, the Washington representative of South Africa's Argus news chain, had been summoned to the White House and asked to convey a message to Pretoria via his column: the White House was anxious to improve relations with South Africa and was therefore refraining from condemnation of South Africa's denial of a visa for Arthur Ashe as a sign of a shift in policy. In September 1970, Assistant Secretary of State David Newsom had, in a Chicago speech, signalled South Africa that the U.S. would be prepared to accept license applications for sales of VIP jet planes to South Africa's military, indicating a new flexibility in the U.S. arms embargo. Two years later, Terrence Smith of the New York Times had analyzed the new policy of "dialogue." By early 1973, Chairman Diggs of the House Subcommittee on Africa was openly referring to NSSM 39 as the memorandum that had "launched the so-called communication policy."

What is new of late is that a wide range of people outside the Administration have recently had access to the text of the memorandum itself. The significance of the NSSM lies in the glimpse it affords of Kissinger's realpolitik analysis, undorned by rhetoric and devoid of charisma. The basic considerations and posture there set forth indicate what we can expect between now and at least 1976. A more exact analysis of the document's contents and of the actions flowing from it is thus justified.

In April 1969, Kissinger directed the preparation of a comprehensive review of U.S. policy toward Southern Africa by the National Security Council Interdepartmental Group for Africa—composed primarily of representatives of the State Department, the Department of Defense and the CIA, Treasury, Commerce, Joint Chiefs of Staff, AID and NASA would add their special knowledge. The study was to cover the history and the future of major area problems, U.S. interests and options for strategy and policy. The emphasis was to be on broadening the range of views and presenting alternatives.

In August, the 70-page memorandum was presented to Kissinger. It was then redrafted in ways not affecting most of its substance and presented to the National Security Council on December 9th. The Council's view was that the U.S. should to some degree "straddle" the racial conflict which it saw building—with an emphasis on relaxing previous "arbitrary" limitations on U.S. interests—and should adopt a less moralistic, admonishing tone toward the white states. Kissinger therefore recommended to Nixon in January that the general outlines of "Option 2" of NSSM 39 be followed, and he spelled out what this choice would mean in a number of "Operational Examples."

A careful reading of the five options of NSSM 39 makes it appear probable that Option 2 was favored by most of the participants in the survey. Its rationale was more detailed and its outline better fleshed out than are those of Options 1, 3, 4, and 5. Option 3 is a codification of the policy inherited from the Kennedy and Johnson era, and Options 1, 4, and 5 seem to have been provided for context and intellectual balance. Since all of the options represent varying combinations of U.S. interests, we need to understand what the study defines as these interests.

U.S. interests in Southern Africa are seen as falling into
four categories:

1. Political. Politically conscious Blacks in Africa and elsewhere resent "discrimination" against Blacks by white regimes. To the extent that the United States is seen as a collaborator with, or a tacit supporter of, the white regimes, black states may conclude that this country is racist both abroad and at home. Further, they may threaten U.S. defense installations, deny overflight rights and port facilities, and threaten U.S. economic interests. (At the time of the survey, U.S. trade with and investment in the black states of Africa was roughly 60 percent of all U.S. trade with and investment in the continent.)

2. Economic. The study points out that investments in those African states controlled by Whites are highly profitable, that the balance of trade is favorable to the U.S. (1968: 1.8 to 1), and that South Africa's gold must be marketed in an orderly fashion in order to maintain the two-tier gold system.

3. Defense. The strategic value of the Southern area was seen to be "important" (but not "vital"), especially because of the closing of the Suez Canal and the Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean.

Overflight and landing rights for military aircraft could become important in the event of Indian Ocean "contingencies." South African ports can handle vessels of up to 100,000 tons and 45-foot draft, such as aircraft carriers, while Mozambican and Angolan ports cannot. South Africa's ship repair and logistical facilities possess a level of technical skill not found elsewhere in Africa.

4. Scientific. The NASA space tracking facility in South Africa is seen to be of major value for unmanned spacecraft flights. The Atomic Energy Agreement with South Africa provides leverage to keep South Africa from marketing its rich uranium deposits so as to increase nuclear proliferation.

Since the pursuit and protection of all interests might involve contradiction inter se, a dilemma is presented. Is it possible to construct a policy which will improve U.S. standing with black states on the race issue while protecting our economic, scientific, and strategic interests and opportunities in the white states—simultaneously cooling violence, encouraging white "moderation," and minimizing chances for the USSR and China to gain propaganda and political benefits?

