

May 7, 1969

Dear Dean:

Many thanks for your fine piece on Southern Africa. It adds a perspective that would never come from the bureaucracy.

I have sent your paper on to the President, and will also see that your arguments are cranked into the NSC review of Southern Africa now in progress. Once we have an NSC paper in relatively good shape, I would like to send it out to you for comment if that is agreeable.

With warm regards,

Henry A. Kissinger

Mr. Dean Acheson



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April 30, 1969

U.S. Policies Toward Southern Africa Require Change

U.S. policies toward southern Africa -- that is, toward Portuguese Angola and Mozambique, South Africa, and Rhodesia -- as designed to align this country among the adversaries of those regimes -- should be abandoned.

They were developed largely between 1961 and 1969 in the United Nations with the Afro-Asian group -- plus Britain in the case of Rhodesia. Broadly speaking they seek to force on the states of southern Africa the principle of majority rule (one man one vote) in their internal polity. Subsidiary aims are the independence of Angola and Mozambique from Portugal, of Southwest Africa from South Africa, and the subjection of Rhodesia to British colonial rule until local majority rule is established ("majority rule before independence").

The United States participates in this policy by joining in harassing action in the United Nations, including resolutions encouraging subversion against the governments in power and embargoes against imports of arms (even arms essential for domestic defense against external aggression) in two cases and against all trade with Rhodesia.

The reasons for abandonment of these policies are:

1. Because they are impossible of achievement.
2. Because they are contrary to our national interests.
3. Because they are frustrating the common interest of the United States and of both the black and white nations of southern Africa in the stability and development of that area.

1. These policies are impossible of achievement

(a) In Portuguese Africa

The Portuguese discovered Angola a decade before Columbus discovered the Western Hemisphere. Portuguese rule has been undisputed since the sixteenth century.

In the last decade bloody incursions from the Congo have created terror in northwest Angola. These, aided from both Soviet and Chinese sources (as in the Congo) have been bloodily suppressed by considerable additions to local Portuguese forces. They have little or no indigenous support. If outside force sufficient to defeat Portugal in southern Africa (which would possibly involve defeating South Africa also) was supplied, the result would not be one man one vote but a bloody Nigerian-type shambles. The United States cannot meddle with revolution in Africa with impunity.

(b) In South Africa

South Africa is the strongest, toughest, most stable power in Africa, possessed of immense resources, advanced technology, and controlled by a population as stubbornly attached to the autonomy of South Africa as William the Silent was to that of the Netherlands in his Britain at the height of her imperial power and even after a punishing war was unable to bend the Africaaners to her will. South Africa, with the support of the International Court of Justice, does not recognize the authority of the United Nations unilaterally to alter the mandate agreement with the League of Nations, which put in its present form her authority over Southwest Africa, originally derived from conquest from Germany. That authority, subject to the trust of the mandate, includes all the powers of sovereignty. She would resist with all her military power any encroachment upon them in this territory of vital importance to her.

(c) In Rhodesia

Thus far the economic sanctions that the United Nations Security Council has induced its members -- or some of them -- to impose on Rhodesia (such as stopping commercial intercourse, blocking funds, and various other forms of economic warfare) have affected Rhodesia's internal political policy only in a counterproductive way. For the first time in Rhodesian history constitutional amendments have been proposed based on racial terms. These would have two voting rolls, white and colored, with literacy and property qualifications. The blacks would be given a minimum number of members in the parliament, which might increase as the black percentage of taxes paid but not to exceed one half.

Sanctions have weakened the effectiveness of the moderate white elements and strengthened the advocates of a South African policy. They have not harmfully affected the economy, except to decrease employment (chiefly among the blacks engaged in such agricultural work as tobacco farming). They have also decreased employment in neighboring black states. They have transferred US purchases of chromium from Rhodesia to the Soviet Union. Sanctions have, however, increased a sense of isolationism and persecution in Rhodesia.

2. These policies are contrary to our national interests.

The United States has important interests in southern Africa. The Cape abuts on one of the three maritime approaches to the Indian Ocean. Another approach, the Suez Canal, is closed. The Russian fleet has moved into the Eastern Mediterranean. All the harbors and ports in Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean are under the control of South Africa or Portugal. They are of vital importance to the private ships of the western powers. In time of trouble the naval base at Simonstown, South Africa, could be of importance to our public vessels. Yet we do our best to alienate these nations. Our naval vessels demonstrate moral displeasure by standing off-shore and having Rhodesian beef and other supplies lightered out to them.

The time was when our relations with a foreign power were determined by its foreign policy and our interests. The empathy or hostility of groups in the United States to the domestic policy of foreign nations was regarded as irrelevant. It still is where the foreign power is a great power like the Soviet Union.

Only the deluded believe that today there are unimportant states. Consider North Korea.

3. These policies harm the stability and development of Southern Africa

Southern Africa is Africa's most stable area. This condition in itself is valuable and most important to preserve. South Africa and Rhodesia are more productive than all of the rest of the continent. Together and with

Portuguese cooperation they could do far more than the United States could do to aid the development and stability of the whole area south of the Congo and Tanzania, and, perhaps, farther north. South Africa's "outward policy" recognizes this and demonstrates a willingness to give both help and a lead. Dr. Banda of Malawi is willing to cooperate and the black-ruled former High Commission territories of Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland have shown sympathetic if cautious interest. President Kaunda of Zambia is playing an ambiguous and ambivalent game. He takes a permissive attitude to those who foment terrorism and advocate British military action against Rhodesia. But he is cautious in keeping Zambia out of the line of fire. Basically Kaunda will change attitudes and sides as the economic warfare against Rhodesia fails.

Present UN and British policies are sterile failures and should be scrapped. The United States would do a good turn to both its own and British interests by quietly dropping its embargoes and turning instead to a creative, hopeful, and viable sub-Saharan Marshall plan, based on the cooperative efforts of the new black states of the south aided by the technological guidance of Rhodesia and South Africa and financed by a regional consortium with United States minor participation.

One does not need to comment on the sanctimonious immorality of those who argue in favor of continuing economic warfare upon friendly states to force a change in their internal policies because to stop would cause some criticism in some quarters and to continue may not do much harm.