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# FRANCE



## Concern About Military Unrest

French army on parade



For the first time since the Algerian war ended almost 15 years ago, discontent in the military has become a topic for grave concern in France. The streams of discontent flow mainly from inadequate military salaries, a failure to define the mission of the army in the defense of Europe, substandard living conditions, and changing social attitudes in France.

France has been particularly sensitive to the political role of the military since 1958 when the army played a significant part in the birth of the 5th Republic. At that time the country was faced with widespread revolt in the army over policy toward Algeria, and de Gaulle's return to power was seen as the only alternative to civil war. Ten years later, when student-labor disorders threatened to topple the government, the French public noted uneasily that President de Gaulle found it necessary to assure himself of the loyalty of the army before taking action. Most recently, French sensitivity has been heightened by the role of the Portuguese military, which has raised the question in French minds of whether the rumblings of discontent in the armed forces are the early warning of an attempt by the military to impose its own solution on France's current social and economic troubles.

During the past six months, the volume of press articles—by generals, journalists, and politicians—has made it impossible for the government to ignore the problem. President Giscard is proceeding cautiously, however, for the issue is a potentially explosive one, and his leftist opposition may have hopes of using it to try to embarrass, or even bring down, the government. At the same time, he is constrained by the high cost of meaningful reforms.



Demonstration at Draguignan

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### An Army, Cut-Rate

Since the Algerian war, Paris has poured money into its *force de dissuasion*—the strategic nuclear deterrent force that allows France to maintain its claim of military “independence.” The high cost has been offset by extremely low salaries in the armed forces, especially for conscripts who are called up at the age of 18 or 19 for 12 months’ service. Their salaries, though recently raised from roughly \$17 to \$50 a month, are still five times less than the French minimum wage. Officers and noncommissioned officers also earn far less than their civilian counterparts.

Eighty-six percent of conscript barracks were built before World War I, and 10 percent date from the Napoleonic wars—“without the honor of being named national monuments.” Another important cause of malaise, particularly among the cadres, is the feeling of being cut off from French society. There is an increasing tendency on the part of the public to question the need for an expensive peacetime army, and the prestige of a military career is at a low ebb. Less than three candidates apply for every vacancy at the principal military academy, compared with 13 at the civil service - oriented National School of Administration. Meanwhile, the proportion of sons from military families who are accepted by the academies or given direct commissions is steadily growing—possibly an indication that the officer corps is feeding on itself, becoming ever more isolated from “outside” society.

### Changing Society

The years of peace that followed France’s disentanglement from its colonial imbroglios and the relaxation produced by detente have reduced the importance of the armed forces in the public’s eye. Government emphasis on the strategic nuclear force has similarly served to make the conventional soldier seem redundant. At the same time, the gulf between the living standards of the

soldier and his civilian friends has widened dramatically.

The changing nature of society is also reflected in the new crop of conscripts, who are better educated and more sophisticated than their predecessors. They are also more politicized—two years ago, they were demonstrating in their high schools against the elimination of student deferments—and they have recently been enfranchised. An increasing number resent having to donate 12 months to the state—especially when that time is often wasted on menial and nonmilitary duties. Finally, the military is confronted with the fundamental problem of enforcing rigid discipline in an increasingly permissive society.

### Military Protests

During the final round of the presidential election last May, a series of demands in the form of an open letter was sent to the two candidates, Giscard and Socialist leader Mitterrand. Originally signed by 100 conscripts and NCOs, the letter became known as the “Call of the 100.” It was later signed—sometimes in a diluted form—by some 2,500 to 4,000 soldiers, including many stationed in West Germany.

The letter called for specific measures to ameliorate compulsory military service:

- free choice of date and place of induction between the ages of 18 and 25;
- right to form trade unions;
- pay equal to the minimum wage;
- free transportation.