While the foregoing definition of U.S. interests in Southern Africa was agreed upon, the study group disagreed on other major questions: Will violence in opposition to white rule increase? How much damage would pursuit of U.S. tangible interests in white states do to U.S. interests in black states? Can the U.S. have any real influence on the course of events in Southern Africa? Which interests are, ultimately, the more important ones?

Notwithstanding the differences over such points, certain extreme policy options are ruled out in the study. On the one hand, our interests are not sufficiently large to justify U.S. military intervention to protect the white regimes. On the other, we could not endorse the racial or colonial policies of these regimes. Support for the positions of the black states could also go just so far. We would never agree to exclude South Africa or Portugal from the U.N., and we would not vote for economic sanctions against them (this would involve possible military enforcement, which would be politically impossible in the U.S.). Support for liberation movements could go no further than support for their "aspirations" and humanitarian assistance to individuals. Material support is ruled out.

Within these boundaries, what could the United States do?

It could go all out not only to protect, but to increase economic, strategic, and scientific interests in the white-ruled countries—letting the chips fall where they might in the black states—on the ground that the U.S. is incapable of influencing white attitudes and policies anyway, and that the political costs would not be excessive. This is Option 1.

Option 1's polar opposite is Option 4. It says, in effect, let's buddy up to the black states and disassociate from the white regimes to enhance our standing on race, on the ground that violence is inevitable and that giving up our interests in the white states is not too costly because those interests are not vital.

Option 5 carries Option 4 one step further and is in essence a "Curse on Both Your Houses" policy. Racial conflict, which may escalate beyond any rational control or management, should be left to burn itself out without any U.S. intervention on either side.

These options seem constructed primarily as part of an intellectual game. The real work seems to have gone into the two compromise or straddle options, which give promise of deriving the most out of everything. Options 1, 4, and 5 are predicated on the proposition that we cannot influence the white regimes. Options 2 and 3 maintain that we can be instrumental in nudging the South Africans toward "majority rule."

Until 1969, our policy had defined progress toward majority rule in the white states as meaning:

1. "Non-whites" from the U.S. would be free of discrimination on naval shore leave, would participate in exchange programs and have access to non-white areas.

2. Elimination of job reservation, recognition of African trade unions as bargaining agents, abolition of pass laws and repressive police measures, and a qualified franchise.

3. Recognition of United Nations responsibility for Namibia and the cessation of repression there; withdrawal of South African economic and paramilitary support for Rhodesia; generous customs treatment for Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland; and exceptions to apartheid for black sportsmen and businessmen.

Option 2 is built on a new acquiescence in the fundamental permanence and even desirability of South African power. Its key premise is that South Africa is and should be the dominant power in the area and that white rule there (and in the Portuguese colonies) is "here to stay." The outward thrust of South Africa to become accepted as a legitimate African state, to make itself available as a partner in black economic development, and to create a whole nexus of economic interrelationships with the states of the region provides a welcome opportunity for the United States. A closer relationship between South Africa and its black neighbors is seen to be the key to relaxation of tensions in the area, and thus to the protection
of U.S. interests from the risks of instability arising from escalating violence. In order to accomplish this, the U.S. should work to encourage a closer relationship between the black and white states. By urging black states to concentrate on internal economic development, by giving them U.S. aid, and by encouraging South Africa to do the same, Option 2 envisages less support of armed struggle for the liberation of the white-ruled countries on the part of black states which realize that "peace and prosperity" lie in a closer relationship with South Africa. Communist powers will correspondingly lose influence. (It is interesting to note that even in 1969 U.S. policymakers were aware of South Africa's overtures to its black neighbors, and of a response from Zambia and others.)

The authors of the memorandum are cognizant of the political cost of Option 2. We will have to accept "political arrangements short of majority rule": in fact, basic change is ruled out. The pro-Western leaders in the black states would have a tough time justifying relations with the United States. The Communist states would make hay out of the situation. Option 2 envisages less support of armed struggle for the liberation of South Africa and even in Namibia, relaxation of Rhodesian sanctions, and routine use of ports and airfields. Postures toward liberation groups range from public denunciations of their use of violence (Options 1, 2, and 5), to "discreet" contact (Option 3), open contact (Option 4), and open support for their aspirations (Option 4). In no case would material support be given except for assistance to individuals for humanitarian or educational purposes (Option 4).

Let us compare the most important Operational Examples of Option 2 with the actual historical record insofar as we can detect it. This analysis provides the clearest evidence that Option 2 was in fact selected as the basis of the policy implemented by the Nixon Administration.

