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Probable Developments Following the UN General Assembly Resolution to Terminate the South-West Africa Mandate

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PROBABLE DEVELOPMENTS FOLLOWING THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION TO TER- MINATE THE SOUTH-WEST AFRICA MANDATE

THE PROBLEM

To estimate probable developments, particularly reactions of key countries, following the recent UN General Assembly resolution terminating South Africa's mandate in South-West Africa and placing the territory under direct UN responsibility.


SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A. The October 1966 UN General Assembly resolution ending South Africa's mandate in South-West Africa and placing the territory under direct UN responsibility has set the stage for a confrontation between the UN and South Africa. Talks through diplomatic channels may produce some new South African proposals, perhaps leading to a plan by which Pretoria would continue to administer the territory under UN supervision. But it is highly unlikely that the South Africans will agree to give up administration of the territory or to accept UN supervision of its administration.¹ We believe the African states will settle for nothing less than the ouster of South Africa from South-West Africa. (*Paras. 1-2, 9*)

B. We believe it unlikely that the Security Council would adopt mandatory economic or military sanctions against South Africa. Even if the Security Council did adopt mandatory economic sanctions, it is unlikely that all important countries would effectively enforce the measure. If all South Africa's major trading partners cooperated in

¹ Mr. Thomas L. Hughes, The Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, believes that it is possible that the South Africans might accept some degree of UN supervision over their administration of South-West Africa, although he agrees that the chances are against such an arrangement.





applying economic sanctions over a protracted period, this might bring some modification in South African attitudes. But in this case, we think it more likely that the South Africans would become even more intransigent. (*Paras. 11-17, 21-24*)

C. We further believe that any attempt forcibly to dislodge South Africa's hold on South-West Africa would require a major military effort, even if backed by a Security Council resolution or by a "Uniting for Peace" resolution of the General Assembly. It is virtually certain that none of the major European powers, including the USSR, would provide sufficient financial or military force to oust South Africa from South-West Africa. (*Paras. 25-26*)



DISCUSSION

I. THE SOUTH-WEST AFRICA ISSUE IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

A. Introduction

1. In October 1966, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution terminating South Africa's mandate in South-West Africa and making the territory a direct UN responsibility. The resolution also established an Ad Hoc Committee for South-West Africa to recommend practical means to administer the territory prior to independence, and to report to a General Assembly special session by April 1967. For the next few months, the matters of principal importance will be the attitudes of the black African states, the work of the Ad Hoc Committee, and the reactions of South Africa. As the period of initial maneuvering draws to a close, the UN will face the problem of how, in fact, to remove South-West Africa from South Africa's jurisdiction. At this point, the positions of the permanent members of the Security Council and of certain other interested countries will gain in importance.

B. Black African Reactions

2. For most black Africans South Africa is the real target. South-West Africa is important primarily as a means of bringing US and UK power to bear on South Africa. The black African states, already frustrated and bitter over the ineffectiveness of numerous past UN resolutions, will seek to apply new pressures to precipitate a showdown.

3. As a first step, the Africans will almost certainly seek an early test of South Africa's intentions with regard to the General Assembly resolution. The Africans are aware that in order to obtain the widest possible backing for their cause at the UN, they should build a case suited to UN procedures. Therefore, they will probably press the Ad Hoc Committee to send a political mission to South-West Africa or, alternatively, to South Africa. The Africans almost certainly calculate that Pretoria would refuse to permit a UN mission even to enter the territory and that this would make more certain a showdown between the UN and South Africa at the time of the special session. Even if the South Africans were disposed to allow a UN group to visit the mandate, such a gesture would fall far short of satisfying the Africans who want to separate South-West Africa from South Africa's control.

C. South Africa's Reactions

4. Prime Minister Verwoerd's death and Vorster's succession have not altered South Africa's basic intransigence on the South-West Africa issue. Retention of the territory is regarded by most white South Africans, regardless of party allegiance, as a matter of national prestige and as necessary to the security of their country. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) decision in July 1966 dis-



missing the case brought by Ethiopia and Liberia² was seen by the South Africans as a vindication of their legal and moral position. Hence, they were offended to have the US and UK Governments endorse the proposition that Pretoria has forfeited its right to the mandate. The fact that the UK and France failed to support, and the US voted against, South Africa's position in the General Assembly has contributed further to the beleaguered state of mind of the South African whites.

5. Without yielding any of the substance of their position, the South Africans are unlikely to take provocative action if they can avoid it. New to the job and aware of the pitfalls, Vorster is likely to act cautiously in foreign affairs. He has allowed South Africa's representatives abroad a little more freedom of action than they had under Verwoerd, and this has given the appearance of some flexibility. Their responses, particularly the Foreign Minister's, to the recent General Assembly debates on South-West Africa have been moderate. Moreover, the South Africans have misgivings over their growing isolation from the West, and the government hopes to keep lines open to the US and remain on good terms with the UK, if possible.