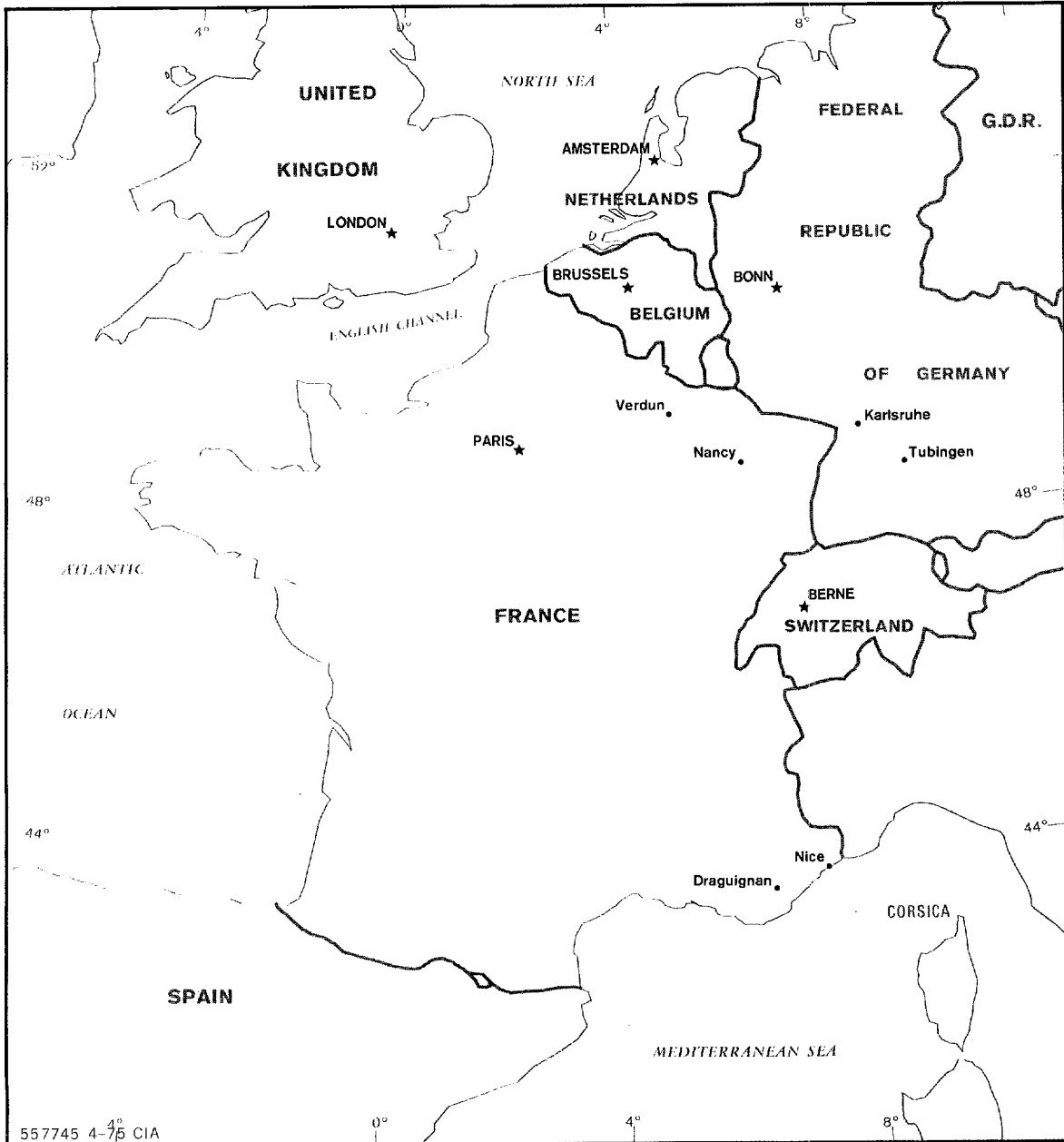
A series of other demands was aimed at loosening the bonds of military protocol; eliminating military security, tribunals, and sanctions; and terminating conscript service outside of France.

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**Sites of Conscript Demonstrations**



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This document may well represent the most serious challenge to French military institutions since the early years of the 5th Republic. The "Call of the 100" has become the manifesto of the draftee demonstrations that have taken place since last September in several French and West German cities.

The 200 draftees who broke out of their barracks last September 10 to march down the streets of Draguignan in southern France set a precedent for revolt against the previous system of protesting through proper military channels. Driven by what the French media has dubbed *le phenomene ras le bol*—military slang for "fed up to the back teeth"—they chanted slogans against army conditions and raised their fists in the salute of the extreme leftists. Among them were 30 blacks from France's overseas departments who also protested against racial discrimination in the barracks. The demonstration was orderly and ended without incident, but the chain reaction it set off is still rocking the French military establishment.

The Draguignan protest was quickly followed by incidents of insubordination in a battalion stationed in nearby Nice, and by a joint letter to the defense minister from 200 draftees and noncommissioned officers in Paris requesting a variety of reforms in line with the "Call of the 100."

On January 13, some 100 draftees assigned to units in Karlsruhe, West Germany, demonstrated against the living and working conditions in Germany. They also questioned the need for stationing French troops in Germany—the first time a political factor raised by the "Call of the 100" had been used in a demonstration. Two weeks later, another garrison in West Germany was affected when some 80 draftees in Tuebingen protested disciplinary actions taken against fellow conscripts.

In mid-February, about 150 draftees demonstrated in the streets of Verdun, demanding a civilian inquiry into the accidental death of a conscript. A day later, some 100 draftees met in

Nancy for a clandestine press conference with the leader of the Young Communists.

The demonstrations so far have all been orderly. They have not attacked the concept of compulsory military service, but have concentrated on demands for more pay, better living conditions, and fewer restrictions.

### Influence of the Left

The military leadership has blamed leftist agitation for the unrest in the barracks. This charge was emphasized by Prime Minister Chirac during his trip to Moscow last month, when he accused the French Communist Party of undermining national defenses. In fact, there is no evidence to support the contention that the party is behind the military malaise. The Communists and the Socialists have not taken a firm stand on defense issues. Extreme leftist splinter groups, however, have been active among the military.

The anti-militarist image formerly associated with the left in France has become an embarrassment for the Socialist Party. In a confidential note last January, Socialist chief Mitterrand warned his party members not to associate themselves with purely anti-militarist demonstrations "which could only rebound to hurt the left." One of the reasons for the Socialist change of heart is reflected in polls showing that over 50 percent of the military officers and NCOs voted for Mitterrand in the last presidential election. Nevertheless, Socialist action has been limited to issuing a 20-point program aimed at improving material conditions and morale in the barracks.

The Communist propaganda efforts that are aimed at the armed forces appear to be primarily defensive—to ensure that the army will not interfere should a leftist government come to power. But the Communists are also worried about being "passed on the left" by extremists active among the armed forces. The French Communists' propaganda tries to counter the appeal of more radical leftist groups by building strict discipline among the party's military members and by emphasizing the necessity for wide-ranging reforms. Many Communist draftees signed the

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**General Marcel Bigeard**

"Call of the 100" but they have steered clear of radical "soldiers' committees" and have not been conspicuous in the demonstrations. As the new secretary of state for defense, General Bigeard, recently remarked, "Communist soldiers are always well behaved and disciplined. If one day there were a Communist defense ministry, there would be no more street marches."

