

# **ANGLO-AMERICAN STRATEGY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND ITS BACKGROUND**

An impression exists rather too widely in the labour movement, and is being assiduously fostered by the British government and the media, that the current Anglo-American strategy in Southern Africa can be seen as a significant step forward towards the liberation of the peoples of Southern Africa. This paper intends to combat this impression, by examining the deeper meaning and context of current Anglo-American strategy. It argues (a) that rather than representing any fundamental change of heart or change of position on the part of the United States or British governments, the current strategy must be viewed as a new mode in which a historically consistent set of objectives are being pursued (b) that, although settlements in Rhodesia and Namibia are the immediate apparent aim of the current Anglo-American strategy, it has been and remains the South African state which is the key force in Southern Africa, and that the Anglo-American strategy must be viewed primarily in terms of its implications for the liberation of South Africa from fascism and racism (c) that such changes as have occurred have been changes in the balance of forces in the class struggle in Southern Africa, and that the apparent "changes" in United States or British government policy are purely defensive reactions against the real momentum for liberation (d) that the differences in the "rhetoric" and "negotiating role" which appear to exist between the United States and British governments from time to time in the course of the pursuit of this policy have a real basis, but at the same time serve to conceal the objectives which the two governments have in common.

## **1. THE UNITED STATES AND BRITAIN IN SOUTHERN AFRICA SINCE THE SECOND WORLD WAR**

After the Second World War the United States emerged unequivocally as the major centre of world capital accumulation, and therefore the dominant force in the restructuring of the world capitalist economy. This did not mean that the United States was omni-present, economically or politically, in an unmediated way. It did mean that, economically, the United States was the major force pressing for the "freeing" of trade, the opening of new markets, and the internationalisation of accumulation; and that it has been forced economically on the defensive only with the emergence into a competitive position of the most fundamentally restructured areas of accumulation (West Germany in the EEC; Japan) during the 1960's and 1970's. The special circumstances of the re-emergence

of West Germany and Japan have, moreover, meant that politically the US has remained the dominant force even when under challenge economically. The politics of the restructuring of capital since the Second World War have taken different forms in Europe and elsewhere: it is with the latter we are concerned here. Popular resistance to capitalism outside Europe since the Second World War predominantly took the form of the struggle against imperialism and for national liberation, and was immediately and initially directed against former colonial powers: Britain, France, etc. The United States, as the ultimately dominant political force, was concerned to transform this anti-colonial resistance into a restructuring of capital, in a manner which balanced its own particular interests with the general interests of capitalism. As Dulles said in 1953:

Most of the peoples of the Near East and Southern Asia are deeply concerned about political independence for themselves and others. They are suspicious of the colonial powers. The United States too is suspect because, it is reasoned, our NATO alliances with France and Britain requires us to try to preserve or restore the old colonial interests of our allies. I am convinced that United States policy has been unnecessarily ambiguous in this matter. The leaders of the countries I visited fully recognise that it would be a disaster if there were any break between the United States and Great Britain and France. They don't want this to happen. However, without breaking from the framework of Western unity, we can pursue our traditional dedication to political liberty. In reality, the Western powers can gain, rather than lose, from an orderly development of self-government.

It was the conflict between preserving alliances and "influencing" anti-colonial and post-colonial movements which led to the massive development of covert US activities (CIA, etc) in this period; though also, where popular resistance escalated to forms beyond the control of colonial or neo-colonial rule, the United States was compelled to step in more actively. The most serious and horrifying form of this, as we know, was the military intervention in Vietnam from 1965 which replaced earlier and more covert forms of post-1954 intervention.

A similar United States dialectic vis-a-vis colonial powers and national movements operated in the different conditions of Africa. In "tropical" Africa, with a specific history in each country, this resulted in a trend towards controlled decolonization, with a progressive enlargement of the US military and economic role in certain areas (accelerating, despite French competition, in the 1960's and 70's), and with the Congo, in the period after 1960, seeing covert US involvement changed into its most active African

form. In southern Africa, this dialectic operated in the context of the particular role and dynamic of South Africa itself. Traditionally, Britain was the dominant imperial power in Southern Africa; and it was widely assumed both in Britain and South Africa, in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, that the role of restructuring of capital in Southern Africa could be adequately handled by the United Party ruled South African state. The victory of the Nationalist Government in 1948, and its subsequent consolidation of power, necessitated reappraisal. In the first instance, the British government began to reassume from the South African state some of its "Southern African" role: the creation of the Federation as counter-weight, based around a different form of capital restructuring ("racial partnership") to that of apartheid; the retention of control over the High Commission Territories. At the same time, there was an acceleration (and a diversification) of the economic involvement of the major capitalist powers in South Africa itself. This derived, at one level, from the particular economic/strategic relation of South Africa to world capitalist development (production of gold, production of uranium): SA in this period received massive infrastructural loans (more from the IBRD than any other country) for gold and uranium associated projects. The "concern" of Britain, the United States, Western European capital was over whether the Nationalist government would attempt any "nationalist" economic policies; but this was resolved after an intra-Nationalist debate which opened the door wide to foreign capital in the mid-1950's.

Meanwhile, a slowdown of growth during the 1950's in South Africa, coupled with the implementation of apartheid, was generating escalating levels of popular resistance, organised in the Congress Alliance, spearheaded by the African National Congress. In 1955 this movement generated a programme for a radically different form of society in South Africa, democratic and non-racial, in the Freedom Charter. The Freedom Charter argued...and it was in reflection of the extent to which the proletariat was dominant in the resistance...that this democratisation could be achieved only through nationalisation of the banks and monopoly industry. By the mid-1950's, this popular movement was beginning to generate a political challenge to the form of the state in South Africa. This fact, and the extent to which the movement, through its working-class base, was beginning to present a direct challenge to capital, encouraged the initiation of some sort of contingency

planning, particularly in the United States, in case the