*"Enforce arms embargo against South Africa but with liberal treatment of equipment which could serve either military or civilian purposes."

While United States aircraft manufacturers have made no known sales of new equipment to the South African military since 1963, there have been substantial engine replacement, repair, and other services provided for seven C-130s sold before 1963, averaging in value $3 million a year from 1968 to 1972. (The average annual value of these services from 1963 to 1968 was $1.8 million.)

The dollar value of sales of U.S. aircraft to South African commercial consignees rose from $23,483,380 in 1967 to $80,485,712 in 1972. Numbers of aircraft sold, however, have fallen, reflecting increases in price, size, and sophistication of equipment. Recently, six large transport L-100s (the new version of the C-130) have been licensed for sale to SAF Air. State Department sources have admitted that they have received reports of the military use of aircraft previously sold to the same company. Based on previous precedent, we can anticipate that restrictions placed on South Africa's use of these planes will not in fact be enforced to prevent their being used for military cargo and troop transport. Furthermore, since restrictions placed on the sale of Boeing 707s to Portugal failed to deter the Portuguese from using the planes for troop transport, there is ground to fear a similarly broad interpretation of "civilian" use in South Africa.

In the first three months of 1973, "non-military" helicopters accounted for $11 million out of $21 million in aircraft sales. In the fall of 1974, press reports indicate that Boeing 747s may soon be assisting South African Airways to overfly the Cape Verde Islands, where SAA lands now, and proceed to England or the United States directly—thus avoiding one consequence of the PAIGC victory in Guinea-Bissau. Of the total amount spent on communications equipment for South Africa during the period 1967-1972, approximately 75 percent falls into two categories: "Electronic navigational aids" and "Communications equipment n.e.c. [not elsewhere classified]" and parts." While sales of navigational aids have doubled in value since the 1967-68 period, "n.e.c." sales have tripled to a 1972 level of $2.5 million. This latter catch-all category, representing 44 percent of all sales of communications equipment in 1972, may be being used to conceal the exact nature of the equipment being sold.

The military significance of these sales is probably a good
deal less than their economic and political value in drawing the United States and South Africa into closer and more harmonious union with each other. At the same time, however, it should be noted that they do permit South Africa’s fledgling aircraft industry to concentrate on military requirements.

- “Permit U.S. naval calls in South Africa with arrangements for non-discrimination toward U.S. personnel in organized activity ashore; authorize routine use of airfields.”

In actual fact, Kissinger recommended that naval calls continue to be limited to emergencies only, but the matter has been reviewed at least once since then. Probably no one wanted a black crew revolt such as occurred on the Kitty Hawk.

U.S. military aircraft do make routine use of two South African Air Force bases, Waterkloof at Pretoria and Ysterplaat at Cape Town, as well as the civil airports of Jan Smuts and Rand in the Transvaal.

- “Retain tracking stations in South Africa as long as required.”

NASA is shutting down one station as no longer required. The other station is still in operation.

- “Remove constraints on Ex-Im Bank facilities for South Africa; actively encourage U.S. exports and facilitate U.S. investment consistent with the Foreign Direct Investment Program.”

In 1970, the Export-Import Bank extended the term of insurance available to finance exports to South Africa from five to ten years. Medium term insurance issued in 1970 and 1971 was more than twice what had been written in the previous four years—a fourfold expansion. Ex-Im, however, has continued its policy of not making direct loans to finance South African purchases.14

While the formal stated policy of the U.S. remains a neutral “We-don’t-encourage-or-discourage” posture, trade and investment statistics compiled by Neva and Ann Seidman (see Appendix) demonstrate that trade and investment have indeed been facilitated and encouraged. By 1973, U.S. investment in South Africa had risen from the 1968 level of 25.8 percent of all U.S. investment on the continent to 30.4 percent. Profits in South Africa had advanced from 17.8 percent of total U.S. profits in Africa to 37.8 percent in 1973. The largest and most significant increases had been in smelting, mining, and petroleum. Equally significant was the increase in South African imports of capital goods, from 30 percent of all imports in 1960 to 45 percent in 1970.15

- “Without changing the U.S. legal position that South African occupancy of South West Africa is illegal, we would play down the issue and encourage accommodation between South Africa and the UN.”

