



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

S/S

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September 2, 1976

TO: The Secretary
FROM: PA - William D. Blair, Jr. Acting *WDB*

Recent Public Comment on Southern Africa

In advance of your meeting with Prime Minister Vorster, you may wish to know about public comment on Southern Africa policy since our memorandum of July 27, "Public Reaction to the Lusaka Statement" (attached).

Summary

Newspaper editorial reaction to your Southern Africa initiatives remains strongly supportive and exhibits a heightened sense of urgency for change within South Africa and Namibia, as well as Rhodesia. The single editorial from a black newspaper in the last month implied disapproval of "gradualism."

Among the broadcast media, only CBS radio paid substantial attention to African policy prior to announcement of the Zurich meeting. The forthcoming talks and your Philadelphia speech have provoked lengthy -- and essentially positive -- television network commentary.

The high volume of public correspondence on Southern Africa has declined to a few letters a week. About one-third of these support Southern Africa policy, a shift from the 99 percent opposition to the Lusaka doctrine seen earlier in our mail.

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Newspaper Editorials

In the past month, we have reviewed editorials on Southern Africa appearing in 28 newspapers with 17 percent of the total national daily circulation.

The vast majority of these reiterate earlier support for the Lusaka doctrine. Since the first Soweto riots, however, those who previously concentrated on Rhodesia have increasingly viewed the whole of Southern Africa as a threat to peace.

An August 13 editorial in the Louisville Courier-Journal is typical of this widened concern: "The only basis for American discussions with the white leaders of southern Africa is not whether the blacks will be given control over their own destinies, but how swiftly the transition can be accomplished, not just in Rhodesia, but in South Africa, too."

A number of newspapers which had applauded diplomatic or economic pressure to achieve majority rule in Rhodesia now wish to see it applied to end apartheid in South Africa. On August 17, the Atlanta Constitution wrote: "Economic pressure of course is not the ideal way to cause Smith or Vorster to do right...But if (it) is all they understand, if it will help save one life, let it be done." On August 7, the Miami Herald urged that South Africa's desire for postponement of the next international monetary fund gold auction be used as a "political lever" to force racial concessions by the Pretoria government.

Only the Chicago Tribune, commenting on Hilgard Muller's call for readjustment of South African racial policies, and the Des Moines Register, reacting to the announced timetable for Namibian independence, saw any signs of progress toward satisfying black demands. Most papers echoed New York Times columnist Anthony Lewis's view: "The impression blacks are bound to have is that there is no real change -- no recognition of shared humanity -- but only grudging concessions to pressure. That is a recipe for continuing confrontation."

Events in the past month have caused a shift in the attitude of the Ridder-owned St. Paul Pioneer Press, which originally opposed the Lusaka doctrine. Its August 16 editorial said: "America's posture should be one of full support for Kissinger's efforts."

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The Pioneer Press was also one of four papers endorsing an Anglo-American guarantee for white Rhodesian property rights. Others included the Chicago Tribune, an opponent of the Lusaka policy; Hearst's Boston Herald American, and the New York Times, both Lusaka supporters. The Kansas City Times opposed guarantees, saying: "After years of strutting in defiance, does Ian Smith deserve to have his folly redeemed? Surely not by the United States."

Your Urban League speech drew favorable comment from seven newspapers -- the New York Times, Boston Globe, San Francisco Chronicle, Christian Science Monitor, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Washington Star, and Norfolk Virginian Pilot. The only black newspaper to comment on the Boston address was the Cincinnati Call & Post, with sister papers in Cleveland and Columbus (total circulation: 70,000). It criticized the "theme of gradualism" which "seemed to permeate" America's approach to African affairs.

Only the Boston Globe continued to express doubts that Southern African policy would be vigorously pursued during an election campaign, a doubt earlier shared by several newspapers.

Continued editorial opposition to any involvement in Southern Africa was expressed only by the Richmond Times-Dispatch and the Wall Street Journal. The Times-Dispatch attacked Jimmy Carter for his support of the policy, saying: "(He) will help perpetuate the deception that a predominantly black government in South Africa would ensure majority rule." Believing "no American pressures or promises can ensure a favorable outcome," the Journal concluded in a July 30 editorial: "We can offer mediation; but we should beware of assuming responsibility for the future of Rhodesia, lest we find ourselves caterers to another bloodbath." Robert Keatley's front page article yesterday, however, was sympathetic to your attempts to avert racial warfare.

Media Reaction

Among the broadcast media, only CBS radio (including its local affiliate, WTOP) paid substantial attention to Southern African policy prior to the announcement of your meeting with Prime Minister Vorster. Network television

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commentary was negligible until September 1 when there was lengthy coverage of your Philadelphia speech and meeting with Prime Minister Vorster.

In a July 27 CBS morning radio "First Line Report," Marvin Kalb said: "The U.S. interest in the (Rhodesian) settlement is not only humanitarian -- to head off a race war -- but also economic and strategic...the U.S. is using its influence in the right direction in southern Africa." In a "First Line Report" on August 14, Bernard Kalb said: "The Muller speech can be taken as the latest indication that Secretary Kissinger's diplomatic offensive is prodding whites and blacks in southern Africa to confront the challenge they face -- avoiding a catastrophic racial war." On August 31, Marvin Kalb likened your forthcoming meeting to Middle East diplomacy by saying "the odds on success are considered small, but this may be Kissinger's last hurrah, and he is aiming at a breakthrough, if it's at all possible."

Tuesday night, ABC-TV's Howard K. Smith said: "Mr. Kissinger's new venture into personal diplomacy in southern Africa is equally explosive and harder to handle than his long arbitration in the Middle East." In his CBS-TV commentary, Eric Sevareid concentrated on the "morality" of southern African policy. ABC's Barrie Dunsmore said "Kissinger's Africa policy has a sound moral base...but it's a policy which is extremely difficult in the execution." NBC covered, but did not comment on, your Philadelphia speech.

Public Correspondence

In the weeks following your Lusaka address, we received nearly 1,800 individually drafted letters on our African policy, 99 percent opposing it.

Since July 26, we have received 118 individually drafted letters -- 33 supporting and 85 opposing American initiatives toward majority rule in Rhodesia and South Africa -- and 80 John Birch Society initiated forms opposing repeal of the Byrd Amendment.

Attachment:

"Public Reaction to the Lusaka Statement" (w/original only)

Drafted: PA: *JAC* JACCollinge:jc
x23165:9/1/76

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