Nigeria-United States relations with respect to their perspectives on political change in Africa: the cases of Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa

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ABSTRACT

POLITICAL SCIENCE

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Nigeria-United States Relations with Respect to Their Perspectives on Political Change in Africa: The Cases of Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa

Advisor: Professor Robert A. Holmes

Dissertation dated May 1985

This study centers around Nigeria-United States relations with respect to their perspectives on political change in Africa. It is premised on the assumption that international politics is generally a mix of conflictual and cooperative relationships. It is in this context that the study examines Nigeria-United States perspectives, and the positions taken by both countries on the issue of political change in Africa, using Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa as case studies.

The study shows that, at the level of diplomatic rhetoric, there seems to be a shared perspective on political
change between Nigeria and the United States. However, underneath this shared perspective lie a host of disagreements and differences. Of critical significance are the differences in the interpretation of political change and the motivations behind both countries’ policy in Southern Africa.

Nigeria favors radical change, while the United States favors gradual change. Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that Nigeria is motivated by its commitment to the cause of African emancipation, while the United States is largely motivated by its varied economic and strategic interests in the region. These differences, however, have not made cooperation between both countries in other areas impossible.

The conclusion suggests that, on the whole, Nigeria–United States relations during the period under study have been marked by disagreements and cooperation. Relations between the two countries were decidedly cool at times, cordial at other times and uneasy in the Reagan years.
NIGERIA-UNITED STATES RELATIONS WITH RESPECT TO THEIR PERSPECTIVES ON POLITICAL CHANGE IN AFRICA:

THE CASES OF ANGOLA, ZIMBABWE, NAMIBIA AND SOUTH AFRICA

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

AIG. SMART UHAKHEME

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

MAY 1985
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Mesharun and Olobi, for their love and support; to my brothers, Omoruyi, Ibiezugbe and Ozolua for their brotherly love and encouragement; to Aikpabomo for her love, personal sacrifices and encouragement and to Ohamien, (whose timely arrival coincided with the completion of the major part of this study) for his sweet, soothing smile.

I want to thank all the members of my dissertation committee for their guidance and cooperation. Special thanks to Dr. Hashim T. Gibrill for his valuable suggestions. Above all, my sincere appreciation goes to my dissertation advisor Professor Robert A. Holmes for his assistance and helpful advice.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Africa is the centre point of Nigeria's foreign policy. The promotion of African unity and the achievement of "total political, economic, social and cultural liberation of Africa"\(^1\) are two of its stated foreign policy objectives.

The attainment of the aspect of Nigeria's foreign policy with respect to political change in Africa during the period 1975-1981 is the focus of this research. In attempting to pursue its stated objectives, Nigeria realizes that there are other important actors in the international environment to contend with. One such actor is the United States, and both countries have realized that the areas of common interests that exist between them need to be emphasized. According to National Security Council Memorandum No. D18, part of which spells out United States global objectives.

policy, the United States seeks: (1) wider cooperation with key allies and close cooperation with such regional influential nations as Nigeria, Saudi Arabia and Brazil; (2) to strengthen its presence in all regions of the world; and (3) to enhance its cooperative effort with "moderate states of Africa in the cause of African emancipation."^2

Nigeria-United States relations have not always been ambiguous. In the period covered by this study, a discernible pattern has started to emerge. Relations between both countries have had their high and low points since Nigerian independence in 1960. The United States alleged support for Biafra during the Nigerian civil war resulted in strained relations in 1967-70.\(^3\) Also there were open differences over United States involvement in Angola in 1975, culminating in the unwillingness of Nigeria to receive the then Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger.\(^4\) However, relations between both countries improved immensely during the Carter administration largely due to the skillful


diplomacy of Andrew Young, United States Ambassador to the United Nations. There were cordial exchanges and visits between 1977 and 1980, first President Jimmy Carter and then Vice President Walter Mondale visited Nigeria. And, in October 1980 it was President Shehu Shagari's turn to reciprocate with a visit to the United States.\(^5\) There were those who thought that despite these visits nothing of substance was actually accomplished.\(^6\)

**Statement of Purpose**

An Exploratory Study in Conflict and Cooperation

Every nation state in the contemporary state system has its own national interests that differ from the interests of other nations. These differences may sometimes lead to clashes. Occasional clashes between nation states notwithstanding, they still engage in cooperative efforts in other areas. As Ivo D. Duchacek puts it, nation states "may often have profound disagreements on trade and tariff policies while their political and military cooperation

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Furthermore, it needs to be said that virtually all relationships contain some elements of conflict. Even in the most cooperative relationship between nation states, some areas of disagreement are bound to occur. According to Duchacek, "no two nations can be expected to have all their interests in harmony with one another all the time," nor do they "have all their interests in conflict all the time." Even arch enemies, Duchacek added, are often able to engage in cooperative relationship in one sector "while uncompromising enmity and total distrust prevail in a different sector of their relations."\(^8\)

The implication here is that international politics is a mix of conflictual and cooperative relationships. They are not mutually exclusive. That is, nation states can be engaged in both relationships at the same time. It is in this context that this study will attempt to analyze Nigeria-United States relations with respect to their perspectives on political change in Africa, using Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa as case studies.


\(^8\) Ibid.
Areas of conflict.—At least five areas of conflict between Nigeria and the United States can be identified: (1) the United States' refusal to sell arms to Nigeria during the Biafran conflict and the alleged United States support for Biafra, (2) the United States involvement in Angola in 1975, (3) whether or not Nigeria would use its oil as an instrument of its foreign policy toward the United States, (4) the rate at which Nigeria should be producing its oil and the price at which it should be sold to the United States, and (5) whether Nigeria should be considered a rich country. These will be elaborated upon in the section dealing with the review of literature.

Cooperation.—These areas of conflict have not made cooperation between both countries in other areas impossible. Both countries have been involved in cooperative efforts to find a solution to the problem of colonialism in Southern Africa. The focus of this study is on common ground in both countries' perspectives on political change in Africa, pointing out where conflict and/or cooperation exist.

Does the United States need Nigeria's understanding? Is it important to the United States that Nigeria remains a friendly nation? Is Nigeria's support for United States diplomatic initiatives in Africa crucial to the success of
those initiatives? Conversely, has Nigeria's opposition been an important factor in the failure of those initiatives? How have United States diplomatic initiatives, when successful, benefitted both countries?

A major theme in the history of the independence struggles in Africa is total political, economic, social and cultural liberation of Africa. Political change, recognized then and now as a fundamental right to be sought; its achievement has been in the forefront of Africa's mind, and it is likely to remain there.

Today, efforts to bring about political change in the continent are largely confined to Namibia and South Africa. The history of such efforts in Africa is full of examples of how Africans have sought to solve the problem of oppression and colonialism and achieve freedom and independence by various means.

By the early 1960s the rise of numerous independent African states helped legitimize two approaches to political independence: negotiated settlement and revolution. The form of government that is put in place after political independence is, to a large extent, determined by which approach is taken. Apart from the Congo crisis, United States interest was not reawakened until 1975 when
Portuguese domination was suddenly dismantled. Chester A. Crocker explained: "Washington could no longer simply enjoy its varied interests in Africa: it would have to work actively to preempt Soviet-backed revolutionary change and deter further communist adventurism, ..."

Political change in Africa is inevitable. There is evidence to show that political change per se is not necessarily inimical to United States interests. United States policy-makers needed to come to the realization that the United States can no longer act as the policeman of Africa, preventing change. Instead they should have realized that what was needed is the management of change to fit in with United States aspirations and interests. A study by the Center for Strategic and International Studies concluded that what matters is not the fact of change but how change occurs, whose interests and influence it reflects, and the extent of violent or coercive solutions.

How important to Nigeria was the issue of political

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11 Ibid. 12 Ibid.
change in Africa? How sensitive was United States foreign policy to this issue? How did both countries manage their differences and find a common ground on how best to achieve political change in Africa?

Definition of Concept

Political change.—Political scientists are not agreed on the precise meaning of political change. However, there seems to be a consensus that it involves the reordering of a given political system to permit all adult members of the population an effective participation in the political process.

Pan-Africanists hold the view that political change in Africa means "radical redistribution of power and wealth." E. A. Brett, in Colonialism and Underdevelopment in East Africa, explained political change as:

. . .those relating to the structure and size of economic production, the nature of the distribution of the social product, and the location of control over social processes. These concerns embody a set of related normative assumptions—that production be maximized, distribution equalized, and control decentralized. . .

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Martin Kilson defines political change as "the alteration in the ideas, values, procedures, and institutions concerned with the role of authority, power, influence and government."\(^{15}\)

Radical Pan-Africanists take the definition a little further by asserting that the outcome of such a restructuring of the political system should be a socialist order.\(^{16}\)

Basil Davidson expressed this view when he wrote:

> The basic problem for Africans is to find their own way of revolutionizing the structures of the past, and revolutionizing the colonial structures they have had imposed upon them, and which they inherited, in large part, when they have become politically independent. Africans need this dual revolution along African lines: they need it because they have to move on to new systems and modes of production. . .and it seems to me very clear indeed that this revolution will not be, cannot be, in the direction of capitalism. It must be in the direction of socialism.\(^{17}\)

All of these definitions are useful, but for the purpose of this study, a suitable definition relates to the seizure of power that leads to a major restructuring of

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government and society, as distinguished from the mere replacement of the former elite by a new one or coup d'etat involving no more than a change of ruling personnel. Put simply, political change means the wresting of state power from colonial and neo-colonial governments, occupation forces, settler regimes, minority regimes, and the fundamental restructuring of the political system. The ultimate goal is to maximize a state's political, economic, social and cultural liberation. This can be brought about by one or a combination of two approaches: (a) armed struggle, and (b) negotiated settlement. The adoption of one approach does not necessarily preclude the other—in other words, they are not mutually exclusive. Nigeria publicly embraces both approaches, while the United States publicly adopts (b), but covertly encourages (a) in a sometimes futile attempt to prevent change that would lead to a fundamental restructuring of government and society. At the level of diplomatic rhetoric, both countries seem to hold similar views on political change, but does political change mean the same thing to both nations?

18 The United States is currently involved in such operations in Angola and Nicaragua.
Fundamental Differences in Interpretation

**Nigeria.**—During the period covered by this study, particularly beginning with the Muhammed administration, Nigeria adopted a radical and militant approach to issues relating to the liberation of Southern Africa. To Nigeria, political change had come to mean the wrestling of state power from a colonial regime and the fundamental restructuring of the political system. Nigeria believed that this could be attained by: (a) peaceful means where feasible, and (b) armed struggle when necessary. Furthermore, Nigeria was strongly in favor of radical change and total liberation, as opposed to the mere changing of the ruling personnel. An indication of Nigeria's commitment to radical change could be seen from her extensive support for liberation movements in Africa.

**United States.**—Historically, the United States' position could be summed up as follows: (a) a rhetorical condemnation of colonialism, and (b) at the same time, expressing its strong opposition to armed struggle. Recently Chester Crocker reiterated this position when he said that the United States cannot endorse colonialism or oppression, nor those who are "dedicated to seizing or holding
power through violence.\textsuperscript{19} To the United States, political change means no more than a mere change of ruling personnel, with little or no change in the structure of the political system and society. It supports evolutionary change, as opposed to radical change. It seeks negotiation, but opposes armed struggle that would lead to radical change. It needs to be said that although the United States is opposed to armed struggle as an official policy, it is also involved in covert operations in many trouble spots around the world.

In sum, there are differences in both countries' interpretations of political change in important respects. While Nigeria favors fundamental change, the United States does not. Instead, the United States favors evolutionary change. Furthermore, Nigeria favors both peaceful means and armed struggle to bring about change, but the United States favors peaceful change, and only opposes armed struggle as an official policy, but favors covert operations. There is evidence to suggest that the United States: (a) is only opposed to armed struggle that would lead to fundamental restructuring of government and society, and

\textsuperscript{19}Crocker, et al., \textit{Implications of Soviet and Cuban Activities}, p. 16.
(b) has actively supported armed struggle in Cuba (Bay of Pigs), Vietnam, Angola, Nicaragua and Grenada to either maintain a status quo or overthrow a government it considered unfriendly.

The question that needs to be asked is why was the United States, a country born of revolution, opposed to radical change? Part of the answer can be gleaned from the discussion of United States interests and motivations elsewhere in this study.

Literature Review

At least two time periods are discernible in the literature on Nigeria-United States relations. There are those who contend that prior to 1975, and for the most part of the Nixon/Ford administration, relations between both countries were at an all time low. Others state that beginning with the Carter administration, relations between both countries significantly improved.

Prior to 1975 Nigeria was referred to as a "sleeping giant" because of its inactive, low profile and sometimes timid foreign policy posture. Critics say Nigeria's low profile and timid foreign policy posture was a calculated attempt by successive governments from 1960 to 1975 to:
"Stave off direct conflict with any of the major powers except on critical issues such as the preservation of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Nigeria." ²⁰

Nigeria's low profile foreign policy posture coincided with another important fact in the international system—the East-West power struggle. Cold War concerns, the war in Vietnam and Soviet activities in Cuba were of paramount importance to Washington; therefore, the formulation of a credible United States Nigerian policy was a low priority issue for United States policy makers. In his book *Nigeria's Leadership Role in Africa*, Joseph Wayas noted that "of all the areas of the world, only Antarctica is less important to the United States," ²¹ than Nigeria or Africa. President Lyndon B. Johnson's presumed indifference or ignorance was depicted by his quoted remarks to British Prime Minister Harold Wilson in 1964: "I keep confusing Nigeria and Algeria because both end in 'geria." ²² Hezy Idowu, in


²² Ibid.
"Nigeria's Foreign Policy: A Re-assessment," Times International, (Nigeria) presented a vivid picture of Nigeria-United States relations during the Nixon administration:

...the West took Nigeria for granted. Although Gowon (then Nigerian leader) was in power close to a decade, the United States had no Nigerian policy and when Gowon travelled to that country, Richard Nixon did not consider him important enough to receive him.²³

In the last days of the Ford administration, Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger started to move away from the policy of benign neglect. In an attempt to improve relations between both countries, a more active diplomacy with Nigeria was initiated as evidenced by a scheduled official visit to Nigeria by Kissinger.²⁴ Although the visit was later cancelled,²⁵ diplomatic observers were convinced that a change in Nigeria-United States relations was imminent. However, Kissinger's move away from the policy of benign neglect had not gone unnoticed in Nigeria. The Nigeria


Yakubu Gowon was in the United States to address the United Nations in 1973. He also visited Washington, but Nixon did not meet with him.


²⁵Nigeria's official explanation was "inconvenient timing" of the visit.
Standard attributed this shift to "the intervention of Cuban troops in Angola and the subsequent routing of Western-backed forces in the former Portuguese colony." 26

When Murtala Muhammed came to power in 1975 in a coup d'etat in which Yakubu Gowon was overthrown, the time had come for the "sleeping giant" to wake up. Subsequent foreign policy decisions taken by the Muhammed administration led Africanists to characterize Nigeria's foreign policy as a "dynamic" one. Clement Okosun, in a January 1976 article, "Nigeria's Dynamic Approach to her Foreign Policy," explained that:

. . . within five months of its existence, the new administration has taken steps which point to her pursuit of a dynamic foreign policy not only towards the already developed nations but also towards the developing nations . . .

Nigeria's pursuit of a dynamic foreign policy and of her re-discovery of her important role in the third world and in Africa, are reflected in the decisive stand of the new administration on the Angolan issue. Not only did the government make its stand decidedly clear that it recognised the MPLA as the legitimate government of Angola, it went further to give financial aid to the tune of about fourteen million naira to the MPLA. 27


A. Bolaji Akinyemi, in "Nigerian Foreign Policy," in *Nigerian Government and Politics*, ed. O. Oyediran, (1979) thought that such change in Nigeria's foreign policy approach was long overdue. Nigeria, he said, "Seems to have finally arrived at the role and status which Nigerians have been clamouring for since 1960..." The Economist, in "Sheikhs of Black Africa," August 2, 1975, stated that this arrival of Nigeria was precipitated by the enormous resources generated by the oil boom, resources which were then being ploughed into industrial and infrastructural bases. Jean Herskovits recognized this potential power, and warned that if Nigeria translates its potential into actual power, the United States would have to "rethink its policies and actions in Africa."

The dynamic foreign policy of the Muhammed administration facilitated by the new wealth coincided with the ascendancy of Jimmy Carter to the White House. When Carter announced that he planned to visit Nigeria, observers were quick to point out that a change in Nigeria–United States

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relations had emerged. Jean Herskovits, in "Dateline Nigeria: A Black Power," *Foreign Policy*, Winter 1977-78, described the visit as a symbol of "a new spirit" in Nigeria-United States relations. Chester A. Crocker and William H. Lewis thought that such a change was reflected by "top appointments and a highly energetic diplomacy."

They explained:

To offset past impressions of United States neglect, Washington's new approach was to define and take stock of the African view point on the continent's many problems. This meant extending the narrow base of past United States African diplomacy beyond traditional friends, and building ties with Nigeria. . .where previous relations had ranged from cool to icy. 30

Oye Ogunbadejo, in "A New Turn in U.S.-Nigerian Relations," *World Today*, March 1979, stated that the Carter administration marked a significant turning point in Nigeria-United States relations. The Carter policy, he contended, provided both countries with "an opportunity for a fresh start and a realistic examination of issues affecting them both."

Donald B. Easum, the then United States Ambassador to Nigeria offered a summary of the change in Nigeria-United States relations:

We take Nigerian views very seriously, and not just on African issues but on issues of global concern. We consult and discuss together such problems as the North-South economic relationship, or the Law of the Sea, or Zimbabwe and Namibia, or the question of political rights and equal opportunity within South Africa itself. Nigerian views on these issues are an increasingly important factor in the formulation of United States policies.  

There were those who thought that this new turn in Nigeria-United States relations was not accidental. Two explanations were offered--economic and political. Herskovits explained:

Nigeria is important to the United States. . . because of economics, because of its growing leadership in Africa and elsewhere in the Third World, and its recent election to the United Nations Security Council. . .  

The visits by General Obasanjo to the United States and President Carter to Nigeria, the strengthened economic links between both countries and Washington's firm stand on majority rule for Namibia and South Africa were some of the concrete examples of improved relations between both countries referred to in the literature.  

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Others thought that in spite of what had been done by both countries to improve relations, nothing of substance was actually accomplished. Stanley Macebuh saw more noise than substance to the Carter administration's vaunted claims of a new spirit in Nigeria-United States relations. He stated that little more than diplomatic rhetoric could be expected from the Carter administration because "domestic constraints will probably not permit Carter to be as progressive as he would like to be in Africa."\textsuperscript{34}

Some observers believed that with the departure of some of the key members of the Africanists group in the Carter administration, such as Andrew Young and later Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, the rival group, the Globalists, including National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, seemed to have prevailed by the end of 1979 in influencing the administration's African policy. David Ottaway, in "Africa: United States Policy Eclipse," in \textit{America and the World 1979}, citing decisions taken by the United States elsewhere in Africa, contended that by the end of 1979 the United States "did appear to be on the verge of a major reversal back" to traditional United States policy toward

\textsuperscript{34} Stanley Macebuh, "Misreading Opportunities in Africa," \textit{Foreign Policy} (Winter 1977–78): 162.
Nigeria. He warned that:

The implications of such a reversal for United States relations with Africa were likely to be far reaching. It would certainly endanger the reservoir of goodwill Ambassador Young and the Africanists' policy had built up for the United States throughout black Africa generally, and in such leading African states as Tanzania and Nigeria specifically.\(^{35}\)

If the new spirit in Nigeria-United States relations during the Carter administration, to a large extent, led to improved relations between both countries, what was the situation under the first year of the Reagan administration? Initially the Reagan administration made strong efforts to maintain good relations with Nigeria, partly for the same reasons the Carter administration had. \textit{West Africa} quoted President Reagan as saying to the Nigerian Ambassador to the United States:

\ldots our two countries are interdependent economically, politically and culturally. \ldots This relationship of mutual dependence has always been a close, secure one, and we look forward to its continuing in the future on the same basis.\(^{36}\)

President Reagan's claim of "a relationship of mutual dependence" was a recognition of the fact that the areas of common interest between both countries needed to be


emphasized. However, the growing uneasiness between both countries that became explicit and manifest during the first year of the Reagan administration must be acknowledged. One of the first indications of the unease was the May 1981 visit of the South African Foreign Minister to the White House. The Atlanta Constitution described the visit as:

> Officially signaling an end to almost three years of chilly relations between Washington and Pretoria. . . . but it is certain to cause political problems for Reagan at home and abroad.  


> . . .(1) strengthening direct ties with South Africa through symbols like official visits and proposing terms for a Namibian settlement closer to Pretoria's wishes, (2) recognizing South Africa's problems with the White minority in South West Africa.

Some commentators would like to have us believe that the unease that has characterized Nigeria-United States relations is only a symptom of some long-standing conflicts.


Areas of conflict

As has been mentioned in the preceding section, United States alleged involvement in the Biafran conflict was a source of conflict between Lagos and Washington. According to Harold Nelson, "the use of chartered United States cargo planes for relief flights to Biafra," among other things, "caused some friction on the official level and considerable criticism in the Nigerian press." To guard against clandestine arms shipments to Biafra, the Nigerian government wanted all relief flights to first land in Lagos before continuing to Biafra. Occasional non-compliance with this air blockade by the United States was strongly condemned by Nigeria. Olajide Aluko pointed out that on one occasion, Nigeria had to call in the then American Ambassador to Nigeria, Mr. Elbert Mathews, to strongly protest "the unwarranted American interference in the

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internal affairs of Nigeria." Furthermore, the professed United States policy of "neutrality" in the Biafran conflict and the "sustained pro-Biafran propaganda carried out in the United States," Aluko added, were interpreted in Lagos "as indirect support for the secessionist cause."42

The United States involvement in Angola was also a source of conflict between Nigeria and the United States. The United States backing of the FNLA/UNITA faction and its alleged collusion with South Africa in South Africa's intervention in Angola led to a deterioration of already strained relations. South Africa's intervention, as John Marcum puts it, was seen in Nigeria as a dangerous "American-South African collusion."43

In 1979 a small but vocal section of the Nigerian population urged Nigeria to cut off oil supplies to the United States to underscore its displeasure with United States involvement in Southern Africa. Joseph Wayas represented this view. He outlined several economic reprisals Nigeria should take against the United States,

41 Aluko, Essays in Nigerian Foreign Policy, p. 107.
42 Ibid.
including the cut off of oil supplies and the blacklisting
of United States companies seeking contracts in Nigeria.\textsuperscript{44}

Other areas of conflict between Nigeria and the
United States concerned: (a) the rate at which Nigeria
should be producing its oil and the price at which it
should be sold to the United States, and (b) whether
Nigeria should be considered a rich country. The United
States wanted Nigeria to raise production levels and sell
at below the OPEC minimum levels. On the other hand,
Nigeria preferred to hold down production and sell at
higher prices.\textsuperscript{45} The United States categorized Nigeria as
a rich country, thus, ineligible for concessional, as op-
posed to completely reimbursable aid. Therefore, it would
have to pay full cost for all its needs from the United
States. Nigeria argued that it was not yet a rich country,
therefore, it should be considered eligible for aid.\textsuperscript{46} Aaron
Segal saw these as potentially areas of long standing

\textsuperscript{44}Wayas, \textit{Nigeria's Leadership Role}, p. 79.

\textsuperscript{45}"Nigeria to Consider U.S. Request for Help,"

\textsuperscript{46}Lt. General Obasanjo, "Nigeria is not Yet a Rich
11 October 1977, p. 2.
conflicts that should be taken seriously. He predicted that these conflicts might lead ultimately to "an unhappy" relationship. Aluko was not that modest in his characterization of Nigeria-United States relations when he said that these conflicts had transformed Nigeria into one of the United States' "greatest opponents and a potential enemy."

It is important to note that some of these conflicts did not persist. For example, by 1981 Nigeria was no longer talking about the use of the oil weapon, and the issues of production levels and price range had largely been settled by market forces.

What is apparent in the literature on Nigeria-United States relations is that relations between both countries seem to reflect some elements of conflict and cooperation.

Methodology

The methodological approach used in this study is the Case Study. This method is used because it clearly

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48 Aluko, Essays in Nigerian Foreign Policy, p. 104.
provides an opportunity for the writer to undertake a comprehensive description and explanation of the many components of the subject matter. By using this approach, an attempt will be made to collect and examine data on the political relationship of these countries and the roles played by Nigeria and the United States in the cause of African emancipation. My aim is to generate insights that will have some applicability beyond the cases in this study. However, I am aware that these case studies themselves can not guarantee this.

This research focuses on four areas: (a) a general overview of Nigeria–United States relations during the period covered by this research 1975–1981); (b) identification of both countries' perspectives on political change; (c) an analysis of the positions taken by both countries on the question of political change in Africa, using Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa as case studies; and (d) from information generated in the above sections, conclusions will be drawn and generalizations made about the relations between both countries, their perspectives on political change in Africa, and evaluate the prospects for Nigeria–United States relations.
Data

Part of this study is based on data extracted from primary sources, including government documents and pronouncements. A substantial amount of valuable material is drawn from actual government actions, independent reports, journalistic and scholarly articles and to a lesser extent, from published interviews and texts on the subject.

Significance of the cases

The cases examined in this study are of special significance in that: (a) they held the inevitable prospect of a direct military confrontation between black and white-dominated Africa, (b) there was the possibility of great power confrontations, and (c) at the same time, they demonstrated that diplomatic initiatives can still be instrumental in bringing about political change in a region that is engulfed in revolutionary wars.

Theoretical Framework: Why Nations Act as they do

There are three aspects of theoretical concerns central to this study: (a) National Interests, (b) Foreign Policy, and (c) National Capabilities.