6. In these circumstances, Pretoria will probably avoid bringing troops into the territory, which would violate the terms of the mandate. Nor do we think that South Africa will annex South-West Africa or begin to carry out the Odendaal Commission recommendations to establish "Bantustans," which would serve chiefly to inflame many UN members. But it will almost certainly tighten its already powerful grip on South-West Africa by further integrating some of the territory's administrative and financial institutions with those of the Republic; by increasing the police force, and by gradually introducing stronger internal security measures in the territory. None of the skirmishing in the UN will have much effect on the situation in the barren reaches of South-West Africa. There is little likelihood of significant political action by nonwhites, both because of tribal disunity and tight security controls. Externally based nationalist groups will probably attempt to infiltrate guerrillas, but there is little doubt that South African security forces can deal with any threats that arise.

7. The South African Government would prefer to remain in the UN. It will be likely to do so at least until the General Assembly has acted on the Ad Hoc Committee's report, and beyond that time if possible, depending on the nature of any Security Council action. South Africa would almost certainly leave the UN if sanctions of any kind were voted, or at the first sign of enforcement action. The government would do so as a matter of national pride, and would have broad public support.

8. Indeed, the South Africans are increasingly confident of their ability to ride out sanctions, particularly in view of the failure of sanctions in Southern Rhodesia, and because of their own steadily growing self-sufficiency. Moreover, they have considerable confidence in their ability to stave off the imposition of

² See Annex, SNIE 70 66, "Probable Repercussions of the South-West Africa Issue," dated 2 June 1966, SECRET.





sanctions, because other nations could also suffer from them. They can retaliate economically against the UK, directly as well as by action against the small, poor states of Botswana and Lesotho, and to a lesser extent Swaziland, which are virtually economic hostages to South Africa and for which the UK feels responsibility.

9. Talks through diplomatic channels may produce some new South African proposals, perhaps leading to a plan by which Pretoria would continue to administer the territory under UN supervision. But it is highly unlikely that the South Africans will agree to give up administration of the territory or to accept UN supervision of its administration.³ We believe the African states will settle for nothing less than the ouster of South Africa from South-West Africa.

10. Sometime after the Ad Hoc Committee reports to the General Assembly, it will have probably become apparent that there was scant hope of negotiating South Africa out of South-West Africa. The General Assembly then would almost certainly call upon the Security Council to compel compliance with the Assembly's earlier decision to strip South Africa of its mandate. In this arena, the reactions of the major powers would be of crucial importance since they would be called upon to deal with the key questions concerning the territory: how control is to be wrested from South Africa; who is to administer the area once the UN obtains control; who is to finance the administration?

II. THE SOUTH-WEST AFRICA ISSUE IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL

A. Reactions of the Permanent Members of the Security Council

11. Each of the permanent members of the Security Council will probably seek to avoid or at least to minimize its direct entanglement in this intractable issue, and will strongly resist new and potentially expensive commitments to the UN or to the African cause. On the other hand, each will strive to avoid, insofar as possible, giving offense to the Africans. Some of the permanent members will seek whenever possible to avoid vetoing African-backed proposals. Developments in the Security Council will depend in part on the circumstances of the moment at the UN, positions taken on earlier resolutions, and the precise terminology of the resolution at hand, as well as considerations of national interests apart from those in play at the UN.

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³Mr. Thomas L. Hughes, The Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, believes that it is possible that the South Africans might accept some degree of UN supervision over their administration of South-West Africa, although he agrees that the chances are against such an arrangement. He believes that even limited South African concessions on this issue, however, would introduce a new element into the situation which might affect the course of events projected in the estimate.

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16. *The USSR.* Since South-West Africa is embarrassing to the Western Powers and enables the Soviets to curry favor with the Africans on the cheap, the USSR and its allies will continue to exploit the issue to back publicly the African position at every opportunity. The USSR is on record at the UN favoring Security Council action if necessary to take away the mandate, though it apparently adopted this position reluctantly. Propaganda statements apart, however, the USSR to date has acted with considerable restraint in this matter, and we think it would prefer that the Africans cope with the South-West Africa problem inside the Organization of African Unity (OAU). And there are limits on how far the USSR is prepared to go on behalf of the Africans, particularly in the UN.