There is some evidence that the Young Communists are stepping up their activities in an effort to avoid being left in the dust of radical left splinter groups. The draftee demonstration and news conference in Nancy in mid-February was "sponsored" by the leader of the Young Communists. Defense Minister Bourges, who has seized every opportunity to blame the Communists for the military troubles, immediately denounced the party as the instigator of the demonstration.

The Socialist "National Convention of Reserve Cadres for the New Army" and the Communist "Federation of Officers and NCOs of the Republican Reserve" compete to enroll members of the officer corps. To date, their influence has been small and has been confined largely to lower ranking reserve NCOs. Senior NCOs and officers, who consider themselves members of professional cadres and identify with the French bourgeoisie, so far have not been as susceptible as the draftees to the proletarian solidarity approach of the left.

### Soldiers' Committees

[redacted] link the formation of soldiers' committees to the presence of soldiers belonging to the Trotskyite Communist Revolutionary League (formerly the Communist Revolutionary Front), the Marxist Revolutionary Alliance, the Anti-militarist Committee, and other leftist splinter groups. Security crack-downs and the splitting up of groups of known sympathizers had severely curtailed the activities of these organizations until the "Call of the 100"—which embodied many of the demands made by the soldiers' committees—gave the movement new impetus.

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France's most respected newspaper, *Le Monde*, conducted a survey among soldiers in late January. The newspaper concluded that the Trotskyite Revolutionary League was heavily involved in focusing the attention of draftees on "legitimate grievances," thereby drawing the draftees into soldiers' committees. Soldiers interviewed pointed out that even though one of the three leaders of the initial demonstration at Draguignan was connected with the Trotskyites, he had not hidden this fact. The soldiers emphasized, however, that even though some of the demonstrations may have been "encouraged" by Trotskyites it would be a grave mistake to assume that draftees' grievances were contrived.

### Government Response Sluggish

In early December a report on army morale prepared by the army's then chief of staff, Alain de Boissieu, was leaked to the press. His report was apparently initiated as a result of the

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incident at Draguignan. De Boissieu urged that conditions in the military be improved and suggested a revision of missions to adapt the French army to its financial means. According to *Le Monde*, the memorandum conceded that morale had become a serious problem and even intimated that, should French society suffer another upheaval like that of May 1968, the army might not escape involvement. The words "May 1968," and the specter of army involvement in a student-labor confrontation with the government, evoked a strong negative emotional response from the French public.

The Council of Defense met on December 18 and announced that the basic statute governing officers and NCOs would be studied and revised. The new laws would provide for quicker promotion and would encourage younger cadres. The results of the study, incorporating suggestions made by all ranks of officers, were submitted to the defense minister in early April and will be hammered into a new statute to go before the Council of Defense. The report calls for the division of all officer grades into three groups—junior officers up to captains, commandants up to lieutenant colonels, and colonels and above—within which promotion would be automatic. An age limit would be established for promotion into these major "groups." Military purists in France are already decrying the new proposals as a minor revolution that will create a whole category of short-term officers, changing the army from a way of life to a vocation.

In early January, the military trial of one black and two white leaders of the demonstration at Draguignan once again focused public attention on conscript grievances. Thousands of leftist civilians demonstrated in Paris and Marseilles in support of the defendants, and the Socialist and Communist parties declared their solidarity with the draftees. The black draftee was acquitted—"proving there is no racial prejudice in the army," as one French news magazine drily remarked—and the other two received token sentences. The verdicts were lenient enough to deter strong reactions, but on the whole the army suffered from the exposure given to anti-militarist propaganda.



French draftees in Karlsruhe barracks

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At the end of January, Giscard replaced Defense Minister Soufflet, who had not been effective and, moreover, was identified in the public mind with the government's inadequate response to military discontent. Yvon Bourges, a dynamic civil servant and staunch Gaullist, became the new minister. Giscard also filled the vacant secretary of state for defense slot by appointing a colorful and controversial paratroop general, Marcel Bigeard.

Bigeard will be a key figure in the government's attempt to cope with the military. He may well be the best man for shaking the army out of its torpor. Bigeard rose through the ranks and survived the bloodiest fighting of the French colonial wars to become one of France's most decorated soldiers. Though worshipped by the men in his command, he is regarded with some suspicion by the high command because of his unorthodox methods and his well-publicized irreverence for other generals.

The first indication that Bourges and Bigeard were coming to grips with the military problem came on March 4 when the cabinet announced several new measures aimed at improving morale in the armed forces. Among these, conscripts were to be allotted one free trip home per month, and their pay was tripled to 210 francs (about \$50)—still one of the lowest salaries in NATO. Bourges has also opted to retain the Permanent Military Service Council set up by Soufflet shortly before his resignation. The council—composed of military, parliamentary, and private members—is empowered to investigate and report on all aspects of military service. Bigeard has called for a more flexible code of discipline, but no action has yet been taken.

Giscard has promised further reforms and has emphasized the necessity for reintegrating the military into the mainstream of French life. In his March "fireside chat" to the nation, he also stressed the importance of the conventional forces. Drawing attention to the explosive nature of world crises today, he called for a more mobile and flexible army capable of defending French interests anywhere in the world at a moment's notice.