National interests.—These are the basic objectives
and ultimate determinants that the decision-makers of a
state ought to follow in formulating their foreign policy.
They are typically seen as general conceptions of those es-
sential elements that make up a state's most vital needs.
Invariably, these include self-preservation, independence,
territorial integrity, military security and economic well-
being. 49 As Ivo D. Duchacek puts it:

Groups constituting a national community feel that
in addition to their subnational and often conflicting
interests, they also have one higher and general
interest in common; the interest in remaining a state
and in promoting its security and welfare. This col-
collective interest represents a total of all individual
and group interests, and something more. It usually
stands above particular interests, and its emotional
content is high. 50

Ideally, national leaders are charged with the responsi-
bility of equally promoting and defending all of these
interests, but sometime such a task becomes almost an im-
possible one to accomplish. Hans J. Morgenthau elucidated
the link between interest and nation as follows:

...while the concern of politics with interest is
perennial, the connection between interest and the
national state is a product of history. The national

49 Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the
American People (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall,

50 Duchacek, Nations and Men, p. 118.
state itself is obviously a product of history and as such is destined to yield in time to different modes of political organization. As long as the world is politically organized into nations, the national interest is indeed the last word in international politics.\textsuperscript{51}

Although national interests may stand above particular interests and may be the last word in international politics, they also raise serious controversies, such as: (a) what exactly the national interests of a nation are in any given situation, (b) whether or not they are being seriously threatened by external forces, and (c) how best to promote and/or defend them.\textsuperscript{52}

Nation states in the contemporary state system interact with one another as they promote and defend their national interests. Differences in the national interests of states may lead to actual conflict, but such a clash "has never precluded conciliation or even cooperation among nations" in other areas.\textsuperscript{53} According to Duchacek: "When the interests of several nations seriously clash, it does not mean that these nations are in mutual opposition at all times and in all respects."\textsuperscript{54} Nation states sometime have


\textsuperscript{52}Duchacek, \textit{Nations and Men}, p. 119.

\textsuperscript{53}Ibid., p. 121. \hfill \textsuperscript{54}Ibid.
harmonious interests. When they do, they often work together to solve mutual problems. Closely related to national interests is foreign policy.

**Foreign policy.**—This is usually defined as a planned course of action developed by decision-makers of a state aimed at achieving specific objectives defined in terms of national interests. Furthermore, foreign policy involves a dynamic process of applying relatively fixed interpretations of national interests to the various situational factors of the international scene in order to develop a course of action and to achieve its implementation by diplomatic means. Major steps in this process include: (a) determining the state's most vital needs, (b) translating its national interests into specific goals and objectives, (c) determining the nature of the international environment as it relates to the policy goals, (d) analyzing the states capabilities to achieve the desired objectives, (e) formulation of a plan of action that will best utilize the state's capabilities, (f) executing the desired actions, and (g) undertaking a periodic review and

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evaluation of progress made toward the attainment of the desired objectives.\textsuperscript{56}

In practice, however, this process seldom proceeds quite as systematically as outlined above. On occasions, some of the steps may have to be discarded and new ones added because of the ever changing nature of the international environment. There are frustrations and failures, enough to prompt Gunnar Myrdal's gloomy assessment that "the foolishness of foreign policies may, on balance, be even greater today than they were three hundred years ago, when the Swedish Chancellor reflected, 'My son, my son, if you knew with what little wisdom the world is ruled.'\textsuperscript{57}

However, foreign policy has assumed a major role in international relations of most states. How much efforts and resources are devoted to the formulation and implementation of foreign policy is sometimes contingent upon the status of the state. In other words, the superpowers can afford and do devote more efforts and resources to the planning and execution of foreign policy than the small powers.

\textsuperscript{56}Duchacek, \textit{Nations and Men}, p. 113.

Foreign policy actions are sometimes difficult to evaluate in that: (a) their impact on other nations may be hard to measure, and (b) most policies rarely result in total success. More often than not they result in qualified success or a mixture of successes and failures.

National capabilities.—Because "not all that is desirable is possible," national leaders are forced to examine the power potential of their state before undertaking a course of action. This involves a systematic assessment of a state's military, diplomatic, political and economic abilities to achieve its foreign policy objectives. Furthermore, such an assessment may include all of the major elements of national power. These elements fall into two categories: the tangible elements and the non-tangible elements. The former are measurable, but the latter are not. The tangible elements include such considerations as geography, population, natural resources, economic strength, and military power. The non-tangible elements include national character, internal cohesion,


59 Duchacek, Nations and Men, p. 141.
reputation and leadership. It needs to be said that these elements are relative in time, and no single element is decisive in determining a state's potential power. According to Morgenthau:

A nation does not necessarily attain the maximum of national power because it is very rich in natural resources, possesses a very large population, or has built an enormous industrial and military establishment. A nation attains national power "when it has at its disposal a sufficient quantity and quality, in the right admixture, of those resources of power." Furthermore, capabilities per se can not translate into effective foreign policy unless these are backed by actions.

The national interests of nation states are usually centered around their most vital needs. These include self-preservation, peace, security, justice, freedom, territorial integrity and economic well-being. These interests are the fundamental objectives and ultimate determinants that guide national leaders in formulating their foreign policies. However, a state's ability to pursue

\[60\text{Ibid.}\]
\[61\text{Morgenthau, Politics Among Nations, p. 151.}\]
\[62\text{Ibid.}\]
its national interests to the utmost is, to some extent, contingent upon its capabilities. Nigeria–United States relations during the period under study can be better understood when placed in the context of the above-mentioned framework.

In the following chapter, an overview of Nigeria–United States relations (1975–1981) will be provided. The developments that led to Nigeria–United States understanding will be explored and their areas of common interests highlighted.
CHAPTER II

OVERVIEW OF NIGERIA-UNITED STATES RELATIONS 1975-1981

The focus in this chapter is to provide: (a) brief background information on Nigeria's foreign policy prior to 1975, and (b) an overview of Nigeria-United States relations during the period under study, pointing out the low and the high points.

Background

The hallmark of Nigeria's foreign policy from 1960-1975 was "pragmatism, restraint and caution."¹ This low-profile foreign policy posture has been interpreted to mean: (a) a decidedly pro-western bent, (b) avoidance of controversial issues, and (c) operating within the consensus of the O.A.U.² At independence in 1960 Nigeria's


Prime Minister Sir Abubakar T. Balewa expressed his belief in "a flexible foreign policy and in a closer association" with the West. Under the first civilian government of Prime Minister Balewa (1960-1966) Nigeria was officially nonaligned, but was in fact pro-West. At the United Nations, Nigeria supported western positions. Such a pro-western bent, reasoned Prime Minister Balewa, would "ensure that full attention is paid to the opinions" and views expressed by Nigeria on the important political issues of the time.

According to John J. Stremlau:

Nigeria sought unabashedly to maintain close relations with Britain and other western governments, for this was seen as the way to maximize economic development. . . . 'Moderate' and 'pragmatic' are the terms that western scholars most frequently invoke to describe the international conduct of Sir Abubakar T. Balewa's government.  

Nigeria's financial position at independence was very weak

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and she had to conduct herself in a manner acceptable to the west whose financial assistance Nigeria needed. And from 1960 to 1966 Nigeria received $273 million in foreign aid from the west. Observers pointed out that this dependence on financial aid "imposed severe constraints on the options open to" the Bala regime in its foreign policy.

In the affairs of the continent, Nigeria did not exert herself. Essentially Nigeria adhered to the O.A.U. principles of:

1. non-interference in the internal affairs of states,
2. respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each state,
3. peaceful settlement of disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation or arbitration,
4. absolute dedication to the total emancipation of the African territories which are still dependent.

This meant that Nigeria had to wait to be part of an O.A.U. consensus before taking any position on most issues affecting the continent. On Southern Africa, however, Nigeria was more forceful. The crusade against colonialism and

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6 Ibid.


oppression was one of the cornerstones of Nigeria's foreign policy. On the 15th anniversary of the Sharpeville Massacre, Nigeria's Commissioner for External Affairs, Dr. O. Arikpo reiterated Nigeria's position when he said:

It is the duty of not only the government but of all the people of Nigeria—as indeed that of every black man the world over—to continue to support the diplomatic, economic and cultural isolation of South Africa until that country abandons racial discrimination; until that government treats the black man in South Africa as a full citizen of the country of his birth. . .

And Nigeria has backed these pronouncements up by (a) prohibiting South African passport holders from entry into Nigeria, (b) prohibiting trade with South Africa, (c) spearheading the move that forcefully removed South Africa from the Commonwealth, and (d) playing a key role in contesting the credentials of the South African delegations at many international forums.10 Balewa's government was overthrown in a coup that brought General Yakubu Gowon to power in 1966.

Gowon's military regime (1966-1975) at first followed the same low-profile course in foreign affairs. However, with the beginning of the civil war in 1967,

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10Ibid., p. 109.
changes in Nigeria's foreign policy posture started to emerge. First, there was a change in emphasis. Nigeria placed more emphasis on acting independently of the west in foreign affairs. Second, there was a conscious attempt by Nigeria to curb the pro-western bent by encouraging relations with the Soviet Union. While the Balewa regime maintained economic and military ties almost exclusively with the West, the Gowon administration broke with tradition in August 1967 by entering into cultural, economic and military aid agreements with the Soviet Union. On August 11, 1967 the first shipment of Soviet MIG-17s and 122mm artillery batteries arrived in Nigeria with Soviet military personnel. Trade with the Soviet bloc countries also rose from 2.4 percent of Nigeria's total trade in 1966 to 4.6 percent in 1968. Nigeria's attempt at strengthening its relations with the Soviet Union notwithstanding, its cultural, economic and trade links remained securely with the West.

Gowon was ousted in another coup in 1975. Observers contend that what emerged at the end of the Gowon administration was a "transformation of Nigeria's foreign policy

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into one of rigorous nonalignment."\(^{13}\) This transformation was precipitated by the unwillingness of Britain and the United States to supply arms to Nigeria during the civil war, and the alleged United States support for Biafra.

In sum, Nigerian foreign policy under Prime Minister Balewa (1960-1966) was officially nonaligned, with a strong commitment to the principles of O.A.U. charter and a pro-western bent. The course of the civil war and western reactions and involvement precipitated a new stance in Nigeria's foreign policy during Gowon administration (1966-1975). Gowon's rigorous nonalignment policy meant curbing Nigeria's pro-western bent and reaching out to the Soviet bloc nations. Gowon's successor, Murtala Muhammed, changed all that.

Brigadier Olusegun Obasanjo became Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters and Colonel Garba became Commissioner for External Affairs. These were critical appointments in that: (a) Muhammed and Obasanjo were vocal members of the Nigerian foreign affairs elite, with critical views of Nigeria's foreign policy under Gowon before assuming their positions, which meant, (b) among other things, that the

views of the professional staff and the Nigerian academi-
cians would no longer be disregarded as seemed to be the
case under Gowon. As expected, the new administration set
up a high powered committee to review Nigeria's foreign
policy and make recommendations. Consequently, rather
than maintain continuity with his predecessors, Muhammed
adopted a "radical and militant" approach, not hesitating
to engage in confrontation with any of the major powers,
especially on issues relating to the liberation of Southern
Africa.

Muhammed's approach, facilitated by the new oil
wealth, did not fail to arouse United States attention.
Thus, after about eight-year reign over United States
policy of benign neglect, Henry Kissinger attempted to
visit Nigeria in 1976.

Overview: (1975-1981)

The years 1975 to 1976 can be characterized as the
low point in Nigeria-United States relations, while 1977 to
1980 represented the high point. Relations between Lagos
and Washington were decidedly cool, if not icy, during the

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14 The Adedeji Report on Foreign Policy of 1976 recom-
mended, among other things, that Nigeria adopt a militant
foreign policy posture with some emphasis on the promotion
and defense of the rights and interests of all black people.
Nixon-Ford administrations. One of the manifestations of this was the unwillingness of Lagos to receive then Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger. Critics contend that during this period "the United States had no Nigerian policy." According to Aluko, the main sources of disagreement between the two countries, among others, were: (1) the tough and uncompromising style of the Nixon-Ford administrations in dealing with African countries, (a) American importation of strategic minerals from Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) until the repeal of the Byrd Amendment, and (3) the United States involvement in Angola in 1975, and the Ford letter to the Nigerian leader on the eve of the extraordinary summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity in Addis Ababa in January 1977.

Between 1977 and 1980 Nigeria-United States relations took a dramatic turn around from the open differences mentioned above to cordial exchanges which culminated in

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16 Ford urged the Nigerian leader not to recognize the O.A.U. meeting on the Angolan crisis. The letter provoked a bitter official verbal attack on the U.S. by Nigeria, which described the letter as an insult to Africa.

state visits by the leaders of both countries. Both visits were hailed in Lagos and Washington as a success. There were those who contended that this heightened United States interest in Nigeria could be traced to three distinct causes.18

**Strategic.**—Soviet-Cuban activities in Africa had caused United States policy-makers to recognize the need to cultivate the friendship of Nigeria. Such friendship with Nigeria and other key African countries, United States policy-makers envisaged, would be instrumental in the success of further United States diplomatic initiatives designed to curtail Soviet-Cuban activities in Africa.

**Political.**—The influence of about 25 million Americans of African ancestry who want to see justice done for the black majorities in Southern Africa denied effective political participation.

**Economic.**—The value of United States investments in Nigeria had been considerable. The main sectors of United States investments were in the oil industry, liquefied gas, agriculture, construction, banking and

insurance and manufacturing industries. In 1980 United States trade and investments with Nigeria stood at $1.49 and $3.5 billion, respectively.\textsuperscript{19}

Great Decisions 1979 summed up the new understanding between Nigeria and the United States in three principles:

(1) the key to success in black Africa is to establish the United States as a friend of African nationalism;
(2) stronger pressures must be brought to bear against white minority rule in Southern Africa; and (3) to accomplish the above, the United States must de-emphasize East-West confrontation in Africa.\textsuperscript{20}

Some of the important reasons for the new understanding can be gleaned from National Security Council Memorandum No. D18, part of which sought to foster closer cooperation with Nigeria which was regarded as one of the influential states likely to sway the fate of the rest of Africa; and to enhance United States cooperative effort with the "moderate states of Africa in the cause of African emancipation."\textsuperscript{21}

It is apparent from the second reason that there was a convergence of interests between the two countries. The "cause of African emancipation," for which the United

\textsuperscript{20}Ibid., p. 58.

States was willing to join forces with moderate African states to achieve, was also the main desire of Nigeria. Aluko explained that:

Although all American governments since 1960 have maintained that they were committed to African independence and liberation from racial and other social, political and economic oppression, the Carter administration has been the first to declare that its ultimate aim in South Africa is the establishment of the principle of 'one man, one vote,' which is what Nigeria wants.²²

Because of this convergence of interests, Nigeria supported United States diplomatic initiatives in Africa.

In September 1977 Nigeria came out strongly in favor of the Anglo-American settlement proposals in Zimbabwe. According to Joseph Garba, then Nigeria's Commissioner for External Affairs, General Obasanjo's trip in September 1977 to the front line states was undertaken for the sole purpose of persuading the leaders of these countries to accept the proposals.²³ Explaining the government's position on the Anglo-American proposal, Garba stated that: "...the document truly contained a number of the African demands in Southern Africa. Our demands like

²²Aluko, Essays in Nigerian Foreign Policy, p. 250.

one man, one vote in those territories are contained in the proposals. In addition to one man, one vote, the document provided for a cease-fire; United Nations observers to monitor elections and activities of the police; a neutral transition administration with powers over defense, law and order and electoral arrangements in the hands of an impartial administrator; integration of existing armed forces into one army that would be loyal to the elected government; and a democratic constitution with guarantees of individual rights for both black and white Zimbabweans.

Obasanjo's trip to the front line states to drum up support for the Anglo-American proposals was one indication that the United States needed Nigeria's goodwill and support if its diplomatic initiatives in Africa were to succeed. Nigeria, on the other hand, needed United States cooperation in bringing pressures to bear against white minority rule in Southern Africa. Nigerian leaders realized that, not only was it almost impossible to go it alone, but political independence in Southern Africa could not be achieved through armed struggle alone.

24 Ibid.

The issue of political independence in Africa was of paramount importance to Nigeria. This stated foreign policy objective was consistently pursued under successive governments from Muhammed to Shagari. On December 2, 1975, the then Nigerian leader Brigadier Murtala Muhammed in an address to the Angolan people, said:

We in Nigeria are committed to the total liberation of the whole of Africa and we will not fold our hands to see our brothers and sisters in Angola subjugated, exploited and reconquered by the racists and imperialists in South Africa and their supporters.

...your struggle is therefore our struggle and we will support you both morally and materially until absolute victory is gained in Angola.26

Muhammed was assassinated in 1976, and his successor, O. Obasanjo made it clear that there would be no change in foreign policy objectives. In a speech marking Nigeria's 17th independence anniversary Obasanjo declared:

...until all Africa is free, we remain unfree... Nigeria will continue to support liberation movements in Africa until success is achieved. Any political process based on partial or total exclusion of large sections of the adult population, whatever the rationale, must crumble. When...Namibia becomes free, when apartheid ceases to exist in South Africa, all Nigerians can hold their heads high...27


27"We Must Sacrifice to Liberate Africa," New Nigeria, 4 October 1977, p. 9.
Nigeria's then Commissioner for Foreign Affairs, Joseph Garba told the United Nations Security Council:

Mr. Smith is steeped in African blood and his allies in South Africa and the West share responsibility for the present situation. Nigerian armed forces have been alerted to the unfolding situation in Southern Africa and Nigeria cannot remain uninvolved if a racial conflagration engulfs the region.\(^2\)

In an earlier address to the Nation on June 29, 1976, the Nigerian leader reiterated that:

\[...\text{the centre-piece of our foreign policy is Africa. We are committed to the total liberation of all oppressed black people in Africa. ... Whether or not the racists and their collaborators like it, Southern Africa must be free. Nigeria will contribute her full quota to the liberation struggle. ...}\] \(^2\)

Nigeria's full quota, according to O. Aluko, had been very substantial. In addition to the aid Nigeria has given to the freedom fighters through the Organization of African Unity, Nigeria also provided other direct bilateral military and economic aid to the tune of about $5 million a year during 1975-1980 to liberation movements in Southern Africa. Included in this aid package were small arms,


ammunitions and the services of C.130 Hercules military transport planes. Some aspects of Nigeria's contribution to liberation movements in Africa are still classified information, but enough has been made public as extensively documented by Z. Cervenka. One example of the highly publicized aid was the N13.5 grant given to the MPLA government of Angola by Nigeria on December 20, 1975. On July 5, 1976 at the meeting of O.A.U. heads of state in Mauritania, Nigeria donated a quarter of a million dollars to the liberation committee to be used for the struggle in Zimbabwe. In 1977 there was widespread discussion in government circles and the press in Nigeria about how far Nigeria could go on the issue of political change in Africa. The immediate cause of this discussion was the announcement by the Chief of Army Staff, Lt. General T. Y. Danjuma in June 1977 that Nigeria was ready to send troops to assist

30 Aluko, Essays in Nigerian Foreign Policy, p. 251.


the liberation movements in Southern Africa. At best, Dajuma may have made propaganda mileage out of the announcement, for there was no evidence to suggest that such action was being given any serious consideration by the Nigerian government. Although the military option was not given any serious consideration, Nigeria has featured prominently in the discussion considered by some observers "to be the inevitable prospect of a direct military confrontation between black and white-dominated Africa." For such a confrontation to be successful, observers contended, "it would require the backing, especially at sea and in the air, of a super-power and even such a power would be committed to the risks of an operation 6,000 miles from home." Nigeria's reluctance to consider the military option seriously might also have been due to the belief that: "it is likely that, if the future of Southern Africa is to be determined militarily, it will be as a result of prolonged guerrilla war


rather than through a direct military confrontation."\textsuperscript{37} Geographical, logistic and political factors seemed to have ruled out the military option, however, there was evidence to suggest that Nigeria has a military force to be reckoned with in the event of a confrontation between black and white-dominated Africa. A study by the International Institute for Strategic Studies concluded that Nigeria had "by far the largest and one of the best equipped forces in black Africa." Furthermore, the study showed that in 1978 Nigeria had an estimated total of 232,500 men, and spent $2.4 billion on defense. On the other hand, the study indicated that the strength of South Africa's defense force was such that "she would be a match for any force which black African countries could assemble against her."\textsuperscript{38}

There is no doubt that the issue of political independence in Africa was very important to Nigeria. How sensitive was United States foreign policy to this issue? National Security Council Memorandum No. D18 was based on

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{37}Ibid.
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\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{38}The Military Balance 1977-78, International Institute for Strategic Studies, (London, 1978), p. 25. South Africa's armed forces were estimated to be 55,000, with an additional 90,000 in paramilitary units and spent an estimated $1.9 billion on defense.
\end{footnotesize}
the premise that Nigeria would remain a friendly country if United States foreign policy were sensitive to issues of great importance to Nigeria, particularly, the issue of "African emancipation."\textsuperscript{39} The United States had attempted to carry out its pledge of cooperation with Nigeria in the cause of political independence in Africa by two means: economic/military assistance and diplomacy. The assumption here was that resources supporting a policy were key to its effectiveness.

Historically, United States official aid to Africa had been very small. From 1960 to 1976 Africa's share of United States aid averaged around 9 percent. By contrast, United States aid to Latin America was more than 20 percent.\textsuperscript{40} However, under the Carter administration more assistance was given than in the past. For example, United States aid budget for fiscal year 1978 included \$460 million for Africa. This represented a 48 percent increase over 1977.\textsuperscript{41} In 1979 the Carter administration asked Congress for \$294 million for the African Development Fund and

\textsuperscript{39}N.S.C. Strategy No. D18, p. 15.

\textsuperscript{40}Africa Report, March-April 1979, p. 12.

\textsuperscript{41}Great Decisions 1979, p. 61.
$45 million for military assistance.42 Nigeria was one of the several African countries which were beneficiaries of United States aid programs, having borrowed a total of $2 billion from the World Bank and American banks in 1978.43 In the Horn and in Southern Africa the United States made some efforts to help resolve disputes peacefully. In the Ogaden conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia, the United States urged all of the parties concerned to make efforts toward a peaceful settlement. During the Carter administration Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, Richard Moose visited Somalia. State Department reports on the trip indicated that discussions with President Siad Barre were centered on: (a) obtaining assurances from President Barre that he "would respect the internationally recognized borders of his neighbors," and (b) informing the Somali leader that further United States aid to Somalia would be restricted in scope and "confined to defensive items only."44 The implications here were that: (a) Somalia's respect for the internationally recognized


borders of his neighbors would remove the causes of the Ogaden conflict, and (b) since the United States was the major arms suppliers to Somalia, a limited supply would have had a halting effect on Somalia's ability to continue the conflict.

In Southern Africa the United States had been an active member of the Contact Group, formed in April 1977 to find a peaceful solution to the Namibian question. United States chief negotiators, especially Donald F. McHenry during the Carter administration, at different points of the negotiation, came close to achieving a breakthrough. The United States was instrumental in working out what became known as "the Contact Group proposal" for a Namibian settlement which included a call for "cease-fire, elections and independence for Namibia." South Africa had long rejected this plan reportedly because it is thought to have favored SWAPO's electoral chances. Kurt Waldheim warned in his report to the General Assembly in 1979 that such delay in freeing Namibia was "bound to lead to an

45 The other members were Britain, France, Canada and W. Germany.

escalation of violence and bring bloodshed and ruin to the region."

For decades, United States policy toward South Africa had been an ambivalent mixture: rhetorical condemnation of apartheid, sorrowful slaps on the wrist, and wishful thinking that contact and business would lead to evolutionary change, and revolution averted. Although Henry Kissinger had made a belated start in his Lusaka speech in 1976, the first real indication that a change was imminent surfaced during the 1976 presidential election campaign when the Democratic Party charged that eight years of Republican administrations' indifference, "accompanied by increasing cooperation with the racist regime, have left our influence and prestige in Africa at an historical low."

In its place, the Democrats promised to "adopt policies that recognized the intrinsic importance of Africa, and the inevitability of majority rule" in South Africa. Furthermore, they promised to:

(1) Work aggressively to involve black Americans in foreign policy positions. . .and in decisions affecting African interests; (2) support majority rule in

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Southern Africa, recognizing that our true interests lie in peaceful progress towards a free South Africa for all South Africans, black and white; (3) lend support to African nations in denying recognition to 'Homelands' given pseudo-independence by the South African government under its current policy of 'separate development'; (4) end relaxation of arms embargo against South Africa.48

The Carter administration attempted to fulfill some of these campaign promises by: (a) appointing Andrew Young as United States Ambassador to the United Nations; (b) having Vice President Walter Mondale handle the South African negotiations; and (c) by personally taking a direct interest in developing day-to-day policies towards Southern Africa.49 Furthermore, the administration took a number of actions to underscore United States' opposition to apartheid and racial discrimination in South Africa. One such action was to arrange a top-level meeting with the Vice President and South Africa's Prime Minister in Vienna in May 1977.50 The purpose of the meeting was to inform Mr. Vorster that a new era had begun in United States-South Africa relations, and to warn him that, in President Carter's own words,


"unless there is movement away from racial discrimination and separate development and toward full political participation for all South Africans, relations between our two countries can not improve." The United States supported the 1977 United Nations arms embargo against South Africa, and in 1978 imposed a ban on export of goods and technology to the South African regime.

There were some groups who thought that the United States could do better, but that it lacked the political will and unwavering commitment to bring about change in South Africa. They called for stronger measures, including disinvestment and a trade boycott. Beyond diplomatic rhetoric, the case can be made that the United States may not have done enough in concrete terms, but it should be remembered that nation states rarely pursue foreign policies that are not in their own interests. United States interests in South Africa go beyond the rhetoric of African freedom. What these interests are, Nigeria-United States Carter, "Interview," p. 10.

52 Ibid.

53 They included university students and black organizations across the United States.
perspectives on political change, and the common grounds that existed between both countries will be explained in the next chapter.
Nigeria and the United States agreed that political change in Africa was inevitable, but as has been explained earlier, both countries had not always agreed on: (a) what political change meant, and (b) how best to achieve it. However, the emphasis here is on the convergence of interests that existed between both countries on the issue of political change in Africa and their respective motivations.

Nigeria's Perspective

Successive governments from Muhammed to Shagari have seen it, in the words of Chief Abdul Yesufu Eke, the Nigerian Ambassador to Washington, as "a duty to ensure that the wind of change blowing over the continent continues."¹ During the period covered by this study, Nigeria's perspective on political change in Africa

remained fairly consistent. Some of the elements of Nigeria's perspective useful for our examination of the issue of political change in Africa include:

1. Negotiated settlement—As evidenced by the country's support for United States initiatives in Africa, including the Anglo-American proposal, Nigeria supported change by peaceful means where feasible.