Although the U.S. has continued to maintain that South Africa is de jure illegally occupying Namibia and though it supported a recent UN Security Council resolution calling on South Africa to withdraw from the territory, the U.S. has discouraged stronger measures. For example, the U.S. has thwarted the efficacy of the UN Council on Namibia by its refusal to join the Council on the very ground that it would be ineffective. In respect to prospective business operations in Namibia, the U.S. does issue pro forma letter warnings to the new investor that he is on his own. More meaningful measures have, however, been ruled out. The Treasury Department has ruled that taxes paid by U.S. businesses to South Africa in respect to Namibian operations can be credited against U.S. income taxes. (The ruling could equally well have gone the other way on public policy grounds.) Actual discouragement of investment that has been achieved is due to public shareholder resolutions. One petroleum company did agree this fall not to explore Namibian waters in response to a three-year campaign by a consortium of religious and other public non-profit institutional investors. Judge William Booth, President of the American Committee on Africa, had to fight the caution and discouragement of U.S. diplomatic personnel in South Africa to observe an important political trial in Windhoek.

- “On Rhodesia, retain consulate; gradually relax sanctions (e.g., hardship exceptions for chrome) and consider eventual recognition.”

The U.S. position on its consulate was dependent upon the position taken by Great Britain, the recognized legal authority for Rhodesia. When Great Britain decided in 1970 to withdraw its accreditation from consulates in Rhodesia, the U.S. was forced to close down its diplomatic office.

The U.S. continues not to recognize the Smith regime, as does the rest of the world. In what was widely considered a trial balloon, however, former Nixon campaign manager Clark MacGregor visited Rhodesia in 1972, met with Prime Minister Ian Smith and aired over the Rhodesian broadcasting system his belief that the United States might well recognize Rhodesia in two to four years.

Nixon granted Union Carbide and Foote Mineral exceptions from sanctions to import 207,000 tons of chrome ore for which contracts had allegedly been signed before mandatory sanctions were implemented. The Justice Department has not prosecuted any of the U.S. airlines or travel agencies which for years have routinely and illegally booked passengers on Air Rhodesia.

The Nixon White House failed to support the 1972 congressional effort to repeal the sanctions-breaking Byrd Amendment. The Administration improved its public posture during the 1973-74 repeal effort, but it failed to exert any real pressure for repeal in late 1974. In the face of rumors of possible defeat of the bill, the President backed away from sending a personal letter to key members of Congress to urge their support for the bill, in spite of his public turning in support of the bill and his assurances to the bill’s co-sponsors that he would give them his active support. When push came to shove, the White House took the line that the President could not afford to back a loser, although lobbying from the White House might well have been the decisive factor in the attainment of victory.

- “Conduct selected exchange programs with South Africa in all categories, including military.”

The State Department appears to have gone out of its way to bring or to assist in bringing to the United States large numbers of moderate African and Coloured leaders who can play a role in South African “progress toward majority rule.”
The names of Chief Gatsha Buthleni, John Thorne, David Thebehali, Chief Clemens Kaputa, and Bishop Auala come to mind. Visits by moderate white opposition leaders such as the United Party's Harry Schwartz have been judiciously offset by visits such as that of Nationalist Party Minister of Mines, Immigration, Sport and Recreation, Piet Kornhoof, scheduled for early 1975.

The most significant visits, however, have been those of top-ranking political and military figures of the Nationalist government. In the 1960s, U.S. policy was to limit military contacts to inconspicuous correspondence courses or industrial courses at the War College. In a break with past practice, Kissinger in 1974 overruled Africa Bureau recommendations and permitted "private visits" by South African VIPs on military business. In January 1974, South African Minister of Information Dr. Cornelius Mulder, widely regarded as the likely successor to Prime Minister Vorster when the latter retires, met with Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Vice Admiral Ray Peet, the senior officer responsible for International Security Affairs and the Indian Ocean, as well as with the then-Vice-President, Gerald Ford. In May, the Chief of the South African Defense Forces, Admiral Hugo Biermann, a skilled propagandist for the strategic value of the Cape route, met with Admiral Thomas Moorer, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and with J. W. Middendorf, Acting Secretary of the Navy.

One lasting fruit of Mulder's visit has been the engagement of a firm of Washington lawyers with good Republican credentials to do lobbying for the Ministry of Information, a move which has not endeared him to the South African Embassy, but which may well increase South Africa's ability to tell "its side of the story" on Capitol Hill.

- In regard to the Portuguese territories, "continue arms embargo...but give more liberal treatment to exports of dual purpose equipment...Encourage trade and investment...full Ex-Im facilities."