### Meaningful Reforms Expensive

In the current economic climate it will be very difficult to expand the military budget. Prime Minister Chirac supports the Defense Ministry's appeal for more funds, [redacted]

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Barring a real increase in funds for the defense budget, further increases in personnel expenditures will have to come at the expense of weapons development and procurement, or through reduced combat preparedness standards. Already, the completion of a third group of IRBM silos has reportedly been canceled for budgetary reasons, and the air force has been forced to reduce both flying time and the number of bases for its strategic bomber force.

Alternatively, Paris may choose to reduce the size of its forces in order to arrest the rising imbalance between personnel costs and force development and readiness. The US embassy reports that Paris is already asking itself if it can continue to afford a half-million-man defense force. US officials indicate that increasing personnel costs, coupled with the absence of a shooting war, could compel Giscard's government to reduce the armed forces to 300,000 or 400,000 men.

The most likely political solution in the short term is a program of conventional "reforms" designed to make the existing system more palatable. In the long term, however, France will have to come to grips with the basic question of whether to increase defense spending or accept a reduced role as a world power.

Meanwhile, the demonstrations will continue, and the military, especially the lower ranks, will remain a fertile field for leftist exploitation. Unless the promised "further reforms" come quickly, the conscripts could become more disorderly. Officers and senior NCOs, however, remain firmly committed to the existing system, and there does not appear to be any imminent danger of the French military pushing for a voice in French politics or participating to any significant degree in a major civil disturbance. [redacted]

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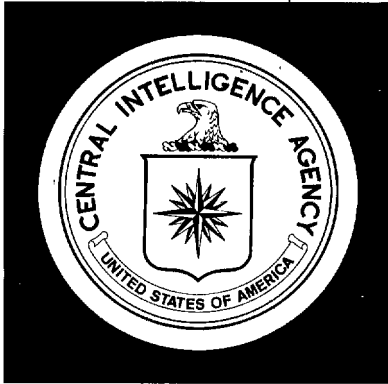
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# Weekly Summary

## Special Report

*New Challenges for South Africa*

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April 25, 1975

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## **NEW CHALLENGES FOR SOUTH AFRICA**



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Since the coup in Portugal a year ago led Lisbon to decide to give up its African colonies, the South African government has faced new problems and opportunities in its dealings with black Africans. In an address to the South African Senate six months ago, Prime Minister Vorster said the black African states and South Africa had come to a crossroads between constructive cooperation and violent conflict. He promised financial and technical aid to any African country that would agree to co-exist on a basis of mutual nonintervention in domestic affairs. Vorster said his government was anxious to maintain South Africa's economic ties with Mozambique after it became independent, to participate in efforts to resolve the Rhodesian problem, and to prepare the people of Namibia (South-West Africa) for self-determination.

Three days after Vorster's speech, Zambian President Kaunda welcomed this "voice of reason." Kaunda said the time might be ripe for constructive cooperation since South Africa's ties with Portuguese colonialism had been dissolved. Kaunda placed priority on resolving the Rhodesian problem, and proposed South Africa start the process by withdrawing its military support for the Smith regime. Zambia, he said, would welcome progress toward self-determination in Namibia, provided it led to the independence of the territory as a unified state. In recognition of the entrenched white-controlled system in South Africa, Kaunda's comments about change there were less specific.

### **A Quandary in Rhodesia**

Lisbon, Pretoria, and Salisbury had long shared a common interest in keeping the bulk of southern Africa under white rule. To the black Africans, this was an "unholy alliance," but it had always been more apparent than real. Solid collaboration had been inhibited by mutual distrust as well as by different approaches to their common racial problem. Portuguese and Rhodesian officials feared South African predominance in any joint venture, while Rhodesians and South Africans shared a basic contempt for Portuguese counterinsurgency capabilities.

A month after the Portuguese coup, Rhodesian Prime Minister Smith visited Vorster to

discuss the effect of an early grant of independence to Mozambique. Their joint press conference after the talks made it appear that they saw eye to eye and that both would welcome an independent black government in Mozambique, provided it was stable and maintained constructive relations with Rhodesia and South Africa.

Smith and Vorster drew different inferences from such a take-over. Vorster recognized, as Smith did not, that a black government in Mozambique would nullify South Africa's strategic interest in maintaining white control of Rhodesia. Smith's break with Britain in 1965 had posed diplomatic problems for Pretoria; the South Africans, for example, never officially recognized the breakaway regime: They did