2. Armed struggle—Where negotiated settlement had failed, Nigeria expressed strong support for armed struggle as evidenced by her extensive support for liberation movements in Africa.

In a policy statement made by General Muhammed in 1975, these two elements were implicitly echoed when he said "if persuasion failed, other methods would be employed." Obasanjo was more forceful in his approach. Speaking at a White House dinner on October 11, 1977 he reiterated these two elements of Nigeria's perspective on political change when he expressed, on the one hand, "support for all efforts aimed at finding a just and peaceful solutions" to the issue of political change in Africa, and on the other hand

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talked about "his belief in the armed liberation struggle."³

What is evident here is that the fact of change was perhaps more important to Nigeria than how change occurred. The same can not be said about the United States. On occasions, the United States had expressed concern about how change occurs and whose interests and influence it reflected. When it did, critics were quick to accuse the United States of being the policeman of Africa, dedicated to preventing change.⁴ It should be pointed out that while Nigeria publicly embraced negotiated settlement and armed struggle, the United States publicly advocated only negotiated settlement. Although the United States had been known to be involved in several covert operations around the world that amounted to supporting armed struggle, it had fallen short of publicly adopting armed struggle as an official policy. There was a major disagreement over means. It did not preclude cooperation between both countries, it only led to minor irritations, with no major strain in relations. However, there is evidence to show that the United States was

³Ibid., No. 1809, 11 October 1977, p. 5.

⁴Radical Pan-Africanists, including Claude Ake, Peter Enahoro and Ralf Uwechue hold this view. For an overview, see New African, August 1978, p. 14.
not necessarily against change per se, provided such change was not inimical to United States interests.

United States Perspective

In a speech on July 1, 1977 Secretary of State Cyrus Vance described United States perspective as "affirmative" and added that:

A negative, reactive American policy that seeks only to oppose Soviet or Cuban involvement in Africa would be both dangerous and futile. Our best course is to help resolve the problems which create opportunities for external intervention.\(^5\)

According to Vance, some of the elements of this perspective included:

. . .(1) A strong United States commitment to social justice and economic development in Africa; (2) efforts to help resolve African disputes peacefully; (3) respect for African nationalism; and (4) helping to foster respect for human rights which strengthens the political fabric of African nations.\(^6\)

The United States had the erroneous notion that countries experiencing political change in Africa brought about through armed struggle, aided by the Soviet Union, would as a matter of course, become Soviet satellites. By

\(^5\)Cyrus Vance, "The United States and Africa: Building Positive Relations," Address made before the annual convention of the NAACP at St. Louis, Missouri, July 1, 1977, p. 5.

\(^6\)Vance, "Issues Facing the U.S. in Africa," p. 11.
interpolating events in Africa as a by-product of a global East-West conflict, the United States either ignored the nationalist dynamic of the African situation or was thoroughly ignorant of it. Thus, the United States on occasion, spoke out forcefully against armed struggle. And when tough talking failed, the United States had invariably resorted to covert operations by secretly backing the opposing factions. For example, in 1975 after United States arm-twisting attempt to prevent O.A.U.'s recognition of the M.P.L.A. failed, it resorted to covert operation by secretly arming and funding the UNITA faction in Angola.

**Common Objective**

It was obvious from both countries' perspectives that a common objective existed between them. That common objective was that Africa become free. This point was further highlighted by Obasanjo in a White House dinner speech when he reiterated that: "A close affinity already exists between our two countries. . . . This affinity. . . derives from our common attachment to freedom and independence." \(^7\) Beginning with the Carter administration this

common objective was recognized by United States policy-makers. In a policy statement on June 7, 1978 President Carter stressed United States commitment to: "Africa that is free...free of the dominance of outside powers, free of the bitterness of racial injustice, free of conflict..."\(^8\)

However, at the beginning of the Reagan administration observers wondered if African concerns, such as the issue of political change in Africa, would be regarded as "high priority issues as they were in the Carter administration."\(^9\) Diplomatic rhetoric notwithstanding, the Reagan administration did not regard African concerns as high priority issues. To maintain the level of rhetoric, Reagan acknowledged the importance of the common objective existing between both countries when he said in his reply to Ambassador Eke's speech, that:

The constructive leadership role Nigeria plays among African nations and in international form is an important contribution to peace and mutual understanding. The United States has greatly appreciated the support of your government in many issues and crises facing the world community. Our many bilateral

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consultations on various of these topics have served to bring us even closer together. We share the same goals and objectives, . . . resolving differences through peaceful negotiations, eliminating oppression and the repression of people. . . .

Nigeria may have played a constructive leadership role in Africa, and may have cooperated with the United States in efforts to resolve some of the conflicts in Africa, but it is hard to say both were involved in these interactions for the same reasons. Officially, the United States had expressed its preference for peaceful change, as opposed to armed liberation and its repercussions. According to Cyrus Vance, the United States preferred:

Working for peaceful change. Violence. . . bears many costs—in human terms, in a legacy of political polarization, in damage to economic interests, . . . and in the excuse it presents for outside interference.

The idea of a peaceful change had sometimes been difficult to pursue because of (1) the intransigence of the colonizers, (2) the successes of armed liberation struggle, (3) the continued flow of arms from the Soviet Union and

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10. President Reagan gave this reply to the speech made by A. Y. Eke, the Nigerian Ambassador to Washington at the White House on June 10, 1981, and was reported in West Africa, 27 July 1981, p. 1689.

Eastern bloc nations and (4) the presence of Cuban troops. The successes of armed liberation struggle were, to some extent, dependent on the level of arms flow from the Eastern bloc nations and the presence of Cuban troops. In Ethiopia alone, the Soviet Union had flown in an estimated $2 billion worth of military hardware, 3,000 Russian military advisers and about 20,000 Cuban combat troops. Similar efforts were being duplicated in other African trouble spots, hence the concern expressed by the United States about Soviet and Cuban activities in Africa. There are those who argue that the Cuban troops and Soviet weapons were not the problem. The problem, they said, was the existence of colonialism and oppression; white, minority-ruled governments pursuing discriminatory policies.

This has become a source of disagreement between the two countries, with the United States linking the issue of Cuban troops with the question of independence; and Nigeria insisting the problem was not the Cuban troops,

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but colonialism and oppression. In the words of Shagari, "linking the so-called issue of Cuban troops with the question of independence is as unjust as it is incomprehensible." 14

The fact that both countries were not agreed on what the problem was in Southern Africa is a further testimony that the stakes for both countries in the liberation of Southern Africa were not the same. However, as has been indicated in our framework, disagreement in one area does not necessarily preclude cooperation among nations in other areas. Indeed both countries had been engaged in some cooperative efforts in many of Africa's minor and major trouble spots. Joseph Garba's attempt to mediate the Shaba problem between Zaire and Angola 15 in the summer of 1977, the continuing peace efforts in Chad and Obasanjo's trip to the Frontline States were some of the positive indicators of these cooperative efforts between both nations to find solutions to some of Africa's pressing problems. Mention

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has been made of Obasanjo's trip in the preceding chapter. Garba's mediation effort grew out of an understanding between him and Vance. According to Donald B. Easum's testimony, the trade-off was that "the United States would not overreact to the reported role of the Cubans" in the conflict.16 Garba's trip was the first major step toward a peaceful settlement. It produced two meetings between the two countries in Brazzaville in July 1978.17 At these meetings both countries agreed to: (1) bring relations back to normal; (2) free the refugees in both countries, and (3) reopen the connecting railway line. This normalization was further consolidated by visits by both Heads of state. First, President Neto paid an official three-day visit at the invitation of President Mobutu on August 19, 1978. Second, the invitation for President Mobutu to visit Angola was contained in a joint Communique18 issued at the end of President Neto's visit to Zaire. In the communiqué both countries reaffirmed: (1) their respect for the aims and


principles of the O.A.U. and the United Nations; (2) their pledge to establish a joint commission to increase security along their common border; and (3) their commitment to the development of close cooperation and the establishment of diplomatic relations.

Nigeria and the United States were actively involved in efforts to find a peaceful solution to the civil war in Chad. First, there was the initial peace effort spearheaded by Obasanjo and Shagari administrations that culminated in the well-acclaimed Lagos Accords. Second, the collaborative effort between Nigeria and the United States on the Chadian crisis was first mentioned at the Cancun conference in Mexico where both leaders discussed the formation of a peace-keeping force to replace the Libyan forces in Chad. The inter-African peace-keeping force that was finally assembled from six African countries, including Nigeria, consisted of 5,000 troops, some 2,000 of them and the commanding general, General G. O. Ejiga, were

19 In 1979 Nigeria brought all the warring factors in Chad to the conference table in an attempt to work out a peaceful solution acceptable to all. The resultant proposal that came to be known as the Lagos Accords was signed in Lagos on August 18, 1979.

from Nigeria. A substantial part of the cost for the Nigerian contingent was covered by the United States, having provided some logistical help and financial assistance to the tune of $12 million.21 The functions22 of the peace-keeping force were to: (1) maintain law and order; (2) supervise elections, and (3) help in the integration of the Chadian army.

The idea of a peace-keeping force in Chad raised optimistic hopes when it was initiated. New African, echoing this optimistic view, saw the move "as an encouraging sign of some order coming out of the Chadian disorder."23 Furthermore, it was in the interest of Nigeria and the United States to find a political solution to the Chadian crisis. Success in Chad would enhance Nigeria's credibility as regional power, and for the United States it would deprive Libya of a conflict to exploit. Thus, the similarity in both countries' position, and their cooperative efforts to reconcile the warring factions and work out a time-table


for a ceasefire and elections were essentially in keeping with some of the elements of both countries' notions of their national interests. While there were similarities in both countries' perspectives on political change, the question remains: were both countries motivated by the same interests?

Motivation

As Richard Cottam puts it, motivation is a "compound of factors that predispose a government and people to move in a decisional direction in foreign affairs." What was at stake for Nigeria and the United States in the liberation of Southern Africa? My contention is that both were not motivated by the same interests.

Nigeria

Two important factors can be identified: moral obligation and commitment to black solidarity. There was evidence to suggest that Nigeria was motivated by its sincere commitment to the unfinished task of the total decolonization of Southern Africa. Nigeria saw this task

as a moral obligation to assist fellow Africans who were still under colonialism. Successive administrations since 1960 had consistently stressed the point that until all of Africa was free, Nigeria remained unfree. This expressed commitment to decolonization had also been backed by financial and logistical support for liberation movements in Southern Africa. The idea of black solidarity, as it related to black people in the continent, was promoted by the Gowon administration in a rather low-keyed fashion. However, under the Muhammed-Obasanjo administrations, black solidarity was raised to the front political burner. According to Aluko:

> It was raised to an important aspect of policy. Indeed, the Adedeji Report on foreign policy in 1976 declared that one of the objectives of the country's external policy should be the defense and promotion of the rights and interests of all black people within and outside Africa.  

The Shagari administration had publicly emphasized this aspect of Nigeria's foreign policy on several occasions. "The destiny of Nigeria," said Shagari, "is inextricably linked with the fortunes of all the countries of Africa and

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25 This has become part of the rallying cry for all Nigerian leaders since 1960.

all the peoples of African descent abroad."  

Nigeria saw her role as Africa's spokesman, with a moral obligation to help fellow Africans still under colonial rule to win their independence. As Africa's most populous nation, with its relative wealth, it is understandable that Nigeria should have spearheaded the cause of black people in Africa, particularly Southern Africa.

**United States**

Critics assert that there was a need to transcend the political rhetoric of the United States in its so-called commitment to the cause of African emancipation; pointing out that there was more to the stated United States' position than was readily discernible.  

United States interests, they contended, were not just Africa that was free per se, but free for the maintenance and or pursuance of United States' strategic and economic interests. Another factor was the fear of the probable cut off of Nigerian oil. Strategic interests have generally included access to the

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28 Pan-Africanists, including black organizations such as the Congressional Black Caucus and university students across the U.S. held this view.
region's mineral resources, security of Western oil flows around the Cape and containing the spread of Soviet and Cuban influence and military activities in Africa.\textsuperscript{29} Specifically, United States' military and strategic stake in Southern Africa was centered around the possibility of Soviet access to naval bases in the region. Since the bulk of Western Europe's oil supplies and a fifth of United States' pass through the Cape of Good Hope,\textsuperscript{30} a prolonged cut off of these supplies by the Soviet Union could wreck havoc on Western economies. Therefore, access to basing rights in Southern Africa was viewed by United States policymakers as giving the Soviet Union the military means to do so. David Rees summed up the strategic importance of the Cape route when he wrote:

> For nearly two hundred years the critical strategic importance of the Cape to the Western trading system has been generally recognized. . . . In the age of the Cape Oil Route, the strategic significance of the best intermediary position between Europe and India is even further enhanced. . . . Consolidation of Soviet influence in South Africa would almost certainly be


\textsuperscript{30}Ibid., p. 318.
the penultimate stage in the economic strangulation of the West.31

Economic.—The United States was heavily dependent on mineral imports from Southern Africa. These minerals were considered to be crucial to the production process of United States' industries. Four essential minerals: chromium, manganese, vanadium and platinum gave the Southern African countries, particularly South Africa, their significance for the United States. Chromium and vanadium are vital to the production of anti-corrosive steels, and platinum is a major element in anti-polution technology.32

Table 1 shows the degree of United States import dependence.

TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mineral</th>
<th>% of Needs Imported</th>
<th>Major Southern Africa Supplier (% of U.S. Imports)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chromium</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>South Africa (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chromium</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Zimbabwe (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanadium</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Zimbabwe (20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


TABLE 1—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mineral</th>
<th>% of Needs Imported</th>
<th>Major Southern Africa Supplier (% of U.S. Imports)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antimony</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>South Africa (44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platinum Group</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>South Africa (42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manganese</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>South Africa (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Diamonds</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>South Africa (81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobalt</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>Zambia (7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Other aspects of United States economic interests are investments and trade. In 1980 United States investments in Southern Africa were estimated to be about $3 billion, with

TABLE 2

U.S. TRADE WITH SOUTHERN AFRICA, 1978-1980
(millions of current U.S. $)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>U.S.Exports to Southern Africa</th>
<th>U.S.Imports from Southern Africa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
$2 billion in South Africa. South Africa appears to have dominated United States trade with Southern Africa. The breakdown is shown in Table 2. These figures partly explain why Southern Africa remained a major strategic and economic interest to the United States. It is conceivable that so long as there are no other overriding national interests, the United States would simply continue its involvement in the region, irrespective of the political arrangement there. Furthermore, it can be said that the United States had downplayed the strategic and economic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>U.S. Exports to Southern Africa</th>
<th>U.S. Imports from Southern Africa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>1,080</td>
<td>1,413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aspects of its interests, while at the same time highlighting its stated commitment to the cause of African emancipation.

The threat of oil weapon.—United States dependence on foreign oil had significant implications for its foreign policy. In 1979 Nigeria provided 18.8 percent of United States oil imports, second only to purchases from Saudi Arabia. And it was estimated that United States investments in Nigeria in 1980 amounted to over $3.5 billion.\textsuperscript{33} The bulk of these investments were in the oil industry, followed by investments in agriculture. The United States-Nigerian Joint Agricultural Consultative Committee was charged with the responsibility of supervising these investments in agriculture.\textsuperscript{34} The implication here was that Nigeria could use its oil as a lever to pressure United States action on Southern Africa. The threat that Nigeria might cut off oil supply to the United States or nationalize United States investments to underscore its displeasure with United States policy in Southern Africa may or may not have been credible, but United States

\textsuperscript{33}Aluko, \textit{Essays in Nigerian Foreign Policy}, p. 138.

\textsuperscript{34}Ibid.
policy-makers would rather not face that prospect. Washington would like to have thought that Lagos was bluffing about the use of the oil weapon, but after a similar action was taken by Nigeria against Britain in 1979 it was hard not to think that the threat was a credible one. Credibility could have been established in many ways. One method was through a declaratory statement of intentions. A second method was through consistent action. Nigeria's policy statement in 1979 that United States' recognition of the Internal Settlement regime in (Rhodesia) Zimbabwe will be met with "appropriate response" was interpreted to mean Nigeria would cut off United States' supplies of oil if the Muzorewa regime was recognized by the United States. Credibility was greatly enhanced if the threat were not out of proportion with the provocation, and there was evidence

35 Following Mrs. Thatcher's statement of her intention to recognize the Muzorewa regime in (Rhodesia) Zimbabwe, Nigeria nationalized BP and disqualified British companies seeking contracts and licenses in Nigeria.

36 For further details see J. David Singer, Deterrence, Arms Control and Disarmament, and Thomas Schelling, Arms and Influence (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966).

37 According to Kenneth Boulding, beyond a particular point, the higher the level of a threat, the lower the probability that it will be believed. See Kenneth Boulding, Conflict and Defense: A General Theory (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 255.
in the threatening nation's history to indicate that the threat may have actually been carried out. It would appear that the oil cut off to United States was certainly not out of proportion to United States' non-support for Nigeria's Southern African policy, and Nigeria's action against Britain in 1979 seemed to have added to the credibility of the threat.

Gulf Oil got 60 percent of its oil from Nigeria, and when the United States Congress was debating whether or not to lift sanctions against the Internal Settlement regime in (Rhodesia) Zimbabwe in 1979, a Gulf Oil representative told a congressional hearing that "we would not like to see our imports jeopardized by precipitous congressional action."\(^{38}\) It was evident that the Nigerian card was on the table, and Congress took note of it when it decided not to lift the sanctions if President Carter considered their retention to be "in the national interest."\(^{39}\) Their retention was, indeed, deemed by the President to have been in the national interest of the United States.


Could Nigeria have actually cut off the supply of oil to the United States? Nigerians felt very strongly about the situation in Southern Africa. Successive administrations, particularly from 1975, have regarded the liberation of Southern Africa as a matter of high principle for which they were willing to pay whatever economic price. Therefore, under certain market conditions, Nigeria might have been tempted to take such action. At the height of the oil boom in 1979 Nigeria was being urged by a small but vocal sector of the Nigerian population to: (a) move from verbal protest to concrete action by organizing concerted economic reprisals against the West, particularly the United States, (b) cut off oil supplies to the United States, and (c) increase aid to frontline states and the liberation movements. One important point to remember, however, is that oil sales represented about 80 percent of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings. Thomas Schelling explained this paradox succinctly: "In threatening to hurt somebody if he misbehaves, it need not make a critical difference how much it would hurt you too—if you can make

him believe that threat." Thus, the implication here is that it does not really matter whether or not Nigeria loses revenue in the process, but that the United States is made to believe the threat. The point was to establish the credibility of the oil threat, which Nigeria may have managed to do. Nigeria did not actually have to carry out the threat to obtain United States support for the cause of African emancipation, it only had to make the United States believe it. That also Nigeria may have managed to do.

In sum, the United States and Nigeria were not interested in the cause of African emancipation for the same reasons. While Nigeria was motivated by moral principles and its commitment to black solidarity, the United States was motivated by its strategic and economic interests, and, to some extent, the fear of the oil threat.

Shared perspectives had not really meant shared interests between both countries, but the real test of their perspectives on political change in Africa was in the problem areas of Southern Africa. In the following chapter, an attempt will be made to find out, on the basis of detailed

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empirical data, the actual positions taken by both countries on the issue of political change in Africa, using Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa as case studies.
CHAPTER IV

CASE STUDIES

The remarkable similarity in the political history of Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa is that they all suffered from some form of colonialism, oppression and the attendant effects of substantial white settlement. White settlement in these countries varied widely, however, from the long established white settlement in Angola dating back to 1575 and South Africa in 1652, to the much later colonization of Zimbabwe during the 1890s and Namibia in the early 1900s. Various theories have been espoused by whites at different periods to justify their dominance: in Angola, the Portuguese fiction of assimilation and overseas provinces; in Zimbabwe, the white settlers' notion of "partnership"; in Namibia, the sacred trust; and in South Africa, the concept of apartheid. In Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa, however, the major problem was essentially the same—that of protecting entrenched white minority interests while at the same time attempting to meet the
Aspirations of the African majority.

The first two have managed to shake the yoke of colonialism, but not its ramifications; while the last two are still continuing the struggle for independence. At one time or another the most important issue on the minds of Africans in these countries was the issue of political change. This chapter will examine how Angola and Zimbabwe settled this issue, and how Namibia and South Africa are wrestling with it, with particular emphasis on the positions taken by Nigeria and the United States on the issue of political change in these countries.

Angola

What was the political situation in Angola prior to the Portuguese collapse in 1975? How was the issue of political change settled, and what were the actual positions taken by Nigeria and the United States on this issue? A brief mention of Angola's colonial history is in order here. Portugal's colonial exploits in Africa dates back to the fifteenth century; and in the process, Portugal colonized a number of African countries including Angola, Guinea,
Bissau and Mozambique.¹ Historians assert that Portuguese explorers, led by Diogo Cao, first landed in Angola in 1482, and Portugal effectively conquered Angola between 1575 and 1675.² After 500 years as a Portuguese Colony, Angola became independent on November 11, 1975.³ According to Basil Davidson, "Europe's concert of imperial powers traced Angola's colonial frontiers as they are today."⁴ Put simply, Angola was recognized as a colony of Portugal at the Berlin Conference of 1884-85. By 1925 Angola was effectively colonized by Portugal. Observers contend that this was accomplished in various phases.⁵ Davidson's categorization seems to be the most useful. According to him, this task was accomplished in three phases:⁶ The first was up to

¹Guinea Bissau and Mozambique won independence in 1973 and 1975, respectively. In both cases independence was won largely through armed struggle led by PAIGC in Guinea Bissau and FRELIMO in Mozambique.


⁵For further discussion, see Wheeler and Pelissier, Angola, p. 51.

⁶Davidson, In the Eye of the Storm, p. 98.
about 1900, characterized by military invasion and the establishment of an effective presence by Portugal. The second, was during the early 1920s, and was characterized by pacification campaigns, which repressed African resistance. The third, beginning in the late 1920s until the 1950s, was concerned with the consolidation of Portuguese domination. Davidson declared that during Portuguese rule Angola's people were the "most deprived of any people anywhere":

Angola's case is certainly extreme in its deprivation... . . These people... .lived in acute material distress and hunger. During the 1960s about 98 percent of all Angolans were completely illiterate, were denied any effective control over their own lives, and were unable to participate in any legal action to improve their lot.7

While the majority of Angolan people were economically deprived, Portugal was busy exploiting the Angolan natural resources for large profits for the metropolitan treasury. In defense of Portuguese colonialism in Africa, its statesmen have used arguments similar to those that their predecessors had used for more than a century—"civilizing mission."

The emphasis was placed upon the human and spiritual rather

7Ibid., p. xiii.
than material virtues of Portuguese colonialism.  

Africans were subjected to forced labor, and their lands expropriated. They were generally regarded as sub-human, people who would benefit from "white subjugation because of the opportunity it gave them for contact with a higher civilization."  

The Portuguese forced labor system in Angola was widespread. According to the *Report on Native Problems in the Portuguese Colonies*, it included "independent self-employed workers, women, children, the sick and the old." "Only the dead," the Report added, were "really exempt from forced labor."  

In 1942 African workers in Angola were paid $1.50 per month. And six years after the 1961 revolt, salaries of African workers had only risen to $3.00 per month.  

Legislation enacted by the Portuguese to systematically disposses Africans of their land started in 1907 and  

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[9] This thinking is credited to the Portuguese administration in Angola by G. J. Bender in Ibid.  


continued through the early 1970s. About 90 percent of the Africans in Angola lost their land property rights as a result of the notorious decree No. 58470 of 1901 which was renewed in 1919.  

The alleged justification for Portuguese presence in Angola was to bring civilization to Africans. Yet more than 400 years later, the Portuguese were still treating the Africans as subhuman whose only value was as a resource of unpaid labor. By the time of the coup in 1974 Portugal had put in place a colonial policy that sought to protect entrenched Portuguese interests while at the same time perpetuating the inherent social and political inequality of the system by dividing the population into two separate classifications: (a) indigena—uncivilized, unassimilated or natives. This category included nearly all Africans; (b) Nao-indigena—civilized. This included all whites and a small percentage of blacks considered civilized.

This extreme deprivation and exploitation was

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12 Mario de Souza Clington, Angola Libre? (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), p. 133. This decree: (a) gave high priority to the settlement of Portuguese in Angola, (b) declared most of the land as the property of the state, and (c) forced 90 percent of the Africans off the land to make room for the settlement of thousands of Portuguese in rural Angola.

13 Bender, Angola Under the Portuguese, p. 149.
compounded by the lack of opportunity for political self-expression. Under these circumstances it was little wonder that a few hundred men, women and children decided to do something about it. They took to arms, and by the 1960s, independence movements that sprang up in Angola numbered well over a dozen. Prominent among these was the Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola (MPLA: People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola) which launched armed struggle against colonial rule in February 1961, in what has become known as the 1961 revolt. That year was, in the words of Irving Kaplan, "by any standard a watershed in Angolan history." The revolt awakened the Portuguese out of their complacency and proved to Africans that they could turn their potential power into actual power. Portuguese attempt to suppress the liberation movements by force of arms led to widespread concern around the world, culminating in the detailed United Nations consideration of the situation in 1962. In January 1962 the United Nations

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16 Ibid.
General Assembly, after a debate, warned Portugal to cease repressive measures against the Angolan people. And on December 18, 1962 it voted 57-14 to condemn Portugal's colonial war against Angola.\textsuperscript{17} An estimated 70,000 to 100,000 Portugese troops were used in the savage military repression.\textsuperscript{18}

The liberation movements suffered a great deal from the reprisals of Portugal, but they were not completely destroyed. Despite the considerable amount of military support received by Portugal from NATO; by the late 1960s it was apparent to Portugal that a military solution to the issue of political change in Angola would not be in its favor. The alternative was predictable--the transfer of some power to some black elites which was regarded as puppets by the majority of the African population. The election of some of these "puppets" to advisory legislatures in 1973\textsuperscript{19} was a case in point, in that "real power" still remained in Portuguese hands. This cosmetic approach to political change did not address the real problems of

\textsuperscript{17}United Nations Resolution 1819 (XVII) U.N. General Assembly Official Records vol 1, Seventeenth Session, 1962.

\textsuperscript{18}Kaplan, Angola: A Country Study, p. 50.