The number of U.S. aircraft and helicopters sold for use in Mozambique rose spectacularly with the success of FRELIMO's guerrilla war. From a total of $150,000 in 1963-68, sales rose to over $14 million for the period 1969-72. Sales to Angola rose steadily but not so spectacularly from levels of $200,000 to $500,000 in the same periods. In addition, in 1970, Boeing 707s worth $35 million were delivered to Portugal without any restrictions forbidding their use for troop transport. Beginning in 1966, no license applications were turned down. To make transactions easier for the Portuguese, in 1972 and early 1973 aircraft sales to Mozambique were 75 percent assisted by Ex-Im guarantees or financing.

In only ten out of ninety-four cases of export dual-purpose aircraft sales for Portugal, Angola, or Mozambique were license applications referred to foreign service posts in the territories for review of the intended use of the aircraft (to assure that sales were legitimately civilian). Sales of aircraft for Angolan or Mozambican "agricultural spraying" or "crop dusting" were made notwithstanding liberation movement protests against Portuguese defoliation raids and suspiciously large herbicide imports.

Twelve Bell helicopters were sold for "telephone line inspection, harbor supervision, etc." Light aircraft were sold for "air taxi" service.¹⁶

No effective system of monitoring the real or "end" use was devised. Anyone who complained was forced to prove his case to government officials, and only the latter had access to information necessary to prove a case. (Such information was denied to the complainant on grounds of commercial privilege.) Without the name of consignors and consignees and details of bills of lading, the complainant could not make a proper investigation even if the Portuguese had allowed field inspection by issuance of visas.¹⁷

We can conclude that the record of policy actions taken since 1969 conforms to Option 2 and its Operational Examples. The United States has moved perceptibly closer to outright political support for southern Africa's white regimes. Indeed, its veto—with Great Britain and France—of the African states' resolution to exclude South Africa from the United Nations, and Ambassador Scali's attack in December 1974 on "unrealistic" General Assembly actions were public confirmation of what was privately decided long ago. NSSM 39 makes it plain that force, sanctions, and exclusion of South Africa are all "unrealistic," and the United States is not now and never has been prepared to see them used as appropriate measures, even though it is admitted that basic change may not come without them.

The authors of NSSM 39, like most white Americans, have a hard time understanding, evaluating, or appreciating the depth of black hopes and the deep anger felt by Blacks with respect to white minority rule in southern Africa. This lack of comprehension no doubt contributed to the rather bizarre and inaccurate judgments contained in NSSM 39:

- While the study group could not decide whether racial "violence" would escalate, some members argued that only the growth of violence would bring about change of any kind. But the predominant view, distilled in Option 2, declared that violence would not get the Blacks any political rights.

Not only did the State Department refuse to see the possibility of a Portuguese collapse in Mozambique, it steadfastly refused publicly to recognize the reality of PAIGC success in Guinea-Bissau. Until the very end, it kept insisting that this most successful of the liberation groups controlled only one-third of the territory and that a virtually non-existent rival, FLIC, was a contender for power. In 1973, Kissinger had an opportunity to meet Amilcar Cabral, but NSC staff refused to consider such a meeting on grounds that it would give offence to the Portuguese.

- The study does not perceive that the success of the liberation movements might bring tangible benefits to the African people in their movement for growth and self-development. On the contrary, only great power interests are considered. Either the U.S. and its Western European economic partners or rivals, including South Africa, will benefit from and have influence in black states, or the
communist bloc will. Africans remain pawns in the cold war game.

- Option 2 is built on the cynical calculation that black states are easily bought off. The token nature of the increase in U.S. economic assistance (an additional $5 million) was admitted to be too small to be capable of exerting any real leverage. But it was intended to protect U.S. interests in the white states by defusing black militancy with some cheap window dressing.

Aid to Zambia was not to include any defensive weapons, whether sophisticated or unsophisticated, notwithstanding the repeated threats of Rhodesia and South Africa to retaliate against Zambian protection of liberation movements.

- NSSM 39 never confronts the question of how “progress toward majority rule” is actually transformed into majority rule. In fact, the document’s silence on that issue amounts to an admission that Whites will never peacefully surrender more than a qualified franchise. Yet the drafters of this study do not consider any real support for strong measures, even though these might be the only effective means of bringing about real change.

- South Africa’s Bantustans are viewed as unworkable not because of any inherent inequity in allocating 13 percent of South Africa’s land as “homelands” for 70 percent of its population, nor because they are areas devoid of resources and without access via the sea to the outside world. They are viewed as unworkable because South Africa has not invested properly in them.