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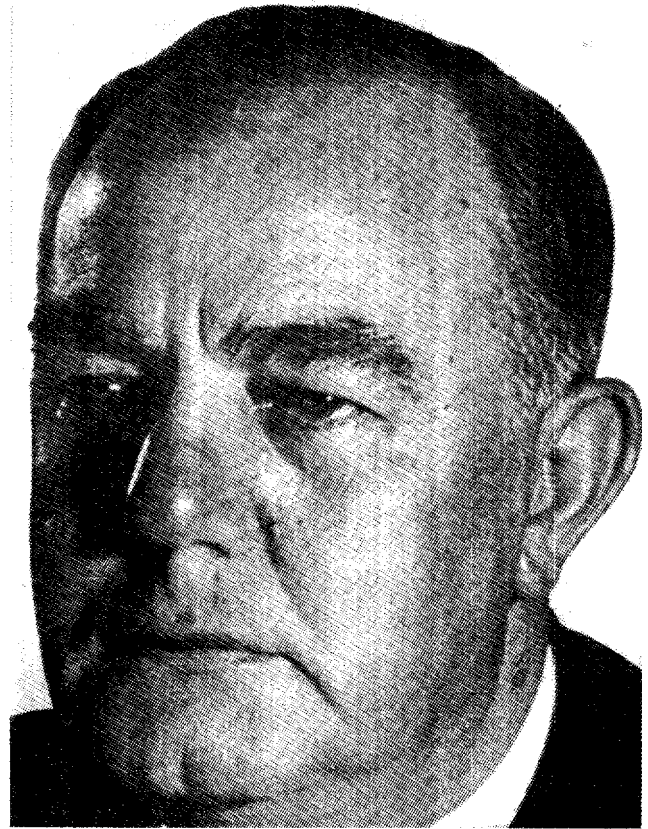
provide discreet economic, financial, and military support to Smith because a white-ruled Rhodesia was regarded as a buffer against black insurgents who might operate against South Africa from Zambia or Tanzania. A black government in Mozambique would, however, permit such insurgents to outflank Rhodesia.

Both Smith and Vorster understand that a hostile government in Mozambique may block Rhodesian or South African trade that now flows through Mozambican ports. Vorster perceives that Rhodesia is much more vulnerable to these dangers than South Africa. Loss of access to Mozambique's seaports would be a crippling blow for the Smith regime, but merely a temporary setback to the South Africans. The bulk of Rhodesia's overseas trade flows through Beira and Lourenco Marques, and rerouting through South African ports would be prohibitively expensive. Lourenco Marques, however, handles only one fourth of South Africa's overseas trade, mostly from the Transvaal mining and industrial area. A new South African port is scheduled to open in 1976 that will further reduce the present importance of Lourenco Marques to South Africa.

#### **Black Insurgency**

Mozambican support for insurgency, a remote contingency for Pretoria, is a present danger for Salisbury. The Rhodesian guerrillas who have been active in northeastern Rhodesia since late 1972 infiltrated through Mozambique from bases in Zambia and Tanzania. The Front for the Liberation of Mozambique has held out hopes to the Rhodesian insurgents that, after Mozambique becomes independent, they may extend their infiltration routes along Rhodesia's entire eastern border with Mozambique. Smith's security forces, dependent on a limited pool of white reservists, could not expand sufficiently to cope with a major increase in guerrilla operations.

Last June, the prospect of early independence for Mozambique apparently encouraged the leaders of the African National Council, the largest black political organization in Rhodesia, to reject Smith's proposals for a constitutional settlement. Smith had offered to broaden the



**Vorster**

franchise gradually for Rhodesian blacks, who outnumber whites 20 to 1, but in a way that would have kept them from gaining a majority in Parliament for at least 40 years.

Smith countered with an election in which his party won all 50 of the parliamentary seats allocated to whites. Black candidates who supported the council's rejection of the Smith proposals won 7 of the 8 seats allocated to the some 7,000 blacks who are allowed to vote.

#### **The Zambian Factor**

Zambian President Kaunda is a man with a strong preference for peaceful rather than violent change, and a Rhodesian settlement has become

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for him a matter of increasing urgency. Zambia has not been able to offset the economic cost of its boycott of the Smith regime since Salisbury's break with Britain. Even the Tan-Zam railroad, when it is completed next year, will not fully compensate for the stoppage of Zambian shipments over Rhodesian rail lines to Indian Ocean ports in Mozambique; port congestion in Tanzania will still delay Zambian shipments.

The mutual interest of South Africa and Zambia in a Rhodesian settlement brought Vorster and Kaunda together last October to seek a way to end guerrilla warfare and reopen settlement negotiations. From then on, the mediation effort has grown to involve Tanzanian President Nyerere, President Khama of Botswana, and Samora Machel, head of the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique.

Since November, Kaunda, Nyerere, Khama, and Machel have met repeatedly with the rival Rhodesian nationalist groups, while Vorster has kept in close touch with Kaunda and Smith. The combination of sustained pressures—Vorster on Smith, and the four black mediators on the Rhodesian nationalists—has brought progress toward a negotiated settlement:

- In December three Rhodesian insurgent groups merged with the non-insurgent African National Council.
- A few days later Smith and the leaders of the enlarged council agreed to a truce.
- In early February, Smith began meeting with the council leaders to try to arrange for the constitutional conference that was called for in the truce agreement.

In order to force both sides to observe the cease-fire, the black African mediators have scaled down their support for the Rhodesian insurgents, and Vorster has cut back his support for Smith's counterinsurgency teams. The black mediators told Rhodesian insurgent leaders, who wanted to retain control of their individual guerrilla forces, that all future aid would go to a newly unified command structure.

### Implications for Pretoria

While Vorster has pushed—and pushed hard—for Smith to come to terms with Rhodesia's blacks on early majority rule, he has no intention of allowing majority rule in South Africa. Most South Africans, including Vorster, concede that racial discrimination exists in their country, but they have also convinced themselves that apartheid, when perfected, will eliminate the most galling aspects of discrimination.

In the South African view, the Rhodesian situation is quite different from theirs; when the white Rhodesians rejected the South African course—apartheid—many years ago, they made a multiracial society inevitable. The South Africans believe that Salisbury must, as a result, either move toward majority rule at a pace that satisfies Rhodesian blacks or face a dangerous insurgency supported more actively than before by neighboring black African governments.