17. We think the Soviets will not take the lead in any proposed Security Council action. Above all, they will seek to avoid being maneuvered into a position where they would be the decisive force, or where they might have to cast the decisive vote. They would, however, go along with economic sanctions; on the calculation that this would make considerable trouble for the West and very little for themselves. They would readily support diplomatic sanctions. If a proposal for military sanctions came to a vote in the Security Council, the USSR might find it expedient to support it, despite its record of opposition to UN peacekeeping forces. Moscow's past opposition to UN peacekeeping forces has been based on the proposition that the General Assembly has no authority to initiate military action; Moscow has not denied that the Security Council has such authority. In the unlikely event that a UN force is authorized by Security Council action, it is possible that the USSR might offer token financial or material support, but it would be highly unlikely to provide military manpower.

18. *Nationalist China* would almost certainly support almost any African proposal because it needs African backing on the question of Peking's membership in the UN.

B. Attitudes of Other Interested States

19. *Portugal.* Salazar can be counted on to exercise prudence in conducting Portugal's policies with respect to the South-West Africa problem. Essentially, of course, he hopes that Portugal's overseas provinces, Angola and Mozambique, can avoid being caught up in the dispute. They can do so unless the UN should undertake to mount a naval blockade against South Africa. In that event, Salazar would probably cooperate with South Africa, for he would not want an independent black African state immediately south of Angola. However, he would not do so blatantly. Salazar is probably confident that he could carry on low-key cooperation with South Africa without much fear of interference from the UN, since any blockade or sanctions against Mozambique and Angola would have adverse effects on neighboring Malawi, Zambia, Congo (Kinshasa), Swaziland, and Southern Rhodesia, all of which depend in large measure on transport routes through these territories.

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C. The Security Council and the Black African Nations

21. Many members of the Security Council are likely to urge a graduated approach, beginning with limited political sanctions against Pretoria (e.g. a resolution to withdraw diplomatic chiefs of mission), followed by communications cutoffs, voluntary trade sanctions, selective mandatory sanctions, and the like. The Africans will be impatient with this approach. They would demand at least selective economic sanctions to begin with (most likely an embargo on oil shipments), and they would probably make a strong effort to apply full sanctions against South Africa. By achieving support for any kind of economic sanctions the Africans would hope to commit others irrevocably to their side.


22. Partly for this reason and partly because the Africans are well aware of the OAU's weaknesses, they would probably scuttle any Security Council attempt to turn over the South-West Africa issue to the OAU, as the regional organization concerned. Nor is there more than a slim chance at best that they would return the problem to the ICJ, as the UK and France would like.

23. Despite the factors mentioned in the preceding paragraphs militating against the imposition of mandatory economic sanctions by the Security Council, we cannot exclude the possibility that over time some of the attitudes of the permanent members may be modified. UN consideration of the South-West Africa issue will be a prolonged process, not a single decisive confrontation, and the development of the Rhodesian situation may make it more difficult for certain UN members to vote against sanctions.

D. Enforcement of Sanctions

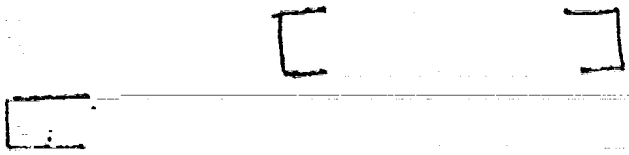
24. If the Security Council adopted a resolution imposing economic sanctions on South Africa, it is unlikely that all important countries would effectively enforce the measure. The South African economy is sufficiently strong to cushion the impact in many ways, probably for a protracted period of time. If all South Africa's major trading partners cooperated in applying economic sanctions over a protracted period, this might bring some modification in South African attitudes. But in this case, we think it more likely that the South Africans would become even more intransigent.

25. If economic sanctions were imposed, and it became clear that South Africa remained essentially unshaken, the Africans would then concentrate their efforts on gaining Security Council support for military sanctions against South Africa. Failure to win Security Council backing for military sanctions might lead the African countries to press for General Assembly action. Should the Security Council fail to agree on military sanctions, two-thirds of the members of the General Assembly could recommend collective measures, including the use of



armed force, similar to the "Uniting for Peace" resolution approved during the Korean crisis in 1950. Subsequent action, however, would require some solution to the longstanding problem of financing UN peacekeeping operations, and it would be necessary to overcome Soviet and French objections to General Assembly efforts to establish military forces. Moreover, it would require active support by at least one major power.

26. We believe that any attempt forcibly to dislodge South Africa's hold on South-West Africa would require a major military effort, even if backed by a Security Council resolution or by a "Uniting for Peace" resolution of the General Assembly. It is virtually certain that none of the major European powers, including the USSR, would provide sufficient financial or military force to oust South Africa from South-West Africa.



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