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., p. 53.
Angola. Critics charged that the half-hearted reforms initiated by Portugal were deception schemes, an attempt by Portugal to minimize the gains of the liberation movements. G. Giovanni viewed the reforms in the same way Frantz Fanon, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, saw concessions granted by colonial powers—as an effective means of arousing a response of loyalty from the African people, consequently sabotaging the efforts of the liberation movements.  

There were a few half-hearted attempts at reforms geared toward equalizing the races before the law and legally discouraging racism. However, by the mid 1970s, the long history of Portuguese abuses against the African people, had turned into a military problem. Many in the military and in the civil service were convinced that the system was ripe for radical transformation. Thus, on April 25, 1974 a group of young military officers took over the government in a bloodless coup. Observers contended that the coup was caused by the increasing military, economic and political pressures brought about by the high cost of Portugal's

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African wars. John Marcum gave a breakdown of the drain in Portugal's resources:

Emigration soared to 170,000 in 1971, including a major outflow of draft-age men. . . . 100,000 draft resisters left the country; there were fewer than one hundred cadets attending Portugal's four-hundred place military academy; and during the last call-up before the coup, some 50 percent refused to report. The toll in Portuguese military casualties. . . .reached 11,000 dead and 30,000 wounded or disabled. Roughly 1.5 million Portuguese sought livelihoods abroad, leaving behind an internal workforce of just 3.5 million and a total population reduced to 8.6 million. The country ran a $400 million a year deficit, suffering Europe's highest rate of inflation (23 percent), and confronted mounting sabotage by anti-war underground movements unprecedentedly disciplined and effective.23

The coup speeded up the decolonization process which culminated in the Alvor Accord of January 15, 1975.24 This was the independence agreement the Portuguese government signed with the three Angolan liberation movements. All the parties to the conflict pledged to work together in a coalition transitional government to govern Angola during the interim period to independence day which was scheduled for November 11, 1975. Observers saw this as a gamble from

23Ibid.

the outset. Predictably, it failed, and independence saw Angola engulfed in a civil war between the rival factions with MPLA eventually overcoming its rivals. At the time of the coup there were three major guerrilla movements and a few minor ones. The major ones were: The popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), led by Agostino Neto; The National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), led by Holden Roberto; and The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), headed by Jonas Savimbi. Of the minor ones, the most important was the separatist-inspired Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC). It appeared that the relative effective fighting strength, the extent of popular support, the primary objective of the movement and the chance of winning the elections were major factors in explaining why Nigeria and the United States supported a particular faction. But aside from these factors, there were several unspoken but critically important interests at stake for both countries in Angola. These will be explained later in this section.

According to Charles Ebinger, of the three major


guerrilla movements, the FNLA was the major fighting force confronting the Portuguese at the time of the coup. Ebinger, quoting official Portuguese estimates, put FNLA forces at about 2,000 "operating in the Dembos Mountains and an additional 10-12,000 guerrillas headquartered" on the Zairian side of the border, with additional scattered units elsewhere in northern Angola. A breakdown of the movements' total forces were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Movement</th>
<th>Number of Forces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 1974</td>
<td>F.N.L.A.</td>
<td>14,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>F.L.E.C.</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>U.N.I.T.A.</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>M.P.L.A.</td>
<td>2,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>23,750</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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In 1974 the MPLA's military prospects were very bleak, partly because: (a) it suffered from intense internal crisis; (b) it lacked operational base; and (c) it was never able to develop the military potential of its forces.28

Finally, UNITA's prospects were also not impressive. Two major weaknesses were apparent: it was undermanned, and it lacked adequate supplies.29

It was obvious that at the time of the coup none of the contending forces was strong enough to win without outside assistance. Since attempts by African governments and the Organization of African Unity failed to find a solution to the Angolan problem non-African involvement became inevitable. The introduction of the external factor into the Angolan crisis changed the military equation. Many observers believed the MPLA eventually won "because of Cuban troops backed by massive Soviet help in weapons and material."30

The issue of political change in Angola was settled, not only by the liberation movements themselves, but with


30 For example, see Kaplan, p.125. Nigeria also gave substantial political and material support for the MPLA later in the struggle.
considerable help from forces outside Angola. These external forces and the roles they played in the Angolan crisis received considerable attention in the literature on foreign intervention in Africa. Let me now turn to an examination of the positions taken by Nigeria and the United States in the Angolan crisis and analyze the motivations behind both countries' involvement in Angola.

Nigeria's Position

The Angolan crisis provided Nigeria with its first serious test in foreign policy during the period under study. The new government of Muhammed continued the Angolan policy of the previous administration which according to Akinyemi, was waiting to be part of an OAU consensus before stating Nigeria's position, while "putting pressure on the three movements to form a National Government." It is important to note that until South Africa's intervention, the OAU maintained a broad consensus on its policy on Angola expressed as follows: (a) support for a Government


of National Unity; (b) acceptance of MPLA, FNLA and UNITA as legitimate nationalist movements entitled to participate in such a government; (c) the maintenance of territorial integrity; and (d) opposition to all forms of foreign intervention. When the prospect for a national government by the three movements failed, Nigeria threw its weight behind UNITA. In the middle of 1975 Nigeria declared its support for UNITA and promised military assistance to Savimbi. According to Legum, Nigeria's first stand "was to favour support for UNITA and the OAU line in favour of reconciliation and national unity in Angola." However, a few months later, Nigeria completely reversed this position at the OAU emergency summit in Addis Ababa in January 1976. Analysts have explained this "volte face" as stemming from the emergence of "the new factor: the open and direct military assistance which the South African regime was giving to the FNLA-UNITA alliance." South Africa's invasion of Angola on October 23, 1975 was cited as evidence


34 Legum, After Angola, p. 35.


of South Africa's involvement, which in Nigeria's view, "had put a different complexion on the situation." In a communique issued on February 3, 1977 by the South African Defense Headquarters in Pretoria, South Africa admitted having given military assistance to the FNLA-UNITA coalition in September 1975, but insisted that the assistance was given on a "limited scale" only. Whatever "limited scale" meant, there was no question about South Africa's involvement. Nigeria was convinced that:

There is now abundant evidence of racist South Africa's troops in the conflict. The factions fighting against MPLA are backed not only by South Africa but by other interests which are clearly against Angolan independence and freedom in Africa.

In a statement recognizing the MPLA as the legitimate government of Angola, the Nigerian leader, Brigadier Muhammed, appealed to all Angolans to rally behind the MPLA. He pledged Nigeria's moral and material support until "absolute victory is gained." But why did Nigeria back UNITA in the first place? Analysts contend that "UNITA was generally credited

37 Ibid.


40 Ibid.
with the best prospect for emerging successfully should the October elections take place."  

Another rationale for Nigeria's support can be found in the report of a ten-member Commission of Enquiry set up by the OAU which stated that "UNITA had the largest popular support" in Angola, followed by FNLA, and MPLA was a distant third.

It should be pointed out that Nigeria seemed to have adhered to its stated perspective on political change by: (a) working towards a negotiated settlement as demonstrated in its effort to pressure the three liberation movements to cease hostilities and form a National Government; and (b) in a pragmatic move, showing support for UNITA because: (1) UNITA played the role of a mediator in order to bring about conditions conducive to holding elections, and (2) indications were that UNITA had a better chance of winning the election as a result of its strong popular support in Angola. Nigeria used the Angolan crisis to demonstrate its two-pronged perspective on political change: negotiated settlement where feasible; armed struggle when necessary. Nigeria saw UNITA as a means to apply

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the latter.

**United States Position**

The Portuguese coup of 1974 made the strategy contained in *National Security Study Memorandum 39 (NSSM 39)* grossly irrelevant; and the subsequent power struggle in Angola and its outcome exposed a basic flaw in NSSM 39. Through faulty intelligence, and a classic demonstration of how out of touch with the realities of the Angolan situation policy-makers were, NSSM 39 concluded that African liberation movements were ineffectual, not "realistic or supportable" alternatives to continued colonial rule. The "depth and permanence of black resolve" was questionable. As it turned out, the most inaccurate part of the conclusion of NSSM 39 was that "black victory at any stage" was completely ruled out.

The study recommended some policy options for the United States in the region, including: (a) closer ties with white-minority regimes in the region, and (b) selective relaxation of United States' opposition toward the white-minority regime, and economic aid to the neighboring

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states. As it turned out, United States official policy became: (a) fostering closer ties with white-minority regimes, (b) adoption of a "lower profile" at the U.N., which meant softening criticisms of Portuguese colonial policy, and (c) $5 million in economic assistance for the neighboring states.\footnote{Ibid. See also Henry F. Jackson, \textit{From the Congo to Soweto: U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Africa Since 1960} (New York: W. Morrow & Co., 1982), Chapter 2.} This study and the resultant policy ignored African interests and concerns in Angola. United States perception of the Angolan crisis as a test of big power rivalry with the Soviet Union, coupled with its strategic interests in Angola, seemed to have been the basic determinants of U.S. policy in Angola.

However, when the three liberation movements were attempting to settle the second phase of the issue of political change in Angola in 1975, the questions of "black resolve" and "black victory" were not the issues for U.S. policy-makers; rather, it was one of coming seriously to grips with what position to take and which faction to support. At a White House dinner for President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia on April 19, 1975 President Ford declared the United States' position:
We have been following developments in Southern Africa with great, great interest. For many years the United States has supported self-determination for peoples of that area, and we continue to do so today. We view the coming independence of Angola... with great satisfaction... America stands ready to help... and to provide what assistance we can.45

Indeed, for many years the United States had supported self-determination as it defines it, which invariably means support for factions it considers to be "moderate" or pro-Western in orientation. In mid-July 1975 Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger took the first major step towards actively involving the United States in Angola by requesting Congress "to vote a $79 million emergency aid program" supposedly for Zaire, but actually intended to provide arms for the FNLA-UNITA forces.46

The United States had hoped that the Alvor Agreement would survive, leading to the emergence of a coalition government of national unity in Angola. According to Kissinger, in his testimony to the Senate's Africa sub-committee on January 29, 1976, the United States "have consistently advocated... a government representing all three

45Department of State Bulletin, August 11, 1975, p. 212.

factions in Angola." Once this hope was dashed, the United States' immediate reaction was to support the FNLA-UNITA coalition. This support was given mainly through covert action. Press reports to this effect started to surface in early 1975 when "the National Security Council's 40 Committee authorized a covert American grant of $300,000 to the FNLA-UNITA factions." According to John Stockwell the 40 Committee had outlined four options for the United States in Angola:

1. limited financial support for political activity;
2. substantial financial support and covert action, ... costing $6 million;
3. larger amounts of money ($14 million) and material to give Savimbi and Roberto (FNLA-UNITA) superiority over Neto (MPLA);...and
4. sufficient support to sustain Roberto and Savimbi's (FNLA-UNITA) armies for a year, costing $40 million.

By July 1975 the administration had stepped up its covert program to beef up the FNLA-UNITA forces. Reports in Congressional Quarterly indicate that between $25 to $50 million

47 Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, Implications of Angola for Future U.S. Foreign Policy, Testimony made before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on January 29, 1976, Washington, D. C.


in military hardware was given to FNLA-UNITA by the end of 1975. This turned out to be a conservative estimate, as the C.I.A.'s own estimate put the figure around a hundred million. Edward A. Hawley, et al, lamenting this increased military aid to FNLA-UNITA, wrote:

We are especially distressed at the rising level of United States involvement through...massively increased aid to FNLA-UNITA. Such outside support can only prolong and intensify the fighting, strengthening those Angolans prepared to accept a neo-colonial pattern of independence and weakening those whose goals are true independence and self-determination.

There were serious differences of opinion within the administration over the Angolan issue. At least, two viewpoints were discernible: (a) those who favored halting support for FNLA-UNITA; and (b) those who favored an increase in aid to FNLA-UNITA. Some top level officials in the State Department, including the then Head of the African Bureau, Nathaniel Davies, and both Houses of Congress were strongly opposed to continued United States support for FNLA-UNITA. Observers contended that opponents were

50 Congressional Quarterly, December 20, 1975, p. 2832.
51 Stockwell, In Search of Enemies, p. 54.
afraid of another Vietnam-type situation in Angola and stressed that claims that United States involvement would be limited was reminiscent of similar statements in the early stages of the Vietnam intervention.\textsuperscript{54} When the issue came to a head in December 1975, Congressional opposition was unmistakably made clear in a Senate vote of 54-22 to ban any further covert assistance to Angola.\textsuperscript{55} The ban was sponsored by John V. Tunney (Democrat, California) as an amendment to the fiscal 1976 defense appropriations bill (HR 9861). And on January 27, 1976, the House of Representatives followed suit by voting 323 to 99 not to provide any further covert assistance to FNLA-UNITA forces.\textsuperscript{56}

Prominent among those who favored increased aid to the FNLA-UNITA forces were the Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, United Nations envoy, Daniel P. Moynihan, and President Ford. Citing the issue of the Cuban presence and its policy implications for the United States, Kissinger argued his case before the Senate on January 29, 1976 without tangible results. The outcome in Angola, Kissinger

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{54} Congressional Quarterly, 20 December 1975, p. 2833.
\textsuperscript{55} \underline{\textsuperscript{55}}, 27 December 1975, p. 2854.
\textsuperscript{56} \underline{\textsuperscript{56}}, 31 January 1976, p. 208.
\end{footnotesize}
warned, "will have repercussions throughout Africa." United States credibility in the region, he said, will be undermined if "the Soviet Union and Cuba are unopposed in their attempt to impose a regime of their own choice in Angola."

Kissinger not only argued his case for continued assistance for FNLA-UNITA, but defended his covert policy on the following grounds:

(1) We chose covert means because we wanted to keep our visibility to a minimum (2) we wanted the greatest possible opportunity for an African solution; (3) we felt that overt assistance would elaborate a formal doctrine justifying Great Power intervention—aside from the technical issues such as in what budgetary category this aid should be given; and how it could be reconciled with legislative restrictions against the transfer of U.S. arms by recipients; (4) the Angolan situation is of a type in which diplomacy without leverage is impotent, yet direct military confrontation would involve unnecessary risks; (5) thus it is precisely one of those grey areas where covert methods are crucial if we are to have any prospect of influencing certain events of potentially global importance.57

President Ford's letter to the House of Representatives on January 27, 1976 warning about the long term effect of the situation in Angola did not change too many minds either. The imposition of a military solution in Angola, the President warned, "will have the most profound long-range significance for the United States." Furthermore, the

President declared that:

The United States can not accept as a principle of international conduct that Cuban troops and Soviet arms can be used for a blatant intervention in local conflicts, in areas thousands of miles from Cuba and the Soviet Union, and where neither can claim an historic national interest. If we do so we will send a message of irresolution not only to the leaders of African nations but to United States allies and friends throughout the world.58

It is estimated that United States military aid to FNLA-UNITA up to the time of MPLA victory was about $31 million,59 but the Select Committee of Intelligence of the United States House of Representatives subsequently declared that the amount was much higher than that because of the covert nature of the operation and the use of secret CIA funds. Stockwell's $100 million estimate seemed to have been a more realistic figure than any of the other quoted figures here.

Nigeria-United States relations during Nixon-Ford administrations were decidedly cool. As a result, United States initiatives in Africa, particularly during the Angolan crisis, did not receive much support. Despite the


59 Legum, After Angola, p. 27.
lack of collaboration between both countries during the Angolan crisis, both supported political change in Angola and efforts to find a peaceful solution to the crisis. For a while, Nigeria and the United States threw their support behind the same faction in the Angolan crisis, but for different reasons.

South Africa's intervention, which turned out to be, as Ebinger puts it, "a serious diplomatic and military miscalculation," changed all that.\(^60\) This intervention, observers contend, destroyed the possibility of a collaborative effort between Nigeria and the United States and "all remaining hope of a unified African stance in opposition to outside intervention." Furthermore, South Africa's intervention was seen as a dangerous "American-South African collusion" which prompted African states such as Nigeria Tanzania "previously critical of Soviet intervention," to rally "to the cause of the MPLA."\(^61\) Kissinger has since denied this charge, saying: "Some charge that we have acted in collusion with South Africa. This is untrue. We have no knowledge of South Africa's intentions and in no way

\(^{60}\)Ebinger, "External Intervention," p. 691.

cooperated with it militarily.\textsuperscript{62} Kissinger's disclaimer notwithstanding, United States collusion with South Africa was documented by the Senate Intelligence Committee in its 1978 report. The general conclusion was that "South Africa entered Angola with the knowledge and approval of the United States."\textsuperscript{63} Why were Nigeria and the United States involved in Angola in the first place? What were the interests at stake for both countries?

**Nigeria's Real Interests in Angola**

Nigeria was involved in Angola to enhance its position as Africa's spokesman, dedicated to the liberation of Southern Africa. When peaceful negotiations failed, Nigeria shifted to a policy of active support for the MPLA and launched a vigorous campaign urging OAU member states to recognize the MPLA at the OAU summit meeting in Addis Ababa in 1976. Angola provided Nigeria with the first opportunity to demonstrate its stated commitment to black solidarity as it related to black people on the continent. It is important to note that Nigeria's stand was directly opposed to that of the United States which had urged the members of

\textsuperscript{62}Kissinger, \textit{Implications of Angola}, p. 7.

\textsuperscript{63}Also see Jackson, \textit{From Congo to Soweto}, pp. 53-77.
the OAU, including Nigeria, to oppose the MPLA and prevent its recognition at the OAU summit meeting in 1976. Furthermore, it can be said that Nigeria's stand on Angola effectively puts to rest the notion that resistance to Soviet and Cuban activities in Angola was a matter of common concern to Nigeria and the United States.

U.S. Real Interests in Angola

Even when it was evident the MPLA was winning in Angola, the United States adamantly stuck with the FNLA-UNITA faction. Thus, it would appear that the United States was involved in Angola, not to promote the cause of African emancipation per se, but to attempt to put in place a government that would protect its ideological and varied economic and strategic interests. Specifically, what were those interests? First, a word about United States method of intervention in general. Put simply, the standard method of United States intervention in third world countries was: (a) to identify in a troubled nation a local leader or faction considered moderate or pro-Western in orientation, and (b) supply this faction with military and material support to facilitate its victory over the opposing faction. In Angola, the faction that fitted United States perception
of a moderate, with pro-Western orientation was the FNLA-UNITA faction. As noted earlier on pages 104 and 105 in this study, the United States funded and armed the FNLA-UNITA faction, not only during the war, but long after MPLA's victory in Angola.

**Strategic Interests**

United States strategic interests in Angola included the Azores Islands air and sea bases, the Lajes air base on Terceira and "its backup field on Santa Maria Island." In 1971 these bases took on added significance when the United States signed an agreement with Portugal to extend United States "base rights through 1973" in return for a substantial aid package of over $400 million that included:

1. $30 million in agricultural development assistance,
2. $5 million in drawing rights on U.S. Defense Department stocks of non-military equipment, and
3. eligibility for up to $400 million in Export-Import Bank financing for a variety of other development projects.

These bases were crucial in redeployment of United States troops in Europe, particularly as "NATO-related staging, refueling, and submarine tracking" bases. In 1973 these

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64 Ibid., p. 59.
66 Ibid., p. 236.
bases were used by the United States to rearm Israel in the Yom Kippur war.67

Economic Interests

United States economic interests in Angola were centered around Angola's oil, diamonds, coffee and phosphates. United States companies acquired a significant control of the oil production in Cabinda province in 1966, and by 1975 Gulf Oil Corporation had invested more than $300 million in oil production and was pumping 150,000 barrels a day.68 The Angolan port of Lobito was critical for imports from Angola and neighboring Zaire and Zambia. These imports included diamonds, copper, cobalt, coffee and phosphates destined for western markets.69

Other Interests

Furthermore, Angola shared a common border with Namibia. This raised frequent concern in Washington that an MPLA government in Angola would serve as a springboard for the spread of communism to Namibia and elsewhere in the

67 Ibid.
68 Jackson, From Congo to Soweto, p. 59.
69 Ibid.
Making Angola safe for the pursuance and maintenance of these interests, was the primary reason the United States was involved in Angola. That the United States had managed to cloak this in the political rhetoric of African freedom is perhaps an indication of the level of misinformation that exists in the foreign policies of the big powers. After the independence of Angola, the focus of the Southern African liberation struggle shifted to Zimbabwe.

**Zimbabwe**

Since the late 1800s Zimbabwe has had a troubled and violent political history. Political scientists have generally examined the political history of Zimbabwe under four headings: (1) White Settlement; (2) Responsible Government; (3) The 1961 Constitution; and (4) The Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI).

1. White Settlement: Political scientists and historians have put the date of the arrival of the earliest

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70 For a detailed discussion of the political history of Zimbabwe, see Philip Mason, *The Birth of a Dilemma* (New York: Preager, 1958).

71 The most useful is given by Patrick O'Meara, in *Rhodesia: Racial Conflict or Coexistence?* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1975).
white settlers in Zimbabwe at September, 1890. These white settlers, who were known as Pioneer Column, numbered 200, and they were carefully recruited by Cecil Rhodes. After 1891 the anniversary of the arrival of the Pioneer Column has been celebrated as Occupation Day. In 1961 it was changed to Pioneer Day. Resistance from indigenous Africans to this occupation was met with ruthless force.

2. Responsible Government: The government that emerged from this illegal occupation collected the taxes, administered the country, and took on the full responsibility of government. In effect, Britain did not assume any real authority. In theory, it became a self-governing British colony after a referendum in 1923 in which the majority (59.4 percent) voted in favor of self-government. In practice, however, it enjoyed almost complete autonomy from 1890.

3. The 1961 Constitution: This constitution was a further attempt by the settler regime to make it impossible for Africans to effectively participate in the political system or achieve majority rule. The constitution created


73Ibid., p. 44. 74Ibid., p. 116.
two-voters' rolls, an A and a B roll, with voting qualifications based on financial and educational standards that were out of the reach of most Africans. The implications of the new condition of franchise were that very few Africans could vote; and as a result, African demand for full political equality based on the principle of "one man, one vote" was effectively rejected, while ensuring permanent white minority control.

4. The Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI):
The country's white minority government strongly resisted majority rule, and in order to ward off British half-hearted political pressure to bring about eventual democratic majority rule in Zimbabwe, the colonial government under Prime Minister Ian Smith issued on November 11, 1965 a unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) which purported to make the country an independent state, free of external control. Britain declared the country to be in a state of rebellion and invoked financial and economic sanctions, but refused to use military force against the Smith regime.

75 Ibid., p. 121.

From then until the Lancaster House Conference of 1979 the country was in an embattled state. The conference ultimately led to the independence of Zimbabwe in April 1980. This section attempts to: (a) isolate the problem in Zimbabwe; (b) show how the issue of political change was settled; (c) examine the roles played by Nigeria and the United States in settling the problem, and (d) highlight the real motivations behind both countries' position in Zimbabwe.

The Problem

An estimated 7,396,000 people lived in Zimbabwe in 1979. Of these, there were about 7,164,000 Africans; 11,000 Asians; 21,000 Coloreds; and 200,000 European settlers. Beginning in 1890 the small body of European settlers, never totaling more than 5 percent of the total population, ruled Zimbabwe for 90 years. During this period the country was polarized between a dominant white minority and an oppressed, exploited African majority which was systematically excluded from effective political participation. How did this small white settlement dominate the African majority for 90 years? What was the response of the Africans?

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Through a complex web of discriminatory legislation, economic exploitation and the use of brutal force, the white minority managed to remain in power against the will of the majority. To understand the nature of the oppression and exploitation of the African majority, one should look at the conditions in which they lived. The objective material conditions of Africans in Zimbabwe under white settler regimes and the intransigence of these regimes made violent confrontation inevitable. Under the provisions of the Land Tenure Act of 1969, 50 percent of the land was reserved for the whites. According to Leonard T. Kapungu, whites took "those parts of the country having better soil and rainfall, and Africans were forcefully removed from their traditional fertile lands," driving them to settle in the hot, unproductive, and at times, unhealthy parts of the country.78 The average wage of the African in Zimbabwe was $190.60 a year while that of the white was $2,894. On education the government spent about $28 per African child in school per year as against $300 per white child.79 According to J. Rogaly, five years of education was:

79 Ibid., p. 19.
...the best that most African school children could expect. This means learning to read and write in African languages; very simple English reading and writing; elementary arithmetic; nature study; and local history and geography.  

Racism was legalized in a number of laws passed between the late 1920s and the early 1930s, "making race the determining factor for access to economic, political, and social privileges." The country turned out to be one of privilege and ease for the whites, while for the Africans it was one of subservience and frustration. African institutions were systematically destroyed, and their development aborted. What emerged out of this was a colonial system in which Africans were exploited as cheap labor, "separated from the white farms and urban centers either in reserves or segregated townships."  

The task of removing the political domination through which these conditions were being perpetuated gave

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rise to the emergence of guerrilla movements in the 1950s. For Britain, and, to some extent, the international community, the problem was how to resolve the vexing contradiction of protecting entrenched white interests on the one hand, and providing equal opportunities for effective African political participation on the other hand. Until 1976 successive British governments, particularly since 1965, had failed to seriously address this problem. Predictably the country was headed for a "bloody confrontation between the white settlers, who exclusively enjoyed political and economic power, and the African" who had been systematically excluded from any effective political participation.

By making evolutionary change impossible, the settler regime made revolutionary change inevitable. Patrick O'Meara explained this point further when he wrote:

Not only was the white power structure unwilling to permit increased African participation, but it also limited channels of protest and opportunities for political mobilization. Ultimately, therefore, the

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83 Most liberation movements, including the ANC, were formed and operated from inside Zimbabwe until they were banned in 1960.

nationalists moved outside of what they saw as a restricted political system.\textsuperscript{85}

Moving outside the system meant waging a guerrilla war against the white settler government, and when the war intensified in the 1970s several factions were vying for political power in Zimbabwe.\textsuperscript{86} The development of the guerrilla movement was very fluid, but four\textsuperscript{87} notable factions were involved in the fight against the Smith regime: (1) Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU). ZAPU was formed in 1961, and led by Joshua Nkomo; (2) Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), led by N. Sithole and R. Mugabe was founded in 1963; (3) Front for the Liberation of Zimbabwe (FROLIZI), led by James Chikerema was formed in 1971; and (4) Zimbabwe Reformed African National Council (ZRANC), led by Thompson Tirivavi was founded in 1976.