These misjudgments flow from the same basic political posture which governed U.S. domestic policy on race in the Nixon era. The issue is defined as “discrimination” by Whites against Blacks and not in terms of the need for a restructuring of power arrangements.

The United States was prepared during the Nixon era to put down violence in the streets or on the campus with police power, surveillance, and subversion of radical groups, to promulgate an ideology of order and law, to offer token financial remedies and popular “participation” by “responsible” native elites through local advisory councils, community action programs and the like. While it may be argued that some of the programs at least assisted in organizing the poor and the discriminated against, no programs were assured any real and continued access to material and technical resources or to important political power. Decision-making was reserved for the already powerful.

This analysis, of course, does not preclude the realism which recognizes the advent of new political power when violence succeeds. Now that FRELIMO has won power in Mozambique, U.S. policymakers have done a complete about-face, switching from denying FRELIMO’s importance and reality to promulgating effusive statements of congratulations and offers of assistance. Economic aid will follow: indeed, it has already been appropriated in a minor amount, since aid can provide some leverage to prevent independent Mozambique from taking political steps unacceptable to the U.S. (such as breaking its economic dependence on South Africa or making itself available as a staging ground for guerrilla raids or war on South Africa).

The advent of Gerald Ford has not meant a perceptible change of direction in U.S. policy toward Africa. On the contrary, Secretary Kissinger’s strategy is more firmly fixed than before since Ford does not pretend to have Nixon’s knowledge of foreign affairs. The U.S. effort to balance its closer alliance with the white regimes by defusing black hostilities and obviating militant measures goes on at an accelerated pace. Recent events indicate, if anything, a hardening of the U.S. position.

Press reports credit Donald Easum, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, with helping to pave the way for recent top-level discussions in Lusaka between leaders of southern Africa’s white and black states. Rumors persist that Kenneth Kaunda, Julius Nyerere, and John Vorster have agreed to a detente scheme through which Rhodesia would peacefully move to majority rule in five years, Namibia would receive a carefully safeguarded opportunity for self-determination under at least formal UN auspices, and South Africa would show a willingness to “moderate” its own apartheid system. This arrangement bears a remarkable resemblance to the “progress toward majority rule” outlined in NSSM 39 as the goal of U.S. policy in 1969. The exclusions in the detente arrangement are as significant as the inclusions. NSSM 39 never anticipated self-determination in South Africa, and now Vorster continues to make it clear that he has no intention of allowing substantive changes in apartheid.

Several straws in the wind indicate that Kissinger senses that, having achieved political success with the black states, the U.S. is now free to move toward a harder line to protect and promote U.S. “tangible” interests in the white states.

After less than a year in office, Easum is being relieved of his post, He is reportedly out of favor because of his sympathy for a moderate southern Africa policy. At the end of his recent trip to southern Africa, he publicly stated his conviction that black states were at least as interested in liberation for southern Africa as they were in their own internal economic development. Kissinger has replaced Easum with Nathaniel Davis, whose lack of African experience may make him more sensitive than Easum to U.S. interests. One-time Ambassador to Chile, Davis is credited with having implemented the “destabilization” program which helped to overthrow Allende. Another veteran of Kissinger’s Chile policy, Dean Hinton, has already been named Ambassador to Zaire, whose size, mineral wealth, and political centrality make it a key to developments in neighboring states: Angola, Zambia, and Tanzania. (Hinton was in charge of AID in Chile.)

The U.S. veto of the African initiative to exclude South Africa from the UN and Ambassador Scali’s denunciation of the UN General Assembly for “unrealistic” resolutions coincided with the gradual collapse of the Administration’s support for repeal of the sanctions-breaking Byrd Amendment. These events suggest a trend to dismiss the concerns of the black states and to move toward a more open and forthright promotion of U.S. tangible interests in the white-ruled states of southern Africa.
This trend reflects not only the rising tide of U.S. economic activity in the white states, but also, perhaps, a raised assessment of the strategic importance of South Africa. The Pentagon has convinced a growing number in Congress that the Cape route is vital to the solution of our energy problems and that the Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean and its air surveillance of the Atlantic from Conakry pose threats to U.S. security interests. There are signs that NATO is increasing its interest and contingency planning to include the southern hemisphere, particularly southern Africa. A South African communications base on the Cape exchanges information with the U.S. military on air and ship movements. Now that the British have announced that they intend to pull out of the Simonstown Agreement, the U.S. may decide to fill the vacuum, although France is perhaps a more logical candidate. Clearly, if Mozambican and Angolan ports become unavailable, U.S. destroyers will refuel in South African ports even if this means no liberty on shore for the crew. Further, the growth of the U.S. base on Diego Garcia is bound to strengthen the argument for using South African logistical services in support of the base.