The Smith government, in an effort to make sure that South Africa does not desert white Rhodesia, has maintained contacts with right wingers in Vorster's Nationalist Party who share Salisbury's views. Nevertheless, the efforts of the right wingers to bring Vorster to view the cause of Rhodesian whites as identical with that of South African whites have been unsuccessful.

### A Challenge on Namibia

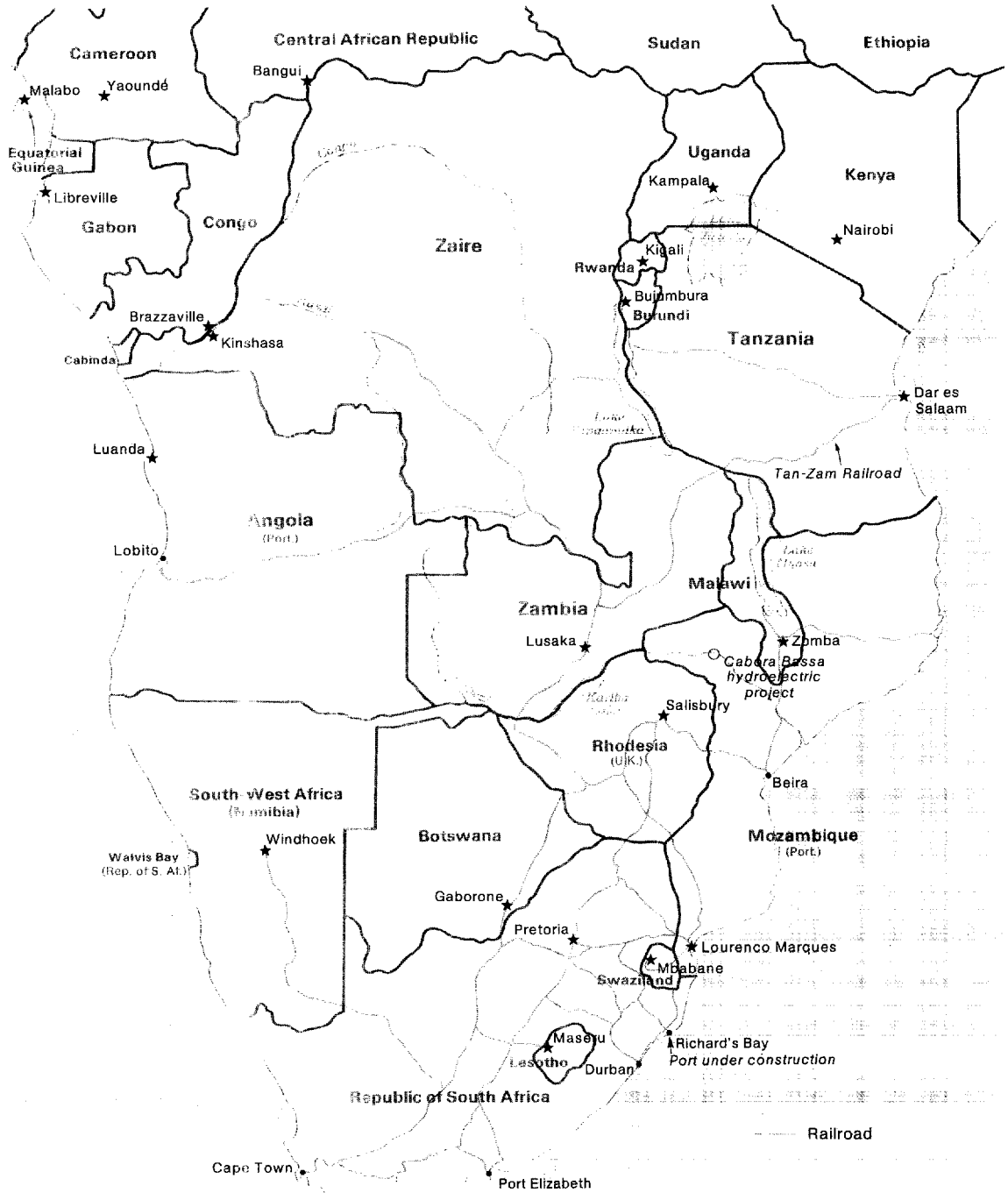
The loosening of Portugal's grip on the reins in Angola has serious implications for Pretoria's ability to deal with any unrest that might develop in Namibia (South-West Africa).

Dissident Ovambo tribesmen, who inhabit northern Namibia adjacent to the Angolan border, found that Portuguese security forces in Angola, after the coup in Lisbon, were no longer apprehending refugees and handing them over to South African police. By mid-1974, an Ovambo exodus to Angola was under way, and a large number of the refugees moved on to Zambia, where some 3,000 now live in refugee camps.

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Some of the Namibian refugees in Zambia are said to have joined the insurgent South-West African People's Organization, which has maintained a headquarters in Zambia since its paramilitary structure in Namibia was destroyed by Pretoria in 1966. The membership of the organization is limited almost exclusively to the Ovambo tribe, the largest of 11 non-white groups in Namibia. Although militarily ineffectual, the group challenges Pretoria's control of the territory, advocating independence for Namibia as a unified state. It is the only Namibian political group to have gained support from the Organization of African Unity and several UN bodies.