Intra-movement conflicts had sometimes been intense, but their fundamental objectives remained the same: (a) the wrestling of the state power from the Smith regime; (b) the restructuring of the political system to permit the

\textsuperscript{85}O'Meara, "Rhodesia-Zimbabwe," p. 24.

\textsuperscript{86}At least twelve factions, including the African National Council (ANC) were in contention for national power.

\textsuperscript{87}ZAPU and ZANU merged on October 10, 1976 to form the Patriotic Front.
effective political participation of all Zimbabweans; and (c) the redistributing of the nation's wealth equitably. Wrestling the state power from the Smith regime required a prolonged guerrilla war that appeared unwinnable from Smith's standpoint, and its effect had taken its toll on the Smith regime.

Solution

The cost of the war in economic and human terms steadily rose, reaching a very high peak in 1978. Virtually all male Zimbabweans age 18-38 were conscripted. In February 1977 conscription was extended from age 38 to 50, and men over 50 were also encouraged to volunteer. In economic terms the war cost the government over $1 million a day in direct outlay and several more millions in lost production. Morale was generally low as emigration reached a record level in 1978. In December of 1978 alone, 2,771 emigrated, and it was estimated that a total of 18,069 whites left in 1978. According to David Martin and Phyllis Johnson, 14,149 left in the first nine months of 1979, and

89Ibid., pp. B. 911-12.
90The Daily Telegraph, 26 January 1979, p. 5.
tourism, an important generator of foreign currency, dropped by 74 percent.\textsuperscript{91}

In human terms it is estimated that more than 8,000 people, mostly civilians, had died and several thousand were wounded. A 10 percent income tax was imposed in 1975.\textsuperscript{92} Under these circumstances the Smith regime had no alternative but to make peace.

The Anglo-American Proposals.—Several attempts were made beginning in 1965 to find a peaceful solution to the Zimbabwean crisis. All these attempts made by successive British governments, Labor and Conservative alike, were doomed primarily because independence was to be granted under white minority rule, with only token African political participation. Only after a United States initiative, spearheaded by Henry Kissinger, which was designed to bring about majority rule in Zimbabwe surfaced in March 1976, did the British government concede for the first time that majority rule was indeed its objective. Thus, for the first time since 1965 the British objective appeared to converge with that of Nigeria and the United States on the issue of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{92}Africa Contemporary Records 1976-77, pp. B. 911-12.
\end{itemize}
political change in Zimbabwe.

The Roles Played by Nigeria and the United States

What were the essential elements of the Anglo-American Proposal? How instrumental was it in bringing about political change in Zimbabwe? What were the actual positions taken by Nigeria and the United States on the issue of political change in Zimbabwe? It is important to note that the Kissinger initiative, the Anglo-American Proposals and the Lancaster House Agreement were belated responses to the call made by the Organization of African Unity in the Lusaka Manifesto of 1969.93 In this document, the OAU: (a) warned of the threat to international peace and security brought about by misunderstandings and conflict of interest among nations; (b) appealed to the international community for cooperation in achieving peaceful change in white minority ruled territories; (c) stated its objectives in these areas; and (d) declared its preference for negotiated settlement.94 In its opening statement the document

94 Ibid., p. 2.
warned that:

When the purposes and the basis of states' international policies are misunderstood, there is introduced into the world a new and unnecessary disharmony. Disagreements, conflicts of interest or different assessments of human priorities already provoke an excess of tension in the world and disastrously divide mankind at a time when united action is necessary.95

In its appeal to the West for cooperation, it urged them to support African objectives and aspirations explained as follows:

Our objectives in Southern African stem from our commitment to the principle of human equality. We are not hostile to the Administrations of these states because they are manned and controlled by white people. We are hostile to them because they are systems of minority control which exist as a result of, and in the pursuance of, doctrines of human inequality. What we are working for is the right of self-determination for a rule in those countries which is based on the will of all the people and an acceptance of the equality of every citizen.96

The Lusaka signatories, while asserting their preference for peaceful change or negotiated settlement, also indicated that they would not hesitate to support armed liberation struggle if necessary. They summed up their position as follows:

We would prefer to negotiate rather than destroy, to talk rather than to kill. We do not advocate violence; we advocate an end to the violence against

95 Ibid., p. 5. 96 Ibid., p. 10.
human dignity which is now being perpetrated by the oppressors of Africa. If peaceful progress to emancipation were possible, or if changed circumstances were to make it possible in the future, we would urge our brothers in the resistance movements to use peaceful methods of struggle even at the cost of some compromise on the timing of change. But while peaceful methods of struggle even at the cost of some compromise on the timing of change. But while peaceful progress is blocked by actions of those at present in power in the states of Southern Africa, we have no choice but to give to the peoples of those territories all the support of which we are capable in their struggle against their oppressors.97

Kissinger's response to the Lusaka Manifesto was contained in his own Lusaka Declaration of April 25, 1976 in which he accepted the OAU proposals and reaffirmed:

. . . the unequivocal commitment of the United States to human rights, as expressed in the principles of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We support self-determination, majority rule, equal rights and human dignity for all the peoples of Southern Africa—in the name of moral principle, international law and world peace.98

Several developments in Southern Africa forced the United States to rethink its policy. One of them was the success of armed struggle in Guinea Bissau (1973), Mozambique (1975) and Angola in 1975. Another significant development was the presence of Cuban and Soviet forces in Angola. MPLA victory in Angola was interpreted as a serious blow to United States

97 Ibid.
credibility as a global power. The United States had to salvage its credibility by playing a constructive role in the process of political change in Africa. It was against this background that Kissinger made a belated response to the Lusaka Manifesto seven years later.

However, it opened the way for some major diplomatic initiatives in 1977 by the Western powers: (a) The Anglo-American Proposals in Zimbabwe; (b) the mediation effort in Namibia by the Western powers (Contact Group); and (c) a renewed focus on the South African problem. The last two initiatives are discussed elsewhere in this study. Before a coherent policy could be developed out of these initiatives, a new administration came into office in the United States, and Dr. Owen was appointed as the new Foreign Secretary in Britain. Following up on the Kissinger initiative, the new administration of Jimmy Carter launched a joint peace initiative in March 1977. New proposals for a settlement were published in a British white paper on September 1, 1977. This document, known as the Anglo-American Proposals contained some essential elements for a peaceful and irreversible transfer of power to black

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majority rule in Zimbabwe. These essential elements included:
(1) the abdication of the Smith regime; (2) a British resident commissioner to preside over the transition; (3) a new constitution guaranteeing majority rule and minority rights; (4) internationally supervised elections based on one man, one vote; (5) integration of existing armed forces into one army that would be loyal to the elected government; and (6) an internationally financed aid program for an independent Zimbabwe. 100

To minimize objections to this plan, close consultations were held with Nigeria and the Front Line States (Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, Botswana and Angola) in its planning and implementation. In September 1977 General Obasanjo came out very strongly in support of the Anglo-American Proposals. In his tour of the front line states in September 1977 to drum up support for the proposals, Obasanjo declared in Lusaka, Zambia that the document "is a positive step towards majority rule in the territory," insisting that "it should be given a chance." 101 In Zaire,

100 This document formed the basis for the Lancaster House Agreement of 1979.

Obasanjo confirmed that "Britain and the United States had jointly given Nigeria and other African countries concerned the assurance of their determination to work with African countries to achieve majority rule in Zimbabwe."\textsuperscript{102}

The four months between September 1977 when the Anglo-American Proposals were published and January 1978 turned out to be crucial in three respects: (a) during this period the Patriotic Front was struggling with its own deep internal divisions and was unable to reach agreement on some of the key aspects of the plan; (b) while Britain, Nigeria and the United States were busy attempting to sell the plan to the front line states and the international community, the Smith regime saw an opportunity to devise an alternative plan; and (c) on February 15, 1978 the Smith regime announced the successful conclusion of the "Internal Settlement" negotiations.

\textbf{The internal settlement.}--On March 3, 1978 the Smith regime signed an agreement with moderate African factions led by Bishop Muzorewa.\textsuperscript{103} Under the new constitution the 212,000 whites still maintained their special

\textsuperscript{102}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{103}\textit{Economist,} 4 March 1978, p. 63.
status. Although they constituted only about four percent of the population, they were guaranteed 28 of the 100 seats in parliament. Furthermore, for ten years they would have controlled through a complex veto provision the judiciary, the civil service and the security forces.\textsuperscript{104}

The Patriotic Front rejected the internal settlement on the grounds that it preserved the existing structure of the state\textsuperscript{105} in that: (a) black leaders were simply taking over some of the apparatus; (b) real power still remained in the hands of the white minority; and (c) no redistribution of the nation's wealth was undertaken. In his assessment of the internal settlement Robert Mugabe said:

All that has happened is a change of heads—a black head being substituted for a white but with the body still the same—the same armed forces, the same civil service, the same judiciary, the same economic structure...a head acting as a megaphone.\textsuperscript{106}

\textsuperscript{104}For example, the specially-entrenched provisions of the constitution could be amended only with the affirmative votes of 78 members of the House of Assembly. This requirement of more than three-quarter votes effectively gave whites a veto power over any proposed amendment. For further details see Documents Section, \textit{Africa Contemporary Records}, 1977-78, p. C. 5. Martin and Johnson, \textit{The Struggle for Zimbabwe}, p. 293.

\textsuperscript{105}\textit{Economist}, 18 March 1978, p. 60.

The Guardian, commenting on the internal settlement, said:

The assumption that the minority can take more than one-quarter of the cabinet seats...is one that could be made only by men who have shut their eyes to what is happening around them...it leaves out of account altogether the most powerful political force in the country—the Patriotic Front,...and it is designed to perpetuate the racial division which has brought Rhodesia to its present wretched state. 107

The United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution on March 15, 1978 which described the internal settlement as "illegal and unacceptable." 108

In defense of the internal settlement the new Prime Minister Bishop Muzorewa declared that:

I do not want this new country to be a sham, a fraud, a hollow shell with the mere trappings of independence—a brand new flag, sleek limousines, black faces in parliament and the U.N. I do not want Zimbabwe ever to become another banana republic. 109

Muzorewa must have been listening to his critics because those were the exact words used to describe the internal settlement—sham and fraud. Others called it a sell out. 110

However, Bishop Muzorewa was officially sworn in as the

109 Time, 30 April 1979, p. 36.
first black Prime Minister on May 29, 1979 after winning the April elections.\textsuperscript{111}

While the internal settlement and the new government of Prime Minister Muzorewa were generally rejected and ignored by those who sought a credible black majority rule in Zimbabwe, observers noted that the internal settlement was perhaps the beginning of a significant change. A sharp decline of white power was envisaged. According to Colin Legum, such a decline was reflected in the views of Ian Smith, the architect of white supremacist rule, in that he "was compelled to concede that the basic reason for the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) on November 11, 1965 was no longer tenable."\textsuperscript{112} Furthermore, Smith was quoted as saying in \textit{Time} magazine that:

\begin{quote}
Whether we like it or not minority governments are unacceptable to the rest of the world. I had always hoped we could avoid black majority rule in my lifetime. But you have to change your tactics in this game, and we came to the conclusion that if we did not change, we couldn't survive.\textsuperscript{113}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{111}Reports by observers indicate the elections were neither free nor fair. For full details of reports, see Claire Palley, \textit{The Rhodesian Election} (London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, April 1979), (mimeographed).

\textsuperscript{112}\textit{Africa Contemporary Records}, 1978-79, p. B. 975.

\textsuperscript{113}\textit{Time}, 30 April 1979, p. 36.
Several months after the institution of the Muzorewa regime, the three major questions facing the country were still unsettled: (a) ending the war; (b) removing economic sanctions; and (c) gaining international recognition. The Patriotic Front saw nothing to be gained from talks with the Muzorewa regime. Instead, it intensified the war efforts by successfully establishing larger numbers of guerilla forces inside Zimbabwe. The turning point of the war came perhaps in September 1978 when a Viscount aircraft of Air Rhodesia was shot down by guerrilla forces. A Zimbabwean military communique described what happened after the crash:

Five of the 18 initial survivors went to seek help from local tribesmen in the nearest village. Terrorists then opened fire with communist-made kalashnikov assault rifles and 10 of the passengers died in the hail of bullets.114

By mid 1979 the weaknesses of the transition government produced fears and frustrations in the country. Several major incidents in the guerrilla war, such as the second Air Rhodesia Viscount aircraft that was shot down on February

114 The Guardian, 5 September 1978, p. 15. From this point on, the effect of the war was felt directly by whites who lived in the cities as more and more raids were carried out in the major cities.
12, 1979 and all the 59 people on board were killed, heightened the fears and frustrations of the white population of Zimbabwe. 115

At this point in the conflict the thrust of the Anglo-American initiative was bring all the factions in the internal settlement and the external movement to an all party conference. However, before any progress could be made in this direction, two events occurred which had a negative impact: First, the conservative party had won the April elections in Britain, and Margaret Thatcher had pledged in her campaign to recognize the Muzorewa regime and lift sanctions. Signalling her intentions, Mrs. Thatcher said at a press conference in Canberra, Australia on July 1st, 1979 that she would not try to get Parliament to re-impose sanctions and that recognition "might take a little longer." 116 A few days later, Lord Carrington, British Foreign Minister, was reported to have told Moraji Desai, then the Indian Prime Minister, that the British government would "formally recognize the Muzorewa regime" soon after the Commonwealth Conference. 117 Second, the United States

115 The Herald (Salisbury), 14 February 1979, p. 1.
116 Economist, 7 July 1979, p. 78.
Senate, in one of its several attempts to undermine White House policy on Zimbabwe, voted 75 to 19 on May 15, 1979 to recommend the lifting of sanctions.\textsuperscript{118}

As the Commonwealth Conference in August 1979 approached, there were increased speculations that the British government would announce its recognition of the Muzorewa government soon after the summit. The attempt by Prime Minister Thatcher and some Republican Congressmen headed by Senator Jesse Helms to recognize the Muzorewa regime and lift sanctions was blocked by pressures from Nigeria and the Carter administration, especially the Africanist Group in the Carter administration. The Nigerian government, in one of its many messages to the Thatcher government, on June 5, 1979 insisted that any attempt to recognize the Muzorewa regime would amount to "provocation and a calculated and deliberate spite, constituting a wanton disregard for African opinion and well-being and deserving of an appropriate response."\textsuperscript{119} Also the Carter administration expressed deep concern that Britain's intention to lift sanctions would be counterproductive.


\textsuperscript{119}\textit{New Nigerian}, 6 June 1979, p. 3.
Ambassador Donald McHenry argued that Britain was "on a very wrong course by not referring the issue of sanctions to the Security Council."\[120\]

As the delegates from 39 Commonwealth Countries were preparing to gather in Lusaka from August 1-7, 1979, the British press supported Britain's position and recognition of the Muzorewa regime. *The Economist*, in its editorial of May 26, 1979 called on Mrs. Thatcher to recognize the Muzorewa regime; and predicted that Nigeria would "only bark and not bite."\[121\] *The Daily Telegraph*, on June 14, 1979 also urged the British government to recognize the Muzorewa regime and present the Commonwealth Conference with a fait accompli.\[122\] It was against this background that Nigeria responded on the opening day of the conference that it was confiscating the assets of British Petroleum (BP) in Nigeria. The implications of this action included a loss of BP's entitlement to about 300,000 barrels a day of Nigerian oil and its 40 percent interest in the Port Harcourt oil refinery.\[123\]


\[122\] *The Daily Telegraph*, 14 June 1979, p. 10.

Britain drew the proper lesson from this action and Mrs. Thatcher departed significantly from her Canberra statement when she said at the conference that her administration "is wholly committed to genuine black majority rule in Zimbabwe," and added that the aim of her administration "is to bring Zimbabwe to legal independence on a basis which the Commonwealth and the international community as a whole will find acceptable." 124

Several issues were discussed at the conference, 125 but the resolution of the Zimbabwean problem attracted considerable attention. On this issue there was a meeting of minds—that what was needed was a peace plan acceptable to all parties to the conflict. This consensus was reflected in the final Communique 126 of the conference in which the Heads of Government agreed, inter alia, on the following objectives: (a) genuine black majority rule; (b) the effective participation of "all parties to the conflict" in the


125 Other trouble spots, including Namibia and South Africa itself, and the growing African refugee problem were discussed.

peace process; (c) a democratic constitution including "appropriate safeguards for minorities"; (d) a free and fair election supervised under British government authority; and (e) the presence of a commonwealth observers team to monitor the election.

There were mixed reactions\(^{127}\) to the outcome of the meeting, but as it turned out, a giant step toward the resolution of the Zimbabwean conflict had been taken. The Lusaka Agreement laid the basis for what finally emerged from the Lancaster House Conference.

The Lancaster House Conference.—One of the remarkable things about the Lancaster House Conference was that the rival sides to the conflict were brought to the same negotiating table, which was one of the objectives of the original Anglo-American initiative. When the conference opened on September 10, 1979, several key issues were addressed: (a) an internationally acceptable constitution, (b) conditions for a ceasefire, (c) the supervision of the elections, (d) the land issue, and (e) the status of the Patriotic Front's guerrilla forces during the transition

\(^{127}\)While Kenneth Kaunda, Chairman of the conference, was jubilant, the Muzorewa regime was angry because Thatcher had changed her position, and the Patriot Front expressed skepticism.
period. Early in the negotiations, Muzorewa agreed to the need for a fresh elections, which effectively meant relinquishing his office for a truly independent Zimbabwe. On the other hand, the Patriotic Front had initially insisted on United Nations-supervised elections, as opposed to British-supervised elections, but dropped its opposition after President Nyerere's personal intervention. Thus, the major point became the function and composition of the Commonwealth monitoring force. With some persuasion from Nigeria and the front line states, Britain agreed to a plan that called for: (a) a civilian group to observe the elections; and (b) the formation of a Commonwealth force to monitor but not enforce ceasefire. Land redistribution was already agreed upon, but several questions were raised such as (a) who would provide the money for compensation to be paid to farmers, and (b) who would be affected by redistribution? A timely intervention by the United States saved the talks. President Carter promised a substantial contribution toward a land compensation fund, thus,

129 Ibid.
130 By the end of 1980 the U.S. had made a $50M donation to that fund.
initiating a multi-donor program that later attracted donations from other countries including Britain and Nigeria. On the status of the guerrilla forces during the transition period, the plan recognized the Patriotic Front's guerrillas on an equal basis with that of the Muzorewa regime. With these key issues resolved, the conference closed on a rather positive note on December 15, 1979. The final agreement, known as the Lancaster House Agreement, was signed by both parties to the internal settlement and the external movements on December 21, 1979. In essence both parties agreed to: (a) observe a ceasefire, monitored by Commonwealth Forces; (b) accept the outcome of a British-supervised and internationally observed elections to be held after a two-month transition period. In the meantime, Britain assumed control over its "rebel" colony Rhodesia on December 12, lifted sanctions and installed Lord Soames as the British governor. Thus, the end had come to Ian Smith's illegal regime, and the results of the elections that followed confirmed even Smith's own belated admission that

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minority regimes "are unacceptable" to Zimbabweans.

Robert Mugabe's faction of the dissolved Patriotic Front won the elections of February 1980 in a landslide and went on to form a coalition government with Joshua Nkomo's faction in March 1980; thus, finally settling the issue of political change in Zimbabwe. Nigeria and the United States were given part of the credit for this desirable outcome. However, perhaps the critical factor was the success of the liberation movements on the battle field.

Nigeria-United States relations during this period witnessed a dramatic turn around from the open differences over the Angolan crisis and Nigeria's subsequent refusal to admit Kissinger into the country, to cordial exchanges and cooperation which culminated in state visits by the leaders of both countries. This positive turn in relations has been attributed to a number of factors including: (a) President Carter's stated commitment to the cause of African emancipation, based partly on his emphasis on human rights, (b) economic: Nigeria's oil export to the United States and

133 ZANU won 63 percent of the popular vote and 57 of 80 black Assembly seats.

134 It is perhaps of some historical significance to note that President Carter's visit in April 1978 was the only state visit to a sub-Saharan African country ever made by a U.S. president.
and U.S. investment in Nigeria, and (c) U.S. willingness to de-emphasize East-West confrontation in Africa.

Nigeria supported the Anglo-American proposals, and Obasanjo undertook a trip to the Front Line states to drum up support for them. Andrew Young should be given part of the credit for this because as Harold D. Nelson puts it, "his influence on American policy in Africa and the close consultations initiated with Nigeria" over Southern African issues.135

And when it was clear that the Thatcher government and the conservative elements in U.S. Congress were leaning toward recognizing the Muzorewa regime, the Obasanjo and Carter administrations resisted Britain and congress, respectively. Both countries were active participants in the Lancaster House Conference. They both played constructive roles at critical points of the talks by helping to avoid a breakdown over the land issue and questions concerning the monitoring force. All of this occurred at a time the Patriotic Front was clearly winning the war. What were the motivating factors behind both countries' involvement in Zimbabwe? Were there some areas of common interest in

Nigeria.—Two factors can be identified: (a) Success in Angola, and (b) the oil wealth. Success in Angola seemed to have elevated Nigeria's Southern African crusade to new heights. The crusade was intensified on many fronts: (a) economic reprisals were taken against Britain, (b) increased moral and material support was given to liberation movements, and (c) Nigeria took a more active role in the negotiation process. A friendly administration in Washington, coupled with the new oil wealth, meant that Nigeria was now prepared to consolidate its position as Africa's spokesman, committed to the liberation of Southern Africa.

United States interests.—Although the United States had other interests in Zimbabwe, African concerns and interests also played a role in its involvement in Zimbabwe. It needs to be said that the Carter administration's approach to the situation in Zimbabwe represented a significant departure from the approach of the Nixon-Ford era in that African concerns and interests were regarded as high priority issues. This approach rested on sound premises that included, among others: (a) fundamental change in Southern Africa was not necessarily inimical to United States interests, and (b) the best way to protect and
promote United States interests was for the United States to identify itself as a friend of Africa, sympathetic to the aspirations of the African people.

Other interests.--(1) Credibility: The United States was involved in Zimbabwe partly to salvage what was left of its already shaken credibility as a global power. MPLA's victory in Angola has been interpreted by policymakers in the United States as a serious blow to U.S. credibility as a global power. Kissinger warned in 1976 that the lack of a direct U.S. response to the Soviet Union in Angola would translate into a substantial loss of credibility for the U.S. in the region. Thus, to preempt further Soviet influence and activities in the region, the U.S. became actively involved in efforts to find a solution to the situation in Zimbabwe. It was in this context that the U.S. not only claimed credit for the outcome in Zimbabwe, but concluded that the outcome in Zimbabwe enhanced U.S. credibility as a global power, and at the same time, it deprived the Soviet Union of a conflict to exploit.

(2) Strategic minerals: Some of the major minerals that make Southern Africa vital to the United States are found in Zimbabwe. Two of these minerals are chromium and vanadium. They are vital to the production of anti-corrosive
steels. Other minerals found in Zimbabwe include asbestos, magnesia, phosphates and uranium. Union Carbide has a profitable investment in chrome mining and smelting in Zimbabwe. It was estimated that the United States had the third highest foreign investment in Zimbabwe, about 20 percent of the total foreign investment, with South Africa and Britain first and second, respectively. United States importation of chromium had jumped from 10.2 percent in 1974 to 38 percent by 1980, despite a United Nations embargo.

It would appear that U. S. policy-makers had correctly interpreted events in Zimbabwe and concluded that an African victory was inevitable. Therefore, in order to: (a) enhance its credibility as a global power, and (b) protect its varied economic interests in the long run, the U.S. had to play a constructive role in finding a solution to the problem in Zimbabwe.

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138 Ann and Neva Seidman, South Africa and U.S. Multinational Corporation (Westport, Conn.: Lawrence Hill, 1977), p. 213. Also see Table 1, p. 76.
Namibia

Namibia's relatively short recorded political history can roughly be examined in three parts: (1) the German Era, (2) the Mandate Era, and (3) the Post Mandate Era.

The German Era

At the Berlin Conference of 1884-5 Africa was partitioned among the imperialists. Germany took Namibia, known then as (South West Africa) and forced most of the tribes in the territory to sign treaties effectively giving up their sovereignty. With Germany's imperial control established, a systematic looting of the resources followed. By the end of the century Germany had "seized by legal trickery, guile or force much of the best land and cattle" in Namibia. 139 African resistance was met by an extermination order issued by General Von Trotha. A Blue Book published in 1918 documented some of the atrocities committed by Germany during this period. 140 During World War I, colonialism in Namibia changed hands.


140 For a review, see Christopher Hitchens, "Namibia—Rhodesia Again?" Nation, 30 December 1978, p. 725.
The Mandate Era

South Africa invaded the territory in 1915, and would have taken over Namibia as its fifth province at the end of the war if President Wilson had allowed it. Instead, under Article 22 of the League of Nations Covenant Namibia became a Class "C" mandated territory administered by South Africa on behalf of the League of Nations. In President Wilson's terms, the territory was entrusted to South Africa as "a sacred trust of civilization," to "promote to the utmost the material and moral welfare and the social progress" of the Namibian people. South African atrocities in Namibia were on a larger scale than those of the Germans. Africans were used as cheap labor, and "relegated to inadequate, poor-quality native reserves." African resistance was met by bombings of "their women and children." According to O'Meara, "the Africans learned that they had exchanged an overseas tyrant for one from next door."
Upon the formal dissolution of the League of Nations in April 1946, all former mandates not granted independence were placed under United Nations trusteeship. But South Africa refused to either grant Namibia independence or place it under the United Nations trusteeship system. Instead, South Africa sought permission to annex the territory. Furthermore, South Africa discontinued its annual reports on Namibia and refused to send petitions from the Namibian people to the United Nations. Since then independent African states, with lukewarm support from the United Nations, have been attempting to settle two crucial problems: (a) the status of Namibia, and (b) political change in the territory. The rulings of the International Court of Justice did little to resolve these problems. In July 1950 the Court rendered an opinion on the international status of Namibia. It advised, inter alia, that: (1) South Africa's obligations under the original mandate continued...; and (2) that it was not mandatory that South Africa should place Namibia under the United Nations trusteeship system. In an attempt to lay the groundwork for eventual independence

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146 Ibid.
for Namibia, Ethiopia and Liberia went to the Court once again in 1960. They charged, inter alia, that South Africa had: (1) extended apartheid to Namibia, and (2) violated the human rights of the Namibian people and prevented progress toward independence. After six years of arguments and one interim decision in which the Court ruled that Ethiopia and Liberia, both former members of the League, had the right to file the charges, the Court in July 1966 reversed itself and concluded that the two complainants had no status to bring the proceedings. Thus, by ruling on the procedural and not the substantive aspect of the case, the Court hindered the efforts of those who were seeking to achieve independence for Namibia and strengthened South Africa's intransigence.