At the same time, as the price of materials and energy increases, the perceived importance of the minerals mined in the white states by cheap labor will also grow. Chrome, ferrochrome, copper, uranium, nickel, and coal (capable of transformation into liquid fuel) are all in abundant supply in South Africa and Rhodesia. U.S. capital investment in these areas of mineral extraction has grown very rapidly in the last five years, far more than in manufacturing.

This analysis does not mean that the U.S. is prepared to intervene militarily on the white side, although it might move to supply South Africa with weapons for "common defense" such as patrol aircraft and anti-submarine warfare equipment. South Africa is much closer to military self-sufficiency now than she was in 1960. Her deficiencies lie primarily in the realm of manpower and political connections and standing. The U.S. cannot supply the former without unacceptable political cost, but the latter we can and have supplied.

NSSM 39 not only built the case for acceptance of South Africa's power and resources; it moves a giant step toward acceptance of the permanence of apartheid itself. It banks on the continuation of the flow of material benefits from the inequities of white oppression. Idolatry of the "tangible" and "realistic" are apparent on every page. Racial discrimination is viewed as a problem in the United States not because it is evil but because Blacks are prepared to cause trouble. By appealing the black states and urging modest improvements on the white states, policymakers hoped in 1969 to strike a delicate balance between pursuit of gain and the appearance of rectitude. At the moment, the balance seems to have been achieved.

What the study ignores is the longer sweep of history, which is ultimately determined by the deeper currents of the human and political struggle. The Bicentennial of the American Revolution reminds us that we have preferred the liberty to pursue individual self-interests, no matter how grossly material, to the preservation of equality for all. This preference for freedom over equality has led to the concentration of economic and political power in the hands of the few. But while we have sacrificed our ideals of equality, we have never entirely forgotten them. Indeed we cannot. They will return to haunt us if the policy of the United States continues to dictate the pursuit of power and wealth as ends in themselves.

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NOTES

4 See David Newsom's testimony in Implementation of the U.S. Arms Embargo, Hearings of the Subcommittee on Africa, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, 93rd Congress, 1st Session, 20 and 22 March and 6 April 1973 at pp. 145 and 159. No actual sales of such aircraft have ever been made and no applications were pending. Newsom evidently intended the speech as a message to South Africa.
7 It should be remembered that U.S. trade and investment in independent Africa is concentrated in relatively few countries and industries. At year end 1967, Libya and Liberia alone represented 27.7 percent of U.S. direct investment in the continent as a whole, while 27.6 percent of exports were concentrated in northern Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Ethiopia). The bulk of U.S. investment in black states since 1963 has been in petroleum production in Libya and Nigeria. (See U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, FT 455 U.S. Exports, 1968, et seq. Survey of Current Business, October 1968.)
5 Ibid., pp. 71 and 68.
8 Implementation of the U.S. Arms Embargo, pp. 132, 144, 44.
6 Apparently, since none of the five options in NSSM 39 dealt with the possibility of successful armed struggle, a sixth option was added, premised on this possibility. The text of this option is not available, but on the basis of conversations with State Department sources, the author does not believe that the option did more than add intellectual breadth to the range of possibilities.
9 Ibid., p. 47.
10 Ibid., pp. 103 and 147. Mr. Newsom: What we are discussing is that area of items of essentially a civilian character which conceivably could be adapted for use in the support of military operations. . . . I do not argue, Mr. Chairman, that these are unimportant to a country's ability to wage war or to maintain internal security. I do argue that in the face of problems in our own aerospace industry, in the
light of balance of payments problems, and in the face of severe competition from others the question of whether restraint shall be put on sale of civilian items because of their possible use in support of a military effort is not an easy one.

11 Ibid., p. 330.
12 Ibid., pp. 45-46.

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TEXT OF OPTION 2 OF NSSM 39

OPTION 2
Secret

Premise:
The whites are here to stay and the only way that constructive change can come about is through them. There is no hope for the blacks to gain the political rights they seek through violence, which will only lead to chaos and increased opportunities for the communities. We can, by selective relaxation of our stance toward the white regime, encourage some modification of their current racial and colonial policies and through more substantial economic assistance to the black states (a total of about $35 million annually in technical assistance to the black states) help to draw the two groups together and exert some influence on both for peaceful change. Our tangible interests are for the welfare of our citizens, and these can be maintained at an acceptable political cost.