In August 1973, agents of the South-West Africa People's Organization initiated an effective boycott of Ovamboland's first popular election to select a legislative council. Only 3 percent of the eligible voters turned out. Despite this warning, the South African government continued to back the territory's traditional tribal leaders and to suppress the dissident organization. Last September, however, the branch of South Africa's ruling National Party in the territory announced that it would eventually hold multiracial talks on the future of the territory and called on all non-white ethnic groups to choose spokesmen for the talks.

#### Keeping a Promise

Subsequently, Pretoria announced that a new election would be held in January 1975 for the Ovamboland legislative council, and that the People's Organization would be permitted to participate. The new election seems to be intended as a first step toward selecting genuinely representative Ovambo spokesmen for multiracial talks. Vorster apparently had decided to move toward eventual self-determination for the whole of Namibia, as he promised UN Secretary General Waldheim in early 1973.

Vorster's concept of self-determination does not, however, anticipate the independence of Namibia as a unified state, despite successive UN resolutions to this effect. Vorster's preparations for self-determination still resemble, in fact, the National Party's blueprint for the separate development of the major tribal groups within South Africa itself. He has implied that Namibia might

become independent as a federation of separate homelands for each ethnic group. Under such a scheme, the white residents would have direct control of the southern part of Namibia, where the territory's most valuable mineral resources are situated, and possibly retain indirect control of the whole federation.

Because the Ovambos make up roughly half of the territory's non-white population, the smaller tribes, who already fear Ovambo domination, might be induced to support the whites against the Ovambos. In the event that the Ovambos choose to stay out of a federation, the 90,000 white residents of the territory would be the largest of the remaining ethnic groups. Furthermore, an independent Ovambo state may be regarded in Pretoria as a useful buffer between the federation and a possibly unfriendly, independent Angola.

#### Zambian Involvement in Namibia

Zambian President Kaunda, who clearly shares Vorster's desire for political solutions instead of violent conflict, has long feared South African military reprisals for Zambian support of guerrilla strikes into Rhodesia or Namibia. Kaunda is, for example, convinced of Pretoria's complicity in laying the land mines that have occasionally exploded in Zambian territory adjacent to Namibia and Rhodesia.

It is unlikely that Kaunda or the other Africans who have been involved in the Rhodesian mediation efforts would explicitly disavow the UN call for independence of Namibia as a unified state or the OAU policy of supporting the liberation struggle of the South-West African People's Organization. Vorster might at least succeed, however, in dissuading the black leaders from stepping up support for Namibian insurgents. He might argue that the Rhodesian truce is a valid precedent for Namibia, because it was accepted by both sides before agreement on constitutional terms was reached.

#### Divide and Conquer

Vorster's senate speech last October suggests that he will attempt to turn any discussions from

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political issues to the mutual advantages of economic cooperation, highlighting the economic and technical aid that South Africa is prepared to extend to black Africa.

Vorster probably has no illusion that the UN will come around to approving his version of self-determination by May 30, 1975, the latest deadline set by the Security Council for South Africa to relinquish control of Namibia. More likely, Vorster has decided to gamble that lifting some of the hitherto tight restraints on political expression in Namibia will foster tribalism instead of nationalism. If a program leading to autonomy or independence for each ethnic group actually mollifies Namibians who resent white rule, Vorster can well withstand international criticism.

If such is Vorster's game, he may have been encouraged by the outcome of the second popular election in Ovamboland last January. Although the South-West African People's Organization again called for a boycott, 55 percent of the 120,000 eligible voters went to the polls, an impressive gain over the 3 percent of the first election. Although opposition candidates were allowed to run, the traditional tribal leaders who are responsive to Pretoria were re-elected.

Although the election results may indicate the organization's support inside Namibia is waning, Namibian guerrilla bands based abroad have gained recruits from the recent exodus of Ovambo tribesmen and may step up their incursions into Ovamboland.

### A Test in Mozambique

Since the coup in Portugal, South Africa has officially maintained that Pretoria will neither interfere with black governments that emerge in the two territories nor tolerate foreign meddling in South African affairs. The "non-interference" doctrine was put to the test last September after Lisbon came to terms with the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique and gave it the dominant place in a transitional government. When disgruntled whites in Lourenco Marques attempted to seize power, the South African foreign minister promptly declared Pretoria's readiness to cooperate with the transitional government and warned South Africans not to join mercenary bands that were said to be preparing to support the white dissidents.

A large portion of Mozambique's revenue is derived from port and rail earnings on South African trade and from the remittances of some 100,000 Mozambicans who work in South African mines. South Africans also anticipate that completion of the huge Cabora Bassa hydroelectric project will strengthen their economic leverage over an independent but impoverished Mozambique. South Africa is the only possible big consumer of power from the dam, but over the short term it could also do without.

Thus far, the Mozambique nationalist leaders seem willing to cooperate with Pretoria, but they are likely to stop short of diplomatic ties.



Khama

Nyerere

Vorster

Machel

Kaunda

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### Vorster Seeks New Dialogues

Vorster apparently hopes he can parlay his quiet collaboration with the four black leaders on Rhodesia into an open and continuing association. He also wants his work on a Rhodesian settlement to smooth the way toward a general normalization of relations between South Africa and the black African states. Although Pretoria has sought for a decade to establish diplomatic relations with OAU members, only Malawi has an embassy in Pretoria. Vorster's earlier attempts to initiate dialogues with black African leaders were rebuffed by an OAU summit resolution in 1971 that condemned any diplomatic contact unless Pretoria modified its racial policies.