Post-Mandate Era

The Court's ruling was greeted with anger and dismay by concerned African states in particular, and the General Assembly in general. Thus, on October 27, 1966 the General Assembly voted 114 to 2 to adopt resolution 2145

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which revoked South Africa's mandate, formally removing Namibia from South African control. Furthermore, the resolution made South Africa's presence in the territory an illegal occupation. Under this resolution Namibia was to become the direct responsibility of the international community charged with the task of bringing the territory to independence. Successive South African governments had defied the United Nations before revocation of the mandate, and insisted that with the demise of the League, all their international obligations regarding the mandate lapsed.

The need to remove this illegal occupation that had lasted for over 51 years in utter defiance of the wishes of the Namibian people and the United Nations gave rise to the emergence of several liberation movements in Namibia. The most important movement was South West African Peoples Organization of Namibia (SWAPO) led by Sam Nujoma. SWAPO was recognized by the United Nations and most of the world as the legitimate representative of the Namibian people.


150Among those in contention for power are the South West African National United Front (SWANUF) the South West African National Union (SWANU) and the South West African Peoples Organization (SWAPO).

151SWAPO is also recognized as such by the Organization of African Unity.
Since its formal inception in 1960 SWAPO has spearheaded the liberation struggle against South Africa's illegal occupation. Sam Nujoma urged "all Namibian patriots to maintain unity, vigilance and intensify at all fronts in the struggle for the national liberation of Namibia."\(^{152}\) Nujoma's call notwithstanding, South Africa's illegal regime was enforced and perpetuated by "all the massive apparatus of apartheid law, military occupation, judicial rulings, a nationwide and ruthless police establishment," and total economic exploitation of the African population.\(^{153}\)

With Zimbabwe's independence in April 1980, the focus of the international community centered on Namibia. Namibia was thought to be next. But such optimism was replaced by cautious speculation. However, one thing seemed certain: political change in Namibia was inevitable. Would political change in Namibia be achieved through negotiated settlement or armed struggle or both? We shall examine the ongoing efforts of the international community, with particular emphasis on the positions taken by Nigeria and the

\(^{152}\) Declaration of the Central Committee of the SWAPO, by Sam Nujoma in Lusaka, Zambia, 2 August 1976.

United States, to resolve the Namibian dispute.

Kissinger's Lusaka Declaration of 1976 marked the beginning of current attempts to resolve the Namibian dispute. Part of that speech dealt with the Namibian question in which Kissinger outlined the United States position as follows:

First, we reiterate our call upon the South African government to permit all the people and groups of Namibia to express their views freely, under United Nations supervision, on the political future and constitutional structure of the country. Second, we urge the South African government to announce a definite timetable acceptable to the world community for the achievement of self-determination. Third, the United States is prepared to work with the international community, and especially with African leaders, to determine what further steps would improve prospects for a rapid and acceptable transition to Namibian independence. We are convinced that the need for progress is urgent. Fourth, once concrete movement toward self-determination is underway, the United States will ease its restrictions on trade and investments in Namibia. We stand ready to provide economic and technical assistance to help Namibia take its rightful place among the independent nations of the world.  

This policy outline, coupled with Carter's commitment to human rights, opened the way for subsequent mediation efforts by the Western nations in 1977. The mediation efforts, spearheaded by the United States, were launched in April

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1977 to obtain a settlement of the Namibian dispute along the lines set out in previous United Nations resolutions on Namibia, especially Security Council resolution 385 of 1976 which demanded, inter alia, that:

. . . (a) South Africa accept elections under United Nations supervision and control before independence; (b) release of all political prisoners; (c) abolish all forms of racial discrimination; (d) permit all exiles to return without fear of arrest; and (e) withdraw its illegal administration.155

The Western nations further agreed that every stage and planning of this mediation effort would involve close consultation with the front line states and Nigeria. Since one of the objectives was a solution acceptable to all parties to the dispute, SWAPO was brought directly into the negotiating process. This was the beginning of the Contact Group, which included Canada, France, United Kingdom, United States and West Germany, and was headed by U.S. Ambassador Don McHenry.

Prompted by events in Angola in 1975 and pressures from the international community, South Africa realized that independence for Namibia was inevitable. However, South Africa's position as to what form it would take

differed significantly from that of United Nations and SWAPO. Although South Africa did not wish to be seen as the one to break off negotiations with the Contact Group, it was unwilling to accept any solution that would jeopardize what it considered "to be vital political, strategic and economic interests in the territory." From South Africa's point of view, the ideal solution was a friendly and dependent government in Namibia that would allow Namibia to remain a buffer state and permit continued South African access to the mineral wealth of the territory. And since the solution proposed by the Contact Group was perceived by South Africa as not likely to lead to a puppet government in Namibia that would allow South Africa to retain control of the territory's uranium and diamonds, South Africa has presented its own alternative—The Turnhalle Constitutional Talks. The talks, launched in September 1975 with representatives of the major ethnic groups, excluded SWAPO. In 1977 the conference produced a set of proposals for the establishment of an interim assembly that would lead to Namibian independence.


157 Richard Sklar, "In Namibia, They have Counted Votes, but the Verdict is Undecided," Los Angeles Times, 17 December 1978, V. 2.
by December 1978. The delegates from this conference, under South Africa's urgings, formed a multi-racial alliance party known as the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), led by Dirk Mudge, a prosperous farmer of German extraction, who was reported to have a long history as a leader of a white supremacist party. South African-sponsored elections that excluded SWAPO and other opposition parties was held on December 4–8, 1978 with predictable results. The DTA won in a landslide amidst worldwide condemnation of the entire exercise. The Contact Group branded the election outcome "null and void." SWAPO's secretary for foreign affairs Festus Naholo called "on all our brothers in Africa and the whole international community to condemn" the exercise.

Observers saw the move as another unilateral declaration of independence and likened the December election in Namibia to Ian Smith's internal settlement. Xtopher Hitchens declared that:

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160 Sklar, "In Namibia," p. 2.

What we are seeing in Namibia is another Unilateral Declaration of Independence, only this time backed even more strongly by Pretoria because those involved are of South African, rather than British, stock and because the economic stake is more direct.162

With the lessons of Zimbabwe fresh in the minds of policy-makers in South Africa, it seemed conceivable that South Africa's strategy was to: (a) eventually agree to an internationally-supervised election, (b) attempt to use the time gained by its delaying tactics to build up internal and external support for the DTA or (internal settlement), and (c) weaken SWAPO politically and militarily, thus, reduce its chances of winning the election when eventually held.

South Africa's attempt to side-track the international initiative may have slowed down the initial momentum gained when it appeared all parties to the conflict were willing to give the western plan a chance, but the plan had not been discarded. The United Nations Council for Namibia held a series of extraordinary plenary meetings in Lusaka, Zambia in 1978. On March 23, 1978 it adopted a Declaration of Lusaka (A/S-9/2-S/12631) in which the Council said it considered the "illegal occupation of Namibia by South Africa to be a threat to international security." The

Council recommended, among other things, that the General Assembly:

(a) urge the Security Council to take the necessary measures to end forthwith South Africa's illegal occupation of the territory; (b) ensure complete and unconditional withdrawal of South Africa from Namibia; and (c) urgently to consider the imposition of mandatory and comprehensive economic sanctions.163

On July 27, 1978 the Security Council endorsed the western initiative and adopted two Resolutions—431, on the appointment of a United Nations Commissioner for Namibia by a vote of 13 to 0; and 432, concerning Walvis Bay, by a unanimous vote.164 South Africa had attempted to separate Walvis Bay from the rest of Namibia for possible annexation.

Nigeria and the United States supported the plan. In Security Council Resolution 435, co-sponsored by Nigeria, the United States and others, the Council reiterated its major objective—the withdrawal of South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia and the "transfer of power to the people of Namibia." Furthermore, the resolution:

(a) called for the establishment of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) to supervise the Namibian election; (b) called on South Africa forthwith to cooperate with the Secretary General in

164 Ibid.
the implementation of its resolution, and with the
UNTAG in carrying out its function; and (c) declared
that all unilateral measures taken by the illegal
administration in Namibia in relation to the electoral
process, including unilateral registration of voters,
or transfer of power, in contravention of Council
resolutions 385, 431, and 435 were null and void.165

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 12 to 0, with two
abstentions. The United Nations appointed Martti Ahtisaari
as United Nations Commissioner for Namibia to head a
negotiating team to work out the details of the cease fire
and elections as stipulated by resolution 435.

Nigeria not only endorsed the western initiative in
Namibia, but threw its weight fully behind their efforts in
1977.166 Nigeria had consistently made its position on the
Namibian question clear in both United Nations sessions and
policy statements. In a speech delivered at the United
Nations in 1977, Obasanjo reiterated Nigeria's commitment
"to the cause of freedom and justice" in Namibia and added
that:

We salute SWAPO leaders and pay warm tributes to
the devotion and determination of that organization
to free Namibia from illegal occupation. . . . We in

165 Ibid., p. 62.
166 The Daily Times, 8 September 1977, p. 2.
Nigeria will not relent in our efforts to see Namibia free.  

Nigeria's foreign affairs commissioner, Joe Garba, in a policy statement on October 21, 1977, not only reaffirmed Nigeria's position on Namibia, but deplored the "hypocritical attitude on the part of some world powers in handling the Namibian question," and stated that "no sacrifice is too great, no measure too strong" for Nigeria to take to accelerate the process of decolonization and bring about genuine political change in Namibia.

The Shagari administration continued the activist foreign policy started by the Muhammed-Obasanjo regime. Shagari repeatedly reaffirmed Nigeria's commitment to the liberation of Namibia. Addressing the Lagos Diplomatic Corps, shortly after his inauguration, in 1979 Shagari said:

My administration will relentlessly work with all countries willing to apply civilized standards to bring about the early eradication of colonialism, racism and other forms of discrimination in Africa.

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On Namibia, Shagari reaffirmed "Nigeria's support for SWAPO as the sole and authentic representative of the people of Namibia." Declaring Nigeria's support for the Western initiative, Shagari urged the United Nations Secretary General to: "Persist in his commendable efforts to implement the Security Council resolutions on Namibia. South Africa must withdraw unconditionally from that territory." During his visit to the United States in 1980, Shagari predicted victory for Namibia in a year and called for mandatory sanctions against South Africa.

Efforts to find an internationally acceptable solution to the Namibian question continued during 1980, President Carter's last year in office. While the United Nations played a central role, it also received some assistance from Nigeria and the United States in keeping the issue alive.

During the Carter administration, South Africa moved grudgingly from intransigence to ambivalence to rather doubtful cooperation. By December 1980 South Africa was ready to come to the conference table. In one of a

170 Ibid., p. 56.

171 Secretary General, Kurt Waldheim told the Security Council on November 24, 1980 that South Africa and SWAPO had agreed to attend the proposed U.N.-sponsored conference in January.
series of attempts to resolve the Namibian dispute the
United Nations sponsored a Pre-Implementation Conference
(PIM) in Geneva in January 1981.\footnote{172} Delegates to the meet-
ing included the South African government and SWAPO,
Nigeria, the frontline states, the OAU and the Contract
Group attended as observers. Specifically, this conference
was called by United Nations Secretary General, Kurt
Waldheim, for the purpose of:

...setting the dates for: (c) a ceasefire; and
(b) the start of the implementation of the Settlement
Proposal leading to independence for the Territory
in 1981.\footnote{173}

The conference, opened by the Secretary General on January
7, ended on January 14 without agreement being reached on
any of the two key points. Predictably, South Africa found
another snag---this time expressing extreme concern "regard-
ing the impartiality of the United Nations." In effect,
South Africa was demanding the withdrawal of United Nations
recognition of SWAPO as "the sole and authentic representa-
tive of the Namibian people."\footnote{174}

\footnote{172}{\textit{U.N. Sets Multi-Party Namibia Talks in January to

\footnote{173}{\textit{Namibia Conference Ends after Failing to Agree on
Central Issues},} \textit{United Nations Chronicle} XVIII, n 3 (March

\footnote{174}{Ibid.}
United Nations Under Secretary General for Special Political Affairs Brian E. Urquhart expressed regret at the failure of the conference, pointing out that by this failure "a great opportunity had been missed." Kurt Waldheim, in his report to the Security Council on the result of the conference (S/14333) dated January 19, 1981 stated that the outcome of the meeting "must give rise to the most serious international concern," and appealed to South Africa to reconsider its position.\(^\text{175}\) At a United Nations press briefing on January 21, 1981, SWAPO's Permanent Observer to the United Nations, Theo-Ben Gurirab accused South Africa of wrecking the talks, and thus, "forced the Namibian people on a war path."\(^\text{176}\) The General Assembly condemned "South Africa's manoeuvres at the Geneva conference," and deplored the failure of the conference, which in the opinion of the Assembly, was attributable "to South Africa's continued intransigence." Furthermore, the Assembly expressed the view that, with the failure of the Geneva talks, "the people of Namibia had no option other than to escalate their armed struggle."\(^\text{177}\)

\(^{175}\)Ibid.  
\(^{176}\)Ibid., p. 6.  
While South Africa continued to question the good faith of the United Nations in an apparent attempt to stall for time, it also stepped up building local support for its internal settlement, and actively pursued military action against SWAPO.178

Observers contended that while the success of Mugabe in Zimbabwe served as a warning to South Africa over the future of Namibia, Ronald Reagan's election as United States President raised South Africa's hopes of a possible reversal of American support for an internationally acceptable settlement in Namibia along the lines stipulated in Resolution 435. "The South African government," wrote the Economist, appears:

...to be stalling yet again on the Namibia settlement plan. This time, it seems, Mr. Piet Botha's government wants another delay because it hopes it will be able to bargain for a better deal once the Reagan administration is in office in Washington. South Africa has long been banking on a Reagan administration coming to power and, it hoped, being both more sympathetic to its standpoint and more ready to veto a sanctions move.179

A reversal of American policy had not yet emerged, but

178 South Africa has carried out military raids on suspected SWAPO bases in neighboring countries, particularly Angola. One such raid was mounted on May 4th 1978 on Cassinga, 156 miles inside Angola.

there had been a decided shift in perspective. This shift was anticipated by African observers when it became clear Reagan would be in the White House in 1981. Ali A. Mazrui, anticipating this shift, predicted that the Reagan administration was:

...likely to have an African policy that, to some extent, is almost a mirror reflection of China's policy—a tendency to look at African issues neither on their merits nor from the perspective of direct U.S.-African relations, but from the perspective of U.S.-Soviet relations.\(^{180}\)

Richard Deutsch predicted that: (a) African concerns, such as the issue of political change in Africa, are not expected to be high priority issues in the Reagan administration, but added that pragmatism will lead the administration to accommodate "Nigeria's commitment to the achievement of majority rule" in Southern Africa; and (b) the administration is expected to back off from applying pressure on South Africa; instead, it will engage the South African government in "frank talk" or "private persuasion."\(^{181}\) Some of these predictions were right. Reagan's new approach was


essentially coaxing rather than threatening South Africa into cooperation. The administration named this approach "constructive engagement." The corollary to this is the so-called "linkage"—which is a formula designed by this administration to make Namibia's independence contingent upon the withdrawal of Cuban troops in Angola. Critics charge that such a policy has hindered negotiations rather than helped them, pointing out that South Africa's refusal to withdraw from Namibia "for security reasons until 19,000 Cuban troops" are withdrawn from Angola, falls in line with Reagan's policy of linkage. In Kenneth Kaunda's own words, "we cannot accept that. We do not see why there should be any connection between the withdrawal of the Cubans and independence for Namibia." United States negotiators, headed by Assistant Secretary of State, Chester Crocker, have been explaining the administration's position at home and abroad. He toured Africa in 1981 to explain United States policy on Africa, particularly in regard to Namibia. In a speech to United States Council on Foreign


Relations in New York on October 5, 1981, Crocker branded the so-called United States tilt to South Africa as "mis-information," and added:

We are determined to press for an internationally acceptable settlement for the independence of Namibia. That settlement must be one which meets the vital security needs of Namibia's neighbors as well as permits the exercise of self-determination by Namibia's people. We believe we have made progress toward that objective.\textsuperscript{184}

Addressing the issue of linkage Crocker denied the existence of such a policy when he said: "We have not made Cuban troops withdrawal a pre-condition of the Namibian settlement. The Namibian negotiations are proceeding on their own track.\textsuperscript{185} However, Crocker echoed the administration's concern over the presence of Cuban troops which he saw as:

\begin{quote}
\ldots (a) a major impediment to progress on Namibia, and (b) a situation which allows the Soviet Union and Cuba to forment disorder, to keep the pot boiling, to continue a dependence on Soviet arms.\textsuperscript{186}
\end{quote}

Crocker's denials and explanations notwithstanding, Reagan made the independence of Namibia contingent upon the withdrawal of Cuban troops. Nigeria publicly rejected this, calling it "unjust" and "incomprehensible."


\textsuperscript{185}Ibid., p. 5. \textsuperscript{186}Ibid., p. 7.
By the end of 1981 negotiations were at a standstill and announced deadlines passed with no solution in sight. Even the unity of the Contact Group seemed to have unraveled, with France, West Germany and Canada conceding that the only obstacle to an agreement was the Cuban issue, and informing Washington that "linkage is unacceptable."\(^{187}\)

The question in Namibia was not political change per se, but what form it would take. Indications were that South Africa wants to impose a neo-colonial form of government on Namibia in a desperate attempt to protect what it considered to be vital political, strategic and economic interests in the territory, and the Reagan administration seemed to be unwilling to discourage this. It is perhaps noteworthy that all the attendant problems that confronted Ian Smith's Internal Settlement were also present in the Namibian situation in that: (a) the war continued, (b) it attracted worldwide condemnation, and (c) South Africa's illegal occupation had not received international recognition. And it was not unrealistic to expect that what happened to Ian Smith's Internal Settlement would also occur in Namibia.

South Africa's delay tactics notwithstanding, colonial history might repeat itself in Namibia. As Faye Carroll pointed out:

What ultimately will transpire in Namibia is predictable. Eventually, South African exploitation of the territory will end. Ultimately, apartheid will fail. The process may be long and costly, but colonialism and white supremacy are dying.188

The Reagan administration made meaningful cooperation between Nigeria and the United States on the Namibian question practically impossible because of its major policy shift.

Motivations behind both countries' stance in Namibia.—First, both countries were not agreed on what the issue was in Namibia. Second, the Reagan administration intensified U.S. concern over Soviet and Cuban involvement in Southern Africa, and U.S. access to strategic minerals and protection of its economic interests were the top priority issues for U.S. policy-makers, not African concerns and interests.

Nigeria.—Nigeria was motivated by the need to push the decolonization process one step further. As Africa's spokesman, with considerable involvement in the Southern

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African decolonization process, this had become a natural issue over which all Nigerian administrations were agreed. Furthermore, it had become an article of faith for all administrations in Nigeria to not only actively support the liberation of Southern Africa, but to regard it as a priority issue in its foreign policy.

**United States.**—While Nigeria saw colonialism as the problem in Namibia, the United States sees the Soviet and the Cubans as the problem. Thus, for the Reagan administration, Namibia's independence took second place to the East-West confrontation. A SWAPO government in Namibia was seen by the Reagan administration as: (a) a victory for the Soviet Union and Cuba, (b) a blow to U.S. security, and (c) a loss of important strategic minerals.

**Strategic Minerals.**—Namibia possesses extensive deposits of minerals including, uranium, diamonds, copper, lead and zinc. In 1977 Namibia was the seventeenth leading mining nation in the world, "with diamonds accounting for 66 percent of total mineral exports."

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Lithium and vanadium are produced extensively in Namibia and exported to the United States. Lithium is used in the manufacture of lubricants and ceramics, and vanadium is vital to the production of anti-corrosive steels. Furthermore, in 1977 Namibia was reported to be the second largest producer of lead in Africa, and "the third largest producer of Zinc." It is also rich in arsenic, silver, sillimanite, salt, sodalite, gold, manganese, tin and slate. In 1975 United States direct investment in Namibia was over $50 million.

United States-owned Tsumeb Corporation and the Consolidated Diamond Mines of South West Africa, a member of the Anglo American Group produced "over 90 percent of all mineral production in Namibia." It is estimated that Tsumeb's share of profit alone in 1978 amounted to $60 million.

191 U.S. Study Commission, p. 310.
192 Seidman, Multinational Corporations, p. 163.
195 Siedman, Multinational Corporations, p. 165.
East-West confrontation and the protection of these varied economic and strategic interests took precedence over Namibian independence. In the next section, the focus will be South Africa itself. Efforts made by Nigeria and the United States to bring about political change in that country will be examined, and the motivations behind both countries' involvement will be highlighted.

**South Africa**

South Africa's apartheid system is unique, and of great concern to those committed to racial justice and human dignity. The question of how to transform South Africa's apartheid system has bothered the rest of Africa for years. The concern the rest of Africa has shown for the achievement of this objective has fluctuated throughout history. It was very intense immediately after periods of relative success of a liberation struggle or negotiated settlement in other parts of the continent.197

Nigeria and the United States have persistently

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expressed their opposition to South Africa's apartheid system. Both countries have also made some efforts to bring about peaceful change in the apartheid system. The focus here is to: (a) identify the problem in South Africa, (b) examine Nigeria and the United States positions on the South African problem, and (c) evaluate both countries' efforts to bring about political change in South Africa, with some insights on the motivations behind both countries' involvement in South Africa.

Some highlights of the historical background of South Africa's apartheid system may be useful. The process of white dominance over the indigenous peoples of South Africa was set in motion in 1652 when the Dutch East India Company established the first permanent European settlement at the Cape of Good Hope. This settlement facilitated the subsequent conquering of the territory. White domination over the African indigenous people was accomplished in three phases. First, whites occupied the arable land within 100 miles of Cape Town. By the 1800 they also controlled the fertile land throughout the whole of western half of the region. And by the end of the nineteenth century whites

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took complete control of the whole territory.\textsuperscript{199}

By 1657 the settlement had grown into a colony, with the company releasing a number of its servants to become free settlers in the Cape in order to cultivate land and herd cattle. The Dutch settlers in the Cape quickly came to consider manual labour below their dignity, therefore, the Company had to import slaves. The first shipload of slaves arrived in 1658.\textsuperscript{200} Furthermore, the Dutch raided the local inhabitants for slaves, and with the increase in the number of Dutch settlers, came a sharp increase in the settlers' demand for cattle and land. African resistance to Dutch expansion was met with brute force, and by 1785 three additional settlements had been established by the Dutch-Stellenbosch settlement in 1685, Swellendam in 1747, and Graaff-Reinet in 1785.\textsuperscript{201}

By the 18th century there were about 15,000 white settlers in the territory. Tension between the different groups of settlers existed, but their common Calvinist


\textsuperscript{201} Leo Marquard, \textit{A Short History of South Africa} (New York: Praeger, 1968), p. 15.
religion molded the white settlers into a relatively homogeneous group that became known as the Afrikaners. However, in about a generation, color had become "the primary index of status." Fundamentalistic Afrikaners have sought Biblical justification for racial segregation and white supremacy by arguing that, as Berghe puts it: "Africans, . . . are the descendants of Ham, who was cursed by Noah, and are destined by God to be servants of servants, hewers of wood and drawers of water." 

British conquering of the territory in 1806 further complicated the South African situation. British-Afrikaner struggle for supremacy had sometimes overshadowed the traditional black-white power struggle. The result was what has become known as the Great Trek, in which Afrikaners, dissatisfied with British rule and its reforms which put the Africans on the same footing as the Afrikaners, traveled far into the interior, eventually establishing settlements in upper Natal.

Intra-white conflict notwithstanding, by the time South Africa became independent in 1910 whites were clearly

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203 Ibid., p. 15.
204 Ibid., p. 29.
in control. However, Africans had not been silent while whites took over control and designed the structure of South Africa's political system. According to Gwendolen Carter, African opposition was strong and organized. On the eve of South Africa's independence, "the National Native Convention protested the exclusion of Africans" from political participation.205 That was the beginning of a movement that eventually gave rise to the formation of the African National Congress (ANC) in 1912. And until it was banned in 1960 following the Sharpeville massacre, "the ANC remained the chief standard-bearer" and a major force in the liberation struggle in South Africa.206

The Problem

The uniqueness of South Africa's apartheid system, in the words of a United States Senator, is that "its policies are based on race, made legal through legislation, and justified in the name of defending the West from Communism."207 The racially dominated state is controlled by


206 Ibid.

207 Senator Dick Clark (D., Iowa), Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Sub-Committee on African Affairs
and exists for the purpose of upholding the privileges of a white minority. According to Bernard Magubane, these privileges include, among other things: (a) the consumption of 60 percent of the nation's income, (b) ownership of 87 percent of the land, and (c) control of "most of the skilled and semi-skilled occupations." 208

Apartheid provided the guiding principle for government action and legislation. What followed particularly from 1948 was a systematic barrage of laws and regulations which imposed requirements for separate facilities, separate group areas, and racial classifications; prohibited sexual relations between different races and practically prohibited any form of meaningful interaction between the races in all aspects of life. 209 To implement and enforce such a vast apparatus of laws and regulations, the South African regime has had to create a substantial bureaucracy. A person's fundamental rights hinge on the color of his or her skin. Thus, the South African regime has divided the population

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into four groups: Africans, Asians, Coloreds and whites.

The legal basis of this division stemmed from the Population Registration Act of 1950.\textsuperscript{210} Under this law, sometimes described as the cornerstone of apartheid, the government can further reclassify people. The implication here is that in South Africa one can be classified as a member of more than one racial group at different times. According to a United States Commission report:

\begin{quote}
In 1978 ten whites were reclassified as coloureds and 150 coloureds were reclassified as white. Such shifts can cause upheavals in families. Families are torn apart when husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters are differently classified, with all the ensuing consequences to their personal, economic and political lives.\textsuperscript{211}
\end{quote}

To guard against racial crossings the South African regime enacted legal prohibitions against mixed marriages and interracial dating. In 1959 the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act was passed. It forbids marriages between "a European and a non-European."\textsuperscript{212} Other laws in the same general category include the Immorality Acts of 1957 and 1950 which outlawed sexual relations or "any immoral or

\textsuperscript{210}Hopkinson, \textit{South Africa}, p. 91.