General Posture

We would maintain public opposition to racial repression but relax political isolation and economic restrictions on the white states. We would begin with modest indications of this relaxation, broadening the scope of our relations and contacts. We would also some degree of liberal policies. Without openly taking a policy of accepting the current situation in South Africa and the UN, we would be more flexible in our attitudes toward the Smith regime. We would treat Portuguese policies as suggesting further changes in Portuguese territories. At the same time we would undertake some steps to convince the black states of the area that the current liberation and majority rule aspirations in the south are not attainable by violence and that their only hope for a peaceful and prosperous future lies in closer relations with and acceptance of the white-dominated states. We would emphasize our belief that closer relations will help to bring about the desired changes. We would give increased and more tangible economic assistance to black states of the area in the form of technical assistance, development grants, and economic aid. We would encourage the development of black economic and political activity in South Africa.

This option, accepted over a 3 to 5 year period, the prospect of unqualified U.S. influence toward the whites and some opposition from the blacks in order to develop an atmosphere conducive to change in white attitudes through persuasion and example. To encourage this change in white attitudes, we would indicate our willingness to accept political and economic pressure toward majority rule, provided that they assure broadened political participation in decision-making by the whole population.

The various elements of the option would stand as a whole and approval of it would not constitute approval of individual elements out of this context.

Operational Examples:

- Enforce arms embargo against South Africa but with liberal treatment of equipment which could serve either military or civilian purposes.
- Permit U.S. naval calls in South Africa with arrangements for non-discrimination toward U.S. personnel in organized activity ashore; authorize routine use of airfields.
- Retain tracking stations in South Africa as long as required.
- Reopen constraints on EXIM Bank facilities for South Africa; actively encourage U.S. exports and facilitate U.S. investment consistent with the Foreign Direct Investment Program.
- Conduct selected exchange programs with South Africa in all categories, including military.
- Without changing the U.S. legal position that South African occupancy of South West Africa is illegal, we would play down the issue and encourage accommodation between South Africa and the UN.
- On Rhodesia, retain consultative; gradually relax sanctions (e.g., hardship exceptions for chrome) and consider eventual recognition.
- Continue arms embargo on Portuguese territories, but give more liberal treatment to exports of dual purpose equipment.
- Encourage trade and investment in Portuguese territories; full EXIM Bank facilities.
- Establish flexible aid programs in the black states of the region; respond to reasonable requests for purchase of non-strategic equipment and seek no new changes in aid programs.
- Toward African emergent movements take public position that U.S. assistance is of small importance in the region, and seek to move toward greater self-reliance for black states.
- Increase exchange and information activities in both white and black states.

PROS

1. Encourage broadening relations between black states and Zambia's trade and sub regional political contacts with South Africa.
2. Prevents U.S. economic, scientific and strategic interests in the white states and would expand opportunities for trade and investment.
3. Relaxation of the U.S. stance toward South Africa would help in present efforts to modify the foreign policies of black states.
4. U.S. trade and economic aid offer the black states the means of maintaining key economic interests and facilitating stabilization of the region.
5. Encourages careful expatriate and eventual economic linkages among black states.
6. Would reduce a major element in our relations with Portugal, and afford the Congress government opportunity for liberalization.

CONS

1. Relaxation of the U.S. stance towards white states could be taken by the whites as a vindication of their policies. Many black states, led by Zambia and Tanzania, probably would charge us with abandoning our traditional or material interests and tolerating white-regime policies.
2. There is a serious question whether pro-Western leaders of the black states could continue to justify their stance to their populations if the U.S. officially declared its opposition to current liberation efforts. Radical and communist states would be the beneficiaries.
3. Unilateral U.S. relaxation of sanctions against Rhodesia would be a highly visible violation' of our international obligations and would be damaging both to the U.S. and to the UN.
4. The current thrust of South African domestic policy does not involve any basic change in the racial segregation system, which is anathema to the black states. There is virtually no evidence that change might be forthcoming in these South African policies as a result of any approach on our part.
5. Requires extensive diplomatic and economic involvement in a situation in which the solution is extremely long-range and the outcome doubtful at best.
6. It is doubtful that the additional aid contemplated would be sufficiently great to influence the black states in the direction indicated."