Since Vorster assumed a mediator role in Rhodesia, however, he has pursued new dialogues, approaching several West African leaders. In September 1974, Vorster visited Ivory Coast to meet with President Houphouet-Boigny and Senegalese President Senghor. Last February, he made another quick trip to Liberia and met with President Tolbert.

Although both trips were secret, the South African press made reference to the meetings with Houphouet-Boigny and Senghor two months afterward; Vorster and Tolbert publicized their meeting within a week.

### Vorster Explains

According to Tolbert, Vorster asked for the visit in order to give his views on the problems that stood in the way of black African leaders who might accept his offer of a dialogue. During their talks:

- Vorster promised that the South African police in Rhodesia would be withdrawn as soon as guerrilla terrorism ceased, noting that he favored a compromise settlement.
- Vorster accepted Tolbert's stipulations that the whole of Namibia should be independent and that Pretoria should set forth a definite program and target date for independence.

- In response to Tolbert's statement that racial problems within South Africa must be resolved on a basis of equality, Vorster said that the policy of separate development was designed to provide independence for blacks in their own homelands and that he was striving for a gradual removal of admitted racial injustices.

Back in South Africa, Vorster has been telling audiences that he is indeed seeking to normalize relations with the other African states, but that he has no intention of abandoning apartheid.

### Vorster's Apparent Strategy

Vorster apparently assumes that black African leaders are grasping at straws to justify profitable dealings with South Africa, a view that may be the thread binding his current activities together:

- The withdrawal of South African police from Rhodesia would fulfill Vorster's most immediate promise to Tolbert and thereby might sustain expectations from some Africans that Vorster intends to follow through with more difficult reforms in Namibia and South Africa proper.
- An eventual grant of independence to Namibia as a federation of autonomous homelands would, at least superficially, reconcile Vorster's promises to his white constituents and to Tolbert.
- Vorster's periodic meetings with South Africa's black Bantustan leaders can be used to turn aside the challenge from the OAU to maintain a dialogue with South African blacks, yet the concessions he has made to them thus far have been so minor that white South Africans have not become apprehensive.
- The opening of a government-sponsored theater in Cape Town to mixed audiences in February was prompted by Vorster as part of

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his reported plans to desegregate some public facilities without dismantling the basic structure of apartheid.

### A New Rebuff from the OAU

The aftermath of Vorster's meeting with the Liberian President may make him revise his strategy. Although Vorster's explanations of his policies convinced Tolbert that he should consult with other OAU members in order to determine their views, the OAU foreign ministers criticized the meeting when they met in Addis Ababa last February. Some also criticized Kaunda, Nyerere, and Khama for working with Vorster to bring about a Rhodesian settlement outside the framework of the OAU.

The debate at Addis Ababa led to a resolution calling for an extraordinary foreign ministers' meeting in April in Dar es Salaam to discuss a coordinated reaction toward Vorster's detente policy. This meeting, held last week, concluded with a declaration that approves negotiations with South Africa designed to bring about majority rule in Rhodesia and independence for Namibia.

The latest declaration went on, however, to call upon member states to help southern African nationalists prepare for intensified guerrilla warfare if their goals cannot be attained through negotiations. It also calls for a tightening of the boycott against South Africa until it ends apartheid.

The declaration is a significant gain for the black African leaders who have cooperated with Vorster in pushing the Rhodesian nationalists and Prime Minister Smith toward a negotiated constitutional settlement. Nevertheless, Nyerere had to formulate the new boycott measures in order to counteract calls for a repudiation of efforts to mediate the Rhodesian conflict.

### Outlook

A Rhodesian settlement that provides for a peaceful transfer of power to the black majority might pave the way for constructive relations between South Africa and a few moderate black African states. Vorster's dramatic turnabout—from militarily backing a white supremacist

regime in Rhodesia to helping arrange its demise—will make it psychologically easier for black African leaders to meet him openly and discuss sensitive issues. It is unlikely, however, that Vorster's contributions toward a Rhodesian settlement will yield international tolerance for his concept of separate development in Namibia or in South Africa proper.

The OAU would probably condemn a member state if it tried to open diplomatic relations with Pretoria in return for economic assistance. Nevertheless, an end of UN sanctions against Rhodesia would open the way for economic integration throughout southern Africa.

Vorster went ahead with his initial meetings with the three West African presidents before he was sure a Rhodesian settlement could be concluded. His domestic political situation hardly required diplomatic triumphs, and his party has a comfortable majority in parliament. Possibly, Vorster hoped that his meetings with the leaders of other OAU states would reduce pressures on the presidents of Zambia, Tanzania, and Botswana while they were involved with him concerning the Rhodesian problem. Possibly, also, Vorster assumed that a satisfactory Rhodesian settlement would be in sight by the time his meetings surfaced in the press. Such a favorable outcome still seemed likely in early February when Vorster visited Liberia.

Recent events in Rhodesia, however, show that Smith will not easily go along with Vorster's plans, and the Rhodesian situation remains at an impasse. Vorster apparently had hoped the meager concessions that Smith had made to Rhodesian nationalists at his behest would soften the OAU boycott of South Africa. The declaration issued by the African foreign ministers at Dar es Salaam proved otherwise.

Of all the players in the Rhodesian game, Vorster seems to have the highest stakes on the table. He has depicted a Rhodesian settlement as the first step toward a solution of Pretoria's Namibia problem and toward full acceptance of South Africa by the black states of Africa. Unless settlement negotiations are salvaged soon, Vorster's further goals may fade from sight.

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