\textsuperscript{212}Hopkinson, \textit{South Africa}, p. 90.
indecent act" between blacks and whites.\textsuperscript{213} About six hundred people were convicted in 1960; and 355 people were charged under the Immorality Acts in 1980 alone.\textsuperscript{214}

The homelands policy, developed in the 1950s, reached its climax in 1976 with the granting of independence to Transkei. One of the basis of this policy was the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959 which implied that Africans would never be permitted effective participation in South Africa except in their designated tribal homelands. In other words, this policy was designed to ensure that whites retained control of 87 percent of the territory while the African majority were restricted to these tribal states. Thus, whites would not have to share political and economic power with Africans, but would retain African labor. The Report of the Study Commission summed up the ultimate goal of this policy as follows:

All homelands would become independent states: the entire African population of the Republic would be granted political rights and citizenship in these states; consequently, there would ultimately be no African citizen of the Republic of South Africa requiring accommodation in the political order of

\textsuperscript{213}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{214}The Study Commission on U.S. Policy Toward Southern Africa, p. 49.
Some of the most detested aspects of apartheid are the pass laws. The Black Urban Areas Consolidation Act of 1945 and the Black Abolition of Passes and Coordination of Documents Act of 1952 are the main statutes restricting the entry of Africans into white areas. The pass laws in effect require that:

Africans must carry at all times a reference book containing his employment history, as well as a number of documents; such as tax receipts. . . . Africans may not reside anywhere without permission, may not move outside his allotted place of residence without approval of the authorities, is subject to curfew at night, may not live in any 'white' area without being gainfully employed, may not own land in freehold, and may be expelled from his residence and deported to any place, when the administration deems his presence to be 'undesirable.'

Compounding these discriminatory laws was the total exclusion of blacks from effective political participation.

Furthermore, blacks were struggling not only against, as Magubane puts it, "the all-embracing" exploitations they had been subjected to in the apartheid system. They were challenging, Magubane added, "a history of violation that

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215 Ibid., p. 50.


217 Berghe, South Africa, p. 133.
goes far beyond the judicial, into that which is economic and social as well."²¹⁸

There were serious inequalities in the education of blacks as compared to that of whites in South Africa. These inequalities ranged from physical facilities to textbooks. In 1979 the teacher-pupil ratio was: (a) 1 to 48 for blacks, and 1 to 30 for Coloureds, compared with 1 to 20 for whites.²¹⁹ Dropout rates in black schools were very high. In 1967 the attrition rate was about 80 percent. In 1970 there were only 1,400 blacks with university education, while there were 104,500 whites with university education.²²⁰

The gross injustice of apartheid as it relates to education can be best gleaned from government expenditures on white and black education. In the fiscal year 1978-1979, the apartheid regime spent $90 on each black child, $290 on each Coloured child, and $940 on each white child.²²¹ Thus, in 1981 40 percent of the urban black workforce were classified as functionally illiterate, in the rural areas, the

²¹⁸Magubane, The Political Economy of Race and Class, p. XII.

²¹⁹The Study Commission on U.S. Policy Toward Southern Africa, p. 113.

²²⁰Ibid.

²²¹Ibid.
There was a wide gap between white and black wages for equal work. Specifically, it was 5 to 1 in 1981. In the same year it was estimated that African per capital income was $280, compared to white per capital income of $3,500. It may be useful to point out that 85 percent of blacks work for the minimum wage, compared with 0.24 percent of whites. Correcting these inequalities and other aspects of apartheid has been, to some extent, the focus of the struggle.

The struggle in South Africa involved a dangerous confrontation between a minority white population, pursuing discriminatory policies designed to keep them in control of the state they captured over a half century ago, and the majority of oppressed, exploited and dispossessed Africans determined to wrest political power from the apartheid regime and institute in its place a system based on majority rule, one man one vote.

The struggle to wrest political power from the

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223 The Study Commission on U.S. Policy Toward Southern Africa, p. 133.

existing regime gave rise to a number of liberation movements in South Africa. The major one was the African National Congress (ANC). Others included the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) and the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), (a splinter group from the ANC). At its peak the ANC claimed a membership of approximately 100,000, committed to the liberation of South Africa. Before the ANC was driven underground in 1960 under the terms of the Suppression of Communism Act, it led the fight inside South Africa against the Native Land Act of 1913. Under this law the white minority took 87 percent of the land, and left 13 percent for the African majority. The ANC supported the bloodily repressed Sharpeville protest of 1960 and the students uprising of 1976 in Soweto, both viewed as turning points in black militancy. The ANC was reported to be a viable organization with a well-established network of internal and external supporters and sources of money. Studies show that the ANC enjoyed widespread support among

225 Africa, No. 55, March 1976, p. 83. Africa, July 1980 reported at least 10,000 young blacks have gone underground since 1976 and are returning as trained guerrillas.

226 Davis et al., Urban Native Law, p. 465.

South African blacks." About 55 percent of the people polled in Soweto in 1978 expressed support for ANC, and the number jumped to 69 per cent in 1980. Cuba, Nigeria, the front line states and the Soviet Union are some of the major backers of the ANC. The ANC also received financial and moral support from the British Labor Party and the World Council of Churches.

Nigeria and United States Positions

Opposition to the apartheid system not only came from internal groups but also from external forces. The fundamental and continuing opposition of Nigeria and the United States to the apartheid system was reiterated by both countries on several occasions.

Nigeria.---Radical Pan-Africanists have long stressed that the survival of the apartheid system rests on the fact that African countries capable of meeting South Africa's humiliating challenge have not stepped sufficiently forward to do so. That assessment may be debatable. However,

229The Study Commission on U.S. Policy Toward Southern Africa, p. 197.
230Ibid., p. 204.
beginning with the Muhammed-Obasanjo regime, Nigeria stepped forward to make its contribution toward meeting the humiliating challenge. Almost immediately after his ascendency to power in 1975 Muhammed tried to provide leadership, particularly in matters concerning political change in South Africa. In a policy statement on September 1, 1975, the Federal Military Government strongly condemned the apartheid system in which, inter alia:

.. .15 million non-whites of South Africa are condemned to live in the most barren reserves covering 13 percent of their home-land while the racist minority group of under four million whites plunder 87 percent of the land.231

The Muhammed regime not only condemned the apartheid system, but sought to ostracize South Africa from the international community through a number of measures which included:

.. .(1) the further tightening of U.N. arms embargo on South Africa; (2) discouraging any form of cooperation in the field of nuclear energy with the apartheid regime; (3) a call on member states of the U.N. to avoid economic relations with South Africa; (4) an oil embargo on South Africa to be observed by all oil producing countries; (5) a rejection of the policy of Bantustan; and (6) the calling on member states not to deal with or recognize any so-called independent homeland.232


After less than a year in office, Muhammed was assassinated. His Successor O. Obasanjo took over in February 1976. Essentially, no reversal of policy was undertaken during his administration. Instead, Obasanjo seemed to favor a tough stance on apartheid by developing a comprehensive policy that placed equal weight on armed liberation and diplomatic initiatives. While collaborating with the United States in the continuing effort to find a peaceful solution to the issue of political change in South Africa, the Obasanjo regime also demonstrated its interest in armed struggle through its extensive support for liberation movements in South Africa. In an effort to prepare the general public for possible Nigerian military involvement in South Africa and raise national consciousness about the struggle in South Africa, the Federal Military Government undertook a massive publicity campaign to educate the people of Nigeria about the situation in South Africa. The Southern Africa Relief Fund was established in late 1976, and by mid 1977 more than $10 million was collected. The first of a number of airlifts of relief supplies that included shoes and blankets sent by the Fund to the liberation movements left Lagos on September 7, 1977.233 Countries which had

suffered from the effects of the liberation war were also earmarked for special assistance to help offset economic losses caused by the war. In April 1976 Nigeria gave Mozambique a grant for $1.5 million, and in July another check for $250,000 for the support of Zimbabwe freedom fighters was handed to Joaquim Chissano, Mozambique's Minister of Foreign Affairs. In January 1977 another airlift of relief supplies left Lagos for Botswana for an estimated 2,000 South African refugees there. And in January 1977 alone 200 Soweto refugee students were admitted to schools and universities in Nigeria. 234

It was against this background that the announcement in June 1977 by the Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. T. Y. Danjuma that Nigeria was ready to send troops to assist the liberation movements particularly in South Africa was received favorably throughout the country. However a report in the London Daily Telegraph indicating that Nigeria actually offered troops was strongly denied by the Federal Military Government. 235


235 Refuting the report by the British Daily Telegraph in its January 31, 1977 issue the Nigerian government said no such offer had been made. For details see New Nigerian, February 4, 1977, p. 1.
Nigeria's efforts at peaceful change were also demonstrated through unilateral actions, diplomatic pressures exerted through international forums and joint diplomatic initiatives with the United States. In his position as Chairman of the United Nations Special Committee Against Apartheid, Leslie Harriman, Nigeria's Ambassador to the United Nations consistently worked to put the issue of political change in South Africa on the front political burner. One of such efforts was the World Conference for Action Against Apartheid held in Lagos from August 22-26, 1977. The conference was organized by the Federal Government of Nigeria, in cooperation with the OAU, the U.N., and in consultation with the South African liberation movements, the ANC and the PAC. Participants were 112 Governments, including the frontline states, the United States and Britain, 12 inter-governmental organizations, five liberation movements and five non-governmental organizations.

The purpose of the conference was to intensify the international campaign against apartheid and map out, as Kurt Waldheim puts it, "a program of effective action.

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commanding the widest possible support from the interna-
tional community."237 Leslie Harriman said at the confer-
ence that: "The time has come for the international
community to pledge to stamp out apartheid, a refined form
of slavery, as it abolished slavery a century ago."238
Speaking before the conference, the United States Ambassa-
dor to the United Nations, Andrew Young, credited the
Nigerian government with bringing about a "new sensitivity
of the West" to apartheid. He saw apartheid as "a policy
of discrimination and racism that most Americans had known
at home in not so distant a past." He likened the apart-
heid system to cancer, but one that can be cured without
necessarily killing the patient.239 Furthermore, he reit-
erated the United States commitment to bring about change
in South Africa, leading to majority rule and an end to
apartheid.

Also speaking before the conference Obasanjo stated
that Nigeria was willing to move from rhetoric to concrete

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237Ibid., p. 5.
238West Africa, 29 August 1977, p. 1791
239Report of the World Conference for Action Against
action. The conference adopted a 30-point Declaration that came to be known as the Lagos Declaration.\textsuperscript{240}

Throughout 1977 the Obasanjo administration discussed ways of forcing western firms doing business in South Africa to choose between their interests in South Africa and in black Africa. By the end of 1977 Nigeria had established an Economic Intelligence Unit to prevent firms that had dealings with South Africa from operating in Nigeria. The first of a number of retaliatory measures was announced on March 21, 1978. Nigeria ordered the withdrawal of all government deposits from Barclays Bank.\textsuperscript{241} This move almost caused the bank to fail. In December 1977, the United Nations General Assembly overwhelmingly endorsed a proposal for a mandatory oil embargo against South Africa, and Nigeria took the proposal to the Security Council in early 1978.\textsuperscript{242}

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\textsuperscript{240}For details see Report of the Conference, vol. 1, p. 31. Delegates from the West expressed reservations on some of the points and attempted to prevent total approval of the Lagos Declaration, which was eventually approved by acclamation.


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Obasanjo left office in 1979, and his successor, President Shehu Shagari repeatedly reaffirmed Nigeria's commitment to the freedom of Namibia and to the end of apartheid. He indicated a willingness to continue the policy of taking a tough stance against "western business interests that continue to collaborate with South Africa." Furthermore, he warned that Nigeria would use "all means at our disposal, including oil if necessary," to bring about political change in South Africa.\textsuperscript{243}

\textbf{United States.}--On South Africa, the United States, especially during the Carter administration, seemed to favor a tough stance on apartheid. This tough stance was manifested in three forms of pressure: military, economic and diplomatic.\textsuperscript{244} Military--Historically, curbs on military cooperation with South Africa appear to have been the most important on the list of United States action taken against apartheid. In 1963 the United States embargoed arms sales to South Africa, and in 1967 the United States Navy was ordered to stop calling at South African


ports. The United States voted for United Nations Security Council Resolution 418 which imposed a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa in 1977. The embargo was adopted unanimously by the 15 members of the Security Council in a vote the Secretary General Kurt Waldheim called "a momentous step." The resolution said, in part, that:

The existing arms embargo must be strengthened and universally applied, without any reservation or qualifications whatsoever in order to prevent a further aggravation of the grave situation in South Africa.245

Andrew Young later said that the arms embargo was not aimed at destroying the apartheid regime but was an attempt to encourage moderation in it.246 In 1978 a ban was placed on export of items used by the South African military and police, deemed to be the chief enforcers of apartheid.247

**Economic**--Although Andrew Young had argued that economic sanctions, whether partial or total, were never effective, limited economic pressure was applied on South

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246 Ibid., p. 8.

Africa by the United States. In 1979 Congressional committee investigations revealed that Olin Corporation was involved in the illegal shipment of arms to South Africa. A total of 3,200 guns were reported illegally shipped between 1971 and 1975, for which the company was fined $510,000.248 Also, voters in Berkeley, California, voted overwhelmingly to withdraw city funds from United States banks that had extended loans to South Africa.249 Furthermore, the Export and Import Bank was forbidden to: (a) make loans for United States sales to South Africa; and (b) extend guarantees or credit insurance to United States businesses operating in South Africa unless they could show evidence of progress being made in eliminating apartheid.250 Also, the United States has endorsed the Sullivan Principles,251 as have about 140 United States firms doing business in South Africa.

248 Ibid. 249 Ibid., p. 144.

250 This was contained in an Amendment to the Bill of Authorization introduced by Representative Paul Tsongas (D., Massachusetts) in 1978. It had the support of national labor organizations, church groups and mainstream-to-liberal political forces.

251 The Rev. Leon H. Sullivan is the author of six principles promulgated in 1977 that form a code of conduct for American companies doing business in South Africa.
Diplomacy.—Quiet diplomatic talks with South Africa on apartheid produced no tangible results. One such occasion was in 1977 when Vice President Mondale, at a meeting in Vienna, bluntly told B. J. Vorster that relations between the United States and South Africa would depend on progress toward the elimination of apartheid. In a policy statement on June 20, 1978 Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance reiterated the Administration's tough stance when he said:

We have made it clear to the South African government that a failure to begin to make genuine progress toward an end to racial discrimination and full political participation for all . . . citizens can only have an increasingly adverse impact on our relations.

By 1980 the Carter administration left no doubts in the minds of observers and the South African regime that a definite departure from the Nixon-Ford administration policy had been established. The State Department group during the Carter administration that was partly responsible for this departure was the Africanists, made up of Secretary of State

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253 Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, U.S. Relations with Africa, Address before the 58th annual meeting of the U.S. Jaycees in Atlantic City, 20 June 1978, p. 5.
State Cyrus Vance, U.S. Ambassadors to the United Nations, Andrew Young and Don McHenry. The administration's policy closely followed the thinking of this group who, according to Great Decisions 1981, believed: "That African problems should be dealt with as much as possible on their own merits, and that apartheid is not only morally wrong but historically doomed."254

The Reagan administration did not deal with African problems on their own merits. Rather, it dealt with African problems within the context of the East-West confrontation. President Reagan tended to be supportive of the South African regime. According to Henry Jackson, President Reagan defended United States support on "both moral and strategic grounds."255 In 1981 President Reagan said:

As long as there is a sincere and honest effort being made (by the apartheid regime), based on our own experience in our land, it would seem to me that we should be trying to be helpful. . . . Can we abandon a country. . . .that strategically is essential to the Free World in its production of minerals we all must have and so forth.256


256Quoted in Ibid.
It was in this context that five South African military officers visited the United States in 1981. They were received by Jeane Kirkpatrick, United States Ambassador to the United Nations. Observers pointed out that the South Africans' visits and consultations with United States officials "violated a long standing policy outlawing official business visits to this country by members of South Africa's armed forces."257

The shift in United States policy under the Reagan administration underminded what little progress had been made by the Africanist Group in the Carter administration to bring about change in the apartheid system.

**Evaluation.**—The effect of these combined pressures from Nigeria and the United States with collaboration from the United Nations, coupled with the escalation of guerrilla activities inside South Africa produced two responses from South Africa: (1) minimizing its dependence on foreign arms and oil; and (2) initiating some cosmetic changes in South Africa.

The South African regime attempted to counter the arms embargo by: (a) stepping up the production of arms.

257 Ibid.
In 1979 it was estimated that South Africa had built the world's tenth largest arms industry, possibly including a nuclear weapons capability; and (b) once heavily dependent on foreign oil, South Africa minimized that dependence to 22 percent of its oil needs in 1980. South Africa is said to have developed the largest and technologically the most advanced "oil-from-coal industry." It is estimated that South Africa will be self-sufficient in energy in two decades.258

The cosmetic changes initiated by the South African regime included the relaxation of what observers call "petty apartheid"—that is discrimination in cinemas, parks, sports and beaches. These changes were contained in three new laws announced by the South African regime towards the end of 1980. The new laws are aimed at eliminating hurtful discrimination. Perhaps the most important aspect of these laws, according to Hennie Serfontein, concerned the attempt to deal "with the presence of Africans in the so-called white areas outside the homelands." These laws repealed the present Urban Areas Act and "change the pass law system and influx control regulation which restricts the flow of

Supporters hailed these changes as "revolutionary breakthrough in race relations," and predicted the end to the pass law system. Critics rejected it as being too little too late because "it did not involve fundamental changes in the apartheid structure, and was merely an adjustment within the framework." On the other hand, domestic violence is on the increase inside South Africa. The ANC has stepped up guerrilla attacks inside South Africa. Two crucial Sasol oil-for-coal plants were set ablaze in 1980.

Students, trade unions and several organizations were also involved in activism inside South Africa. Students protests against being taught in Afrikaans led to the Soweto uprising of June 1976. Within a few weeks the uprising escalated into a large resistance movement. It triggered simultaneous uprisings by colored and Indian students, some sectors of black workers, and some white students marched in solidarity with Soweto. The Soweto

260 Ibid.
uprising, in Magubane's assessment, "became a political act and a general declaration of war on the white rule." In 1980 colored students in the Cape area went on a prolonged strike causing a violent confrontation with the South African police.

The formation of black and multi-racial trade unions was sanctioned in South Africa in 1979. According to Africa Confidential, "it could be argued that it is the only substantial reform to have come out of the Prime Ministry of P. W. Botha."

In theory, trade unions were forbidden to engage in political activities, but 1979 witnessed the fastest growth ever in militancy of the trade union movement. Although the unions claimed they were not political, that their focus was solely on pay and conditions, observers pointed out that "the possibility of organized labor acting as a potent vehicle for political change" was obvious.

The Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU)

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262 Ibid.
264 Africa Confidential, 7 July 1982, p. 1
followed a carefully planned strategy of fighting those battles which they had some chance of winning. Its general secretary Alec Erwin said the unions made some gains in relaxation of petty apartheid in workplaces, but he also pointed out that once outside the workplace, workers were still confronted with apartheid.

There are those who believed the United States, particularly the Reagan administration, did not do enough to promote the cause of African emancipation. They would like to have seen the United States take stronger actions, including a trade boycott, disinvestment and a mandatory application of the Sullivan Principles against the South African government. Randall Robinson, lamented the lack of serious commitment to change on the part of the United States, pointing out that:

... the difficulty is that Americans often do not identify with the struggle for change in South Africa. We lack a serious commitment to change, because as a nation we tend to identify with the plight of white South Africans.267

266 Advocates of these actions include university students, liberal churches and black organizations across the United States.

A case against disinvestment as effective action against the apartheid regime was made by those who contended that disinvestment would hurt blacks. Robinson supported disinvestment.

Some influential Americans were of the opinion that: (a) the United States should apply stronger pressure on South Africa to bring about change of the Apartheid system; and (b) the United States lacked the domestic political will to do so. A study done for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace by James Baker, John de St. Jorre, and J. Daniel O'Flaherty concluded that:

. . . there is a clear consensus in the foreign policy community that the United States should exert stronger pressure on the South African regime to change its domestic racial policies.

Such a consensus, according to this study:

. . . coexists with a feeling that, in the wake of Vietnam, the United States possesses neither the domestic political will nor the practical ability to determine events in other countries.

268 For an overview of the pros and cons of this argument, see Myers and Liff, "South Africa Under Botha," p. 147.

269 They include top-level government officials; congressmen, public interest activists; blacks, church and labor leaders; academics; lawyers and businessmen.


271 Ibid.
The study added that beneath the consensus that fundamental change in South Africa was inevitable, and that the United States should apply pressure on South Africa, "lie a host of contradictions, inconsistencies and disagreements." Of critical significance was the disagreement about the degree of change that had taken place in South Africa and how it had come about.

Admittedly, these changes were not fundamental, but some observers contended that they were important first steps toward real change. Robert Rotberg asserted that:

> South Africa is being compelled to change its intense system of racial domination because of the persistent threat of domestic violence and the suspicion and pressure of a skeptical West.

It is doubtful that South Africa would voluntarily dismantle the apartheid system without the combined effect of domestic violence and international pressure. (More will be said about the relative impact of domestic violence and international pressure in the next section.) Thus, there was some validity in the assertion by Rotberg that:

> Western pressure has stimulated a process of change in South Africa. The rethinking that has been reflected

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272 Ibid.

in Prime Minister P. W. Botha's new rhetoric, in the actions of his government, and in the ferment of late 1979 and early 1980 would have been impossible without a cooling of American friendship.274

Fundamental change in the apartheid system, involving a major restructuring of government and society, is what is needed. The cosmetic changes that have taken place, in Bishop Desmond Tutu's assessment, were no more than improvements. South Africa and its backers, Tutu contended, "are making apartheid more comfortable rather than dismantling it. We do not want our chains made comfortable. We want them removed."275 International pressure on the South African regime would have to be maintained to compel it to start moving decisively to end the apartheid system.

What were the factors behind U.S. policy in South Africa? Diplomatic rhetoric aside, was the U.S. really committed to fundamental change in South Africa? Why did the U.S. drag its feet in applying stronger pressure on South Africa? Were Nigeria and the U.S. both motivated by the same interests in South Africa?

Motivations.--There was evidence to suggest that

274 Ibid., p. 127.

both countries were not motivated by the same interests. While Nigeria may have been motivated by its sincere commitment to political change, the United States sought to protect its varied economic and strategic interests in South Africa.

Nigeria.--The need to complete the unfinished task of the total decolonization of Southern Africa was a strong motivating factor for Nigeria's involvement in South Africa. Furthermore, Nigeria saw this task as a moral obligation on its part to assist fellow Africans in the liberation of what remains of the white redoubt. The liberation of South Africa would have been a fulfilling achievement for Nigeria which had consistently stressed the point that until all of Africa was free, Nigeria remains unfree.

United States.--Beyond the level of diplomatic rhetoric, the United States was not interested in fundamental change in South Africa, particularly in the Reagan administration. The motivating factors behind U.S. policy in South Africa were essentially strategic and economic.

Strategic interests.--These included: (a) U.S. access to South Africa's mineral resources, (b) the security of Western oil flows around the Cape Sea route, and (c) containing Soviet and Cuban influence and activities
in South Africa. Platinum, a major element in anti-polution technology, was one of the many minerals imported by the United States from South Africa. Others included, antimony, (44%), manganese (9%), Cobalt (7%), and industrial diamonds (81%). (See Table 1, page 76.) It is estimated that South Africa has about half of the world's gold resources, and produces about 60 percent of the total world's production. The Cape Sea route, connecting the South Atlantic and the Indian Oceans, serves as a passageway for 90 percent of Western Europe's oil supplies, 70 percent of its strategic minerals, and about 20 percent of U.S. oil imports.²⁷⁶ The U.S. also had an interest in maintaining its naval base in Simonstown, South Africa, in order to continue its space tracking stations' activities and intelligence operations in the region and much of black Africa.

A prolonged cut-off of these supplies by the Soviet Union could cripple Western economies. Therefore, Soviet Union's access to basing rights in South Africa would be considered by the U.S. as giving the Soviet Union the military means to do so.

Economic interests.—The U.S. corporate stake in South Africa included about 350 American companies, with a total investment of about $2 billion in 1980. See Table 2, page 77. Rhetorical condemnation of apartheid notwithstanding, the U.S. government actually facilitated U.S. investments in South Africa. According to a study for the U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Embassy staff in South Africa "consider the rendering of assistance to present and potential U.S. investors to be a vital part of its task in the country," and indeed, this commanded a considerable portion of the embassy's attention."277 Furthermore, the U.S. had lucrative trade relations with South Africa, totaling $3.4 billion in 1980.278

Nation states formulate their foreign policies to promote and defend their most vital interests. Thus, it can safely be assumed that, for as long as the U.S. considers its strategic and economic interests in South Africa as vital national interests, the U.S. is not likely to pursue a foreign policy that would undermine these interests in South Africa.

277 Cited by Seidman, Multinational Corporations, p. 76.
278 The Study Commission on U.S. Policy Toward Southern Africa, p. 394.
In the concluding chapter, an attempt will be made to:
(a) sum up the impact of Nigeria-United States roles on these cases; (b) generalize about relations between Nigeria and the United States with respect to political change in Africa; and (c) evaluate the prospects of Nigeria-United States relations for the future.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In the course of pursuing its stated foreign policy objectives, Nigeria realized that there were other important actors in the international environment to contend with. One such actor was the United States. Nigeria's commitment to the cause of African emancipation seems to have been in harmony with United States global policy as outlined in National Security Council Memorandum No. D. 18, which sought, inter alia, to: (a) foster closer cooperation with Nigeria, now regarded as one of the influential states, likely to sway the fate of the rest of Africa; and (b) enhance the United States' cooperative effort with "moderate states of Africa in the cause of African emancipation."¹

This convergence of interests formed the basis of Nigeria-United States relations during the period covered by this study. During this period both countries publicly


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took similar positions on the issue of political change in Africa. However, the United States has some ulterior motives in taking these positions. These motives, which include its profitable economic interests and strategic interests in the region, it has managed to cloak in political and human rights terms. On occasions, both countries have made joint efforts to find peaceful solutions to the problem of political change in Africa.

How did these shared perspectives and the cooperative efforts between both countries impact on the situation in Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa? In this concluding chapter, an attempt will be made to: (a) summarize the impacts in the cases cited; (b) generalize about the relations between both countries with regard to political change in Africa; and (c) critically evaluate the prospects for Nigeria-United States relations in the future.

Impacts

Angola

If there is any validity in Ivo D. Duchacek's assertion that "very rarely, if ever, is there either a total harmony or total conflict of national interests"\(^2\) between

nations, the Angolan crisis is a good testimony. Nigeria and the United States initially backed the same faction (UNITA-FNLA), but for different reasons.

**Nigeria.**—Two factors can be identified: moral obligation and commitment to black solidarity.

**United States.**—Soviet and Cuban involvement, and a feverish attempt to deny anti-western powers a strong foothold in Southern Africa; and varied economic and strategic interests in the region. However, South Africa's intervention in the Angolan crisis changed all that. Nigeria and the United States found themselves on the opposite sides of the conflict, with Nigeria backing the MPLA while the United States backed the UNITA-FNLA faction.

Perhaps more important was the fact that the Angolan crisis marked the beginning of a shift in United States' perspective on political change in Africa. Contrary to the Nixon administration's policy as outlined in NSSm 39 which predicted, inter alia, continued Portuguese domination, and ruled out black victory, the United States not only witnessed the dismantling of Portuguese domination and the celebration of black victory, but it actively supported one of the factions vying for political power rather than attempting to prevent political change. Caught unaware by
events in Angola, the United States sought to install in Angola a neo-colonial government by covertly funding and arming FNLA-UNITA, the faction considered by the United States as a "moderate and pro-western in orientation." This led to a serious disagreement between Nigeria and the United States. This disagreement was important in that it clearly demonstrated that Nigeria was truly committed to real independence in Angola while the United States was prepared to settle for a neo-colonial pattern of political change.

There was a perception in the United States that an MPLA government in Angola would be inimical to United States' interests, but history proved that wrong. Thus, by backing the FNLA-UNITA the United States sought to prevent the MPLA from coming to power or as John Stockwell, the former chief of the C.I.A.'s Angola Task Force, puts it, "to prevent the quick and cheap installation in Angola of what Mobutu would regard as a pawn of Moscow."³ African interests and concerns were not the factors behind U.S. involvement in Angola.

U.S. anti-MPLA posture notwithstanding, the most important thing to the Angolan people and Pan-Africanists

³ Stockwell, In Search of Enemies, p. 54.
was true independence; how it occurred was of secondary significance. Historically, Pan-Africanists seemed to favor this stand, and Angola was not an exception. In Julius K. Nyerere's own words, "anything else, at this stage, is irrelevant to us." The concern now, Nyerere asserts, is political change, not how it is won, for "that will be dealt with after it has been won, not before." After all, Nyerere added, "in the war against Nazism the United States and the Soviet Union were allies."4

Events since Angola's independence in 1975 have been fairly consistent with this thinking, as has been the case with most African states which won the fight for political change through the assistance of the Soviet Union and Cuba. They invariably turn once again to the West for their technology, trading opportunities and economic assistance. Revolutionary rhetoric is toned down for political and economic reality because, in essence, "Africa is part of the non-communist world economic system."5 According to United


States Under Secretary for Political Affairs in the Carter administration, David D. Newsom:

A few African governments describe their policies or ruling parties as Marxist-Leninist or scientific socialist, but their policies are mixed and do not follow any rigid Soviet model.\(^6\)

These countries include Mozambique, Ethiopia and Angola. In these countries there is evidence "of a resistance on the part of the leadership to the total adoption of the Marxist-Leninist pattern of internal policies and organization."\(^7\) Andrew Young has long urged United States policymakers not to consider the socialist rhetoric of some African leaders in isolation, but rather to compare it with their actual policies. Angola's President, Agostinho Neto, defended Angola's independence and sovereignty when he pointed out that:

We are free and independent. ... We are not satellites because the Soviet Union provides us with arms. We have never asked Moscow how we should organize our state. It is our movement, our government and our people who will take decisions on the many major problems which our country faces.\(^8\)

\(^6\)David D. Newsom, Testimony before the Subcommittee on Africa of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on October 18, 1979, p. 5.

\(^7\)Ibid.

Angolan overtures for direct discussions with the United States were conveyed through congressional aides and journalists touring Luanda. According to Marcum, soon after its independence in 1975 Angola expressed its: (a) readiness to welcome the Gulf Oil Corporation back to the Cabindan oil fields that it had left under United States government pressure; (b) recognition of the importance of Western markets for its oil, iron, coffee, diamond and other exports; and (c) willingness to make a constitutional undertaking not to allow any "foreign power to establish bases" on Angolan territory. Gulf Oil Corporation came back to Angola and was pumping 160,000 barrels a day by 1981. Texaco and Boeing Aircraft also returned to do business in Angola. Although these business interests do not speak for the United States, Gulf Oil Corporation's position on United States policy of nonrecognition was made known in 1978 when an official declared in congressional testimony that: "It would be in the mutual interest of the United States and Angola for the United States to establish formal

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relations with the People's Republic of Angola.\textsuperscript{11}

However, while United States concern over Soviet and Cuban involvement in Africa was understandable, this concern, as the study for the Defense Department by the Center for Strategic and International Studies pointed out, "should not be the only thrust of African policy. Furthermore, the study added, "not all activities of Moscow and Havana" in Africa "are counter to United States interests."\textsuperscript{12} The crucial question was why had the United States not shown so much intensity and concern over the cause of Soviet and Cuban involvement in Africa? It was clear that the existence of colonial and neo-colonial governments, occupation forces, settler regimes, and minority regimes presented the biggest opportunities for Soviet and Cuban involvement in Africa. Emphasizing this point further, a study for the Defense Department declared that "the existence of white, minority-ruled governments is the cause of Soviet and Cuban involvement, and as long as such governments exist and follow discriminatory policies" Africa will seek help from

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\item \textsuperscript{12}Implications of Soviet and Cuban Activities, p. 25.
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the Soviets and Cubans for their liberation. In a belated attempt to remove the cause of Soviet and Cuban involvement in Africa the United States steadily increased its role in finding a peaceful solution to African problems after the Angolan crisis.

On the whole, Nigeria–United States role in Angola had different impacts on the resolution of the conflict. U.S. continued support for FNLA–UNITA, long after the MPLA had won the war and this had the negative impact of prolonging the war and destabilizing the MPLA government. Nigeria's strong position in favor of the winning faction, (MPLA) whose objectives were true independence and self-determination had the positive impact of helping fellow Africans to liberate themselves from colonialism and oppression.

However, in the case of Zimbabwe, Nigeria–United States differences were not as sharp as they were in Angola. Thus, both countries made joint efforts to find a peaceful solution to the crisis.

Zimbabwe

When President Carter came into office in 1977 he explained to an understandably skeptical Africa that the

13Ibid.
motivating force in United States policy in Africa was not opposition to communism per se, but concern for the aspirations of the continent. Andrew Young's appointment and his subsequent diplomacy were instrumental in lending credibility to this new United States line. And when the situation in Zimbabwe became critical in 1977, Nigeria and the United States had no major difficulty in making a joint effort to find a peaceful solution to the problem.

First, there was the basic agreement between both countries that: (a) political change in Zimbabwe was inevitable; and (b) such change should be fundamental. Second, both countries were also agreed that the solution that would bring about such a change should be one which was acceptable to all parties to the conflict, and to devise such a peace plan, all the parties to the conflict would be brought to the conference table.

It was under this basic understanding and commitment to meaningful change by both countries that their collaborative efforts to find a peaceful solution to the Zimbabwean problem, as demonstrated by the many diplomatic initiatives including the Anglo-American Proposals and the Lancaster House Agreement, were successful. The outcome in Zimbabwe, for which Nigeria and the United States are given
a substantial part of the credit, was a desirable one. First, it settled once and for all, the issue of political change in Zimbabwe, thereby meeting the aspirations of the Zimbabwean people, the foreign policy objective of Nigeria and at the same time enhanced the credibility of United States global policy in the region. Second, in the words of Andrew Young, it "was the premier achievement in the long struggle for majority rule in Southern Africa, and United States role in that process contributed to the success" in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the success of United States diplomatic initiative in Zimbabwe, according to Xan Smiley, entailed considerable political benefits for the West, in that:

Mugabe has, in fact, been cold toward the U.S.S.R. since independence. His refusal to invite delegations from the Soviet Union's closest Eastern bloc allies to independence celebrations was widely seen as a snub.

The thinking in the State Department was that:

...our security has been enhanced by the success of peacemaking in Zimbabwe. That effort deprived our adversaries of a conflict to exploit. ...we must not

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As in Angola, events since independence in Zimbabwe have shown that revolutionary rhetoric during the struggle for political change does not necessarily translate into Marxist-Leninist policies patterned after the Soviet model. Rather, President Mugabe "has spoken of his high esteem for the United States and his desire to form genuine bonds of friendship with America." Furthermore, he made known "his intention to work within the free enterprise system." The United States responded with a total of $20 million in assistance in 1979 and $30 million in 1980. Nigeria also gave assistance to Zimbabwe, including a $5 million grant "to enable the government to buy out the South African stake in Zimbabwe's newspapers" in 1980.

It was unlikely that the outcome in Zimbabwe would have been the same without the efforts of the Patriotic Front, the Front Line States, Nigeria and the United States.

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18 Ibid.

19 Shehu Shagari, My Vision of Nigeria, p. 65.
Independence in Zimbabwe, as Andrew Young puts it, was a victory for diplomacy, but it was also a victory for armed struggle, in that:

...it was achieved through the skilled and tough diplomacy of the British government. ...the patient statesmanship of the Front Line states and Nigeria; the courage and unshakable commitment to liberation shown by Robert Mugabe (PF)...and the firm, consistent support of the United States government.20

With the exception of South Africa, where the mood was decidedly one of sombre caution, reactions elsewhere in Africa were very enthusiastic.21 The Organization of African Unity saw the outcome in Zimbabwe as a vindication of its position that the Patriotic Front was the "sole and legitimate representative of the Zimbabwean people."22 In his congratulatory message, Lesotho's Chief Leabua Jonathan saw the outcome in Zimbabwe as "a victory for all black people in Southern Africa and definite defeat for the forces of racism."23 President Sadat of Egypt called the outcome in Zimbabwe "the culmination of an honest struggle

20 Andrew Young, "U.S. and Africa," p. 650.

21 The O.A.U. and several African countries including Nigeria, Angola, and the Front Line states all sent messages of congratulations to Mugabe.

22 The Daily News (Tanzania), 4 March 1980, p. 3.

by the people of Zimbabwe under the leadership of the Patriotic Front." Colin Legum, who had concluded in the previous year (1979) that "the chances of a negotiated settlement in Rhodesia" would take a miracle, called the outcome in Zimbabwe an "astonishing achievement" and gave credit to Britain, the Commonwealth, the Front Line states, Nigeria, the United States and the Patriotic Front.

Specifically, Legum pointed out two critical factors:

. . . the confluence of interests which in the past had been strongly divergent; and the co-incidence of a number of leaders holding their particular positions at the point where the armed struggle of the Patriotic Front (PF) had succeeded in weakening the capacity of the defending Rhodesian forces to hold out much longer.25

The impact of the collaborative efforts of Nigeria and the United States on the Zimbabwean situation can be said to have been constructive and instrumental. These efforts, according to O. Aluko, "were among the decisive ones."26 Because of these efforts, echoed the New York Times, "Rhodesia has been reborn as Zimbabwe. Most important, it

24 Al Ahram (Cairo, 4 March 1980, p. 2.


has been born free."\textsuperscript{27}

Furthermore, the outcome in Zimbabwe was very gratifying to nationalists and prominent blacks in the region who considered it as a giant psychological boost for black aspirations in Namibia and South Africa itself, and hoped that the South African government would draw the appropriate lesson from it.\textsuperscript{28} Dr. N. Motlana of Soweto said "I am as happy as anybody could ever be--as happy as when Frelimo won in Mozambique." An important lesson South Africa should have learned from the outcome in Zimbabwe, according to Motlana, "is that the black puppets whom whites imposed on blacks as their leaders could not work." He also expressed the hope that the outcome in Zimbabwe would make "South African blacks realize that they would also be victorious one day."\textsuperscript{29} The Star perhaps summed up the prevailing feelings among black people in South Africa when it editorialized that:

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\textsuperscript{27}New York Times, 5 March 1980, p. 5Y.  \\
\textsuperscript{28}Others able to express their views included Bishop Desmond Tutu, Gen. Secretary of the South African Council of Churches, who called on the South African government to welcome the new government in Zimbabwe with open and friendly arms.  \\
\textsuperscript{29}The Guardian, 5 March 1980, p. 5.
\end{flushright}
The first lesson from this is that South African government must negotiate directly and immediately with the real black leaders in this country, not just those traditional leaders and obvious moderates through whom the National Party hopes to achieve some vaguely defined ethnic 'constellation' of states.\textsuperscript{30}

It is unlikely that South Africa will, of its own volition, negotiate "directly and immediately with the real black leaders" of South Africa. There has to be an escalation of domestic violence and an increase in external pressure on the South African regime to bring this about.

\textbf{Namibia}

In Namibia considerable progress toward a settlement was made. The United States was an active member of the Contact Group; and a major force in the drafting of the Group's proposal for a Namibian settlement. Donald McHenry's role in this group was instrumental to the success of United States diplomatic initiative. He was credited with:

(a) convincing South Africa and SWAPO to agree to the Group's peace proposal; (b) persuading South Africa "that a United Nations-approved and supervised" peace plan would be in the best interest of South Africa; and (c) bringing the two parties to the conflict "within sight of the peace

\textsuperscript{30}The \textit{Star}, 5 March 1980, p. 2.
table, and kept them there through two and one half years of complex and bitter negotiations.\textsuperscript{31} Nigeria-United States collaborative efforts, with cooperation from the United Nations produced some degree of success. First, South Africa was moved grudgingly from outright intransigence to doubtful cooperation, and participated in an all-party conference in 1981. Second, South Africa was no longer under any illusion that Namibia would be free; the only issue was when this would occur.

This is a far cry from South Africa's uncompromising position in the past. Rather than strengthening apartheid as had been the usual response in the past, South Africa started to dismantle petty apartheid in Namibia, and by 1981, parties favoring an Internal settlement were being encouraged by the South African regime to broaden their support base at home and abroad. None of these would have been thinkable without U.S. pressure and the international community's diplomatic efforts in which Nigeria and the United States were a major force. But these effects seemed to have dissipated with Reagan in the White House. He made Namibian independence a non-priority issue and relaxed

pressure on the South African government. In effect, Reagan rolled back what little progress had been made towards Namibia's independence during the previous administration. Perhaps the point where Nigeria-United States shared perspective and cooperative efforts needed to make a stronger impact than it actually did, was South Africa itself.

**South Africa**

The manifestations of this impact can be gleaned from Prime Minister P. W. Botha's now famous "adapt or die" speech, in which he indicated that he clearly understood the need for far-reaching changes in the apartheid system. By early 1980 South Africa's political fortunes appeared to be on the decline, with aspects of apartheid undergoing some changes. Piet Koornhof, South African minister for Cooperation and Development "declared war" on the pass system and petty apartheid. At the same time South Africa attempted to head off the increasingly militant and violent challenge of the ANC and its supporters. Observers likened the situation South Africa was confronted with in 1980 to that which de Tocqueville had described over a century ago when he wrote:
Experience teaches us that, generally-speaking the most perilous moment for bad government is one when it seeks to mend its ways. Only consummate statecraft can enable a king to save his throne when, after a long spell of oppressive rule, he sets out to improve the lot of his subjects. Patiently endured so long as it seemed beyond redress, a grievance comes to appear intolerable once the possibility of removing it crosses men's minds.  

Perhaps the most striking indication that South Africa was entering this new era was found in its changed political perspective. Colin Legum summed up this change as follows:

...whereas before there was a confident, even arrogant, assumption about the durability of white supremacy; now the dominant white group found itself on the defensive—no longer even sure of its own future.

The success of liberation struggle in Southern Africa also had its impact, particularly on the perceptions of South African blacks. T. Beard explained this changed perceptions accurately when he wrote:

For the first time for well over a decade, blacks have begun to question the immutability of white domination and to anticipate processes of change in which their roles will not be those of mere subordinates dictated to by a 'white' government.

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32 Quoted in *Economist*, 21 June 1980, p. 3.
Consequently, there was a growing acceptance of revolutionary violence among blacks. They believed that fundamental change would be brought about through revolutionary means. *The Report of the Study Commission on United States Policy toward Southern Africa* explained that:

...among young urban blacks, the watchword that has been gaining currency is 'which side of the gun are you on?' Africans began leaving South Africa for military training abroad about 1973...during the two years after Soweto, ...some 4,000 Africans left the Witwatersrand for such training.35

This changed perceptions, coupled with the rise in expectations among blacks in South Africa, which found expression through heightened violence, was not likely to be easily "broken by government counter-measures"36 as had been the case in the past. It was true in 1949 when Kwame Nkrumah made the point as it was in 1981:

When a people who have smarted under a foreign rule suddenly wake up to the indignities of such a rule and begin to assert their national and inherent right to be free then they have reached that stage of their political development when no amount of oppressive laws and intimidation can keep them down. . . . When the spirit of the oppressed people revolts against its oppressors that revolt continues until

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freedom is achieved. It carries in its wake a force too dangerous to suppress.37

"The white regime," said the Report of the Study Commission, "will prove incapable of crushing all resistance permanently and that black opposition will grow after any crackdown."38

Furthermore, blacks had begun to demonstrate greater confidence in their ability to strike targets inside South Africa. The pace of activism quickened. According to the Report of the Study Commission:

. . . whereas Sharpeville was followed by a lull in black activism, the post-Soweto years have been marked by the resurgence of the underground ANC and by growing radicalism, evident in renewed political activity and in waves of strikes and boycotts that have become endemic.39

The Report added that "militancy is growing among all black South Africans: Africans, Coloureds, and Indians." There were "militant ten-year olds and militant grandmothers supporting the same cause."40 The ANC confounded its critics by demonstrating its ability to mobilize and continue the struggle. It attracted "the best of those new recruits who have had to leave the country," and inside


38 U.S. Study Commission, p. 199.

39 Ibid., p. 188. 40 Ibid., p. 200.
South Africa its activities have forced the South African head of Security Police to publicly admit that "South Africa is in a state of war." Africa Confidential declared in 1980 that:

...the ability of the ANC to carry out sophisticated acts of sabotage like the operation against the Sasol refinery will...become increasingly evident...as the paramount exile movement, the ANC is gaining ground. The probability is that one day Botha or his successor will have to talk to it.

According to John S. Saul and Stephen Gelb, the ANC had become a critical factor in the South African revolution because of:

...its military capacity, which is now increasingly relevant, and seen to be so by those gravitating toward it. The ANC has prepared for this necessary level of struggle and is also equipped for it...Engagements with the South African Defense Force have become much more commonplace.

Also there were the increasing "reports of whites abandoning farms all along the Transvaal's northern borders because of guerrilla presence." With external pressures mounting and internal violence escalating, "white

42 Africa Confidential, 1 October 1980, p. 3.
44 Ibid.
domination is becoming increasingly beleaguered"; and delay in the achievement of political change is to be "regarded as no more than temporary." 45

Perhaps the most critical manifestation was the fact that there appeared to be a change of heart among some segments of the white population of South Africa. The pro-government South African newspaper, Rapport, conducted a survey in which three out of four white South Africans "agree that legislation which discriminates purely on grounds of race should be scrapped." Rapport gave editorial support for black political participation when it said:

We have learned enough to know that. . . after all there is only one basis on which communities can associate with one another and develop, and that is government by consent. And this can be achieved only by a system that is not designed by one element and forced on all the others, but one that is created in consultation with others. 46

Willem de Klerk, editor of Die Transvaler, also summed up the mood of some white South Africans in an editorial when he wrote:

Hard, cold, equal negotiations are now on the agenda . . . . The whites in this country are increasingly sincerely predisposed to establish a new dispensation.

45 Beard, "General Introduction," p. 3.

46 Quoted in the Financial Mail, 17 August 1979, p. 2.
A dispensation of human dignity for all. Removal of discrimination. Equal opportunities. . . . The whites want to give their share of a meaningful compromise for a political settlement. . . .47

The pace of this change of heart was probably quickened by events in Southern Africa, particularly Zimbabwe. The Rand Daily Mail's response to the outcome in Zimbabwe in 1980 was a clear indication that the South African regime not only drew the proper lesson from, but it also showed that the people are worried that stalling for time might not be in their best interest. The paper appealed to white South Africans to:

. . . look at (Rhodesia) now to see the consequences of delay; of missing chances to do favorable deals while there is still time; of destroying the moderate black leaders by giving them nothing to show for their moderation except the deadly image of collaborators; and of polarizing the races and radicalizing the minds of the blacks until in the end there is a great nationalist upsurge for the man with the most extreme image.48

This change of heart was further demonstrated in 1980 when 69 Johannesburg restaurants were given official permission to provide equal eating facilities to all races. And Piet Koornhof took a group of white guests to a dinner party

47 Quoted by Saul and Gelb in The Crisis in South Africa, p. 60.

hosted by blacks in Soweto.49

Although none of these changes were fundamental, they are important first steps that "would have been impossible" without the combined effect of domestic violence and international pressure.50

A Generalization

On balance, Nigeria–United States relations with respect to political change in Africa, were marked by disagreements and cooperation. Specifically, relations were decidedly cool at times, as during the Nixon-Ford era; cordial at other times, as they were during the Carter administration, and conflictual during the Reagan administration.

For different reasons, the two nations shared, as President Carter puts it: "(a) a commitment to majority rule and individual human rights. . .; (b) a commitment to an Africa that is at peace, free from colonialism, and free from racism."51 These commitments underlined their shared


perspectives on political change in Africa. During the period under study both countries essentially worked closely together to achieve these goals in some of the cases studied and in other African troubled spots. They took similar positions on most of the cases, although there was a serious question mark over United States' motives; had serious disagreement over Angola, with the United States backing the faction with a neo-colonial orientation; fully collaborated in working out the peace plan in Zimbabwe and made some progress in Namibia and South Africa. In the latter two cases efforts to find an acceptable peace plan have continued, as President Carter pointed out, "We in the United States remain committed, as do the people of Nigeria to the path of genuine progress and fairness." By 1981 President Carter's belief that Namibian and South African societies "should and can be transformed progressively and peacefully, with assured respect for the rights of all," had not yet been realized. This was partly due to the fact that the Reagan administration did not continue the Carter policy. Consequently, no meaningful progress was made after Carter left office.

52 Ibid.  
53 Ibid.
Future Prospects

The chances of the close relations between Nigeria and the United States continuing in the future will largely depend on: (a) progress made in Namibia and South Africa on the issue of political change; (b) whether both countries can continue their collaborative efforts on Southern Africa; and (c) to some extent, who is in the White House.

Progress.—Fast and concrete progress in resolving the Namibian dispute, coupled with a decisive move toward dismantling of apartheid system in South Africa will be needed for the cordial relations between Nigeria and the United States to continue. Unfortunately, since the end of the Carter administration no tangible results have emerged from Reagan's so-called "constructive engagement" policy. Nigeria has voiced its dissatisfaction with the Reagan administration's policy on many occasions. In a policy statement at the Commonwealth Conference in Melbourne, Australia, Shagari expressed his disagreement with aspects of the Reagan policy. Specifically, he rejected the "linkage theory," and added that "linking the so-called issue of Cuban troops with the question of independence is incomprehensible."\(^{54}\) In a major news conference in

\(^{54}\)President Shehu Shagari, "Policy Toward Southern Africa," p. 5.
October 1983 Shagari complained that:

No progress is being made toward what we hold so dear—the decolonization of Africa. We believe these excuses the Reagan administration raises about Cuban troops in Angola are just excuses to delay independence for the people of Namibia, excuses to assist racism in Southern Africa.\textsuperscript{55}

Furthermore, President Shagari pointed out that the long-term interests of the United States rest with "cooperation with the rest of Africa rather than identifying with a small racist clique."\textsuperscript{56}

\textit{Continuing collaboration.}—For concrete progress to be made in the two remaining colonies, Nigeria–United States collaborative efforts will have to be intensified, and the United States in particular will have to take a tough stance and increase international pressure on South Africa. Most important, political change for Namibia and South Africa should not be contingent upon the withdrawal of Soviet and Cuban forces in the region because: (a) the supposition that political change brought about with aid from the Soviet Union and Cuba will as a matter of course make the emergent regime a Soviet satellite, is hopelessly


\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.
flawed; (b) the governments and policies of Angola and Zimbabwe are neither Soviet satellites created by Moscow nor do they follow any rigid Soviet model; and (c) the governments of these countries have publicly stated their intentions to protect their sovereignty and remain in the capitalist world system. Zimbabwe would not even establish diplomatic relations with Moscow until about a year after independence.

It is my contention that the available empirical evidence is far more consistent with the view that political change in Angola and Zimbabwe has brought into existence governments with a strong nationalist orientation concerned with protecting their sovereignty than it is with the view that these governments and their policies are products of Soviet machinations which, once in power, will be communist satellites. To miss this nationalist dynamic in these countries and interpret events as a byproduct of a global East-West conflict amounts to a distortion of reality.

White House orientation.—The prospects of (a) and (b) above coming about will depend, to some extent, on the policy orientation of whoever is in the White House. Therefore, it is essential to have in the White House an
administration that is both sensitive in its policy and committed to the completion of what Nigeria "holds so dear" -- the dismantling of the last vestiges of white minority rule; first, in Namibia and then, most importantly, in South Africa. Such sensitivity and commitment must be reflected in a policy that is actively opposed to apartheid in concrete terms. It will not do to engage in rhetorical abhorrence of apartheid. Such public condemnations must be backed by concrete actions that will leave the South African regime in no doubt that normalization of United States-South Africa relations will depend on progress toward the dismantling of the apartheid system. If these conditions prevail, the high point reached in Nigeria-United States relations in 1980 will undoubtedly continue, and both countries stand to gain from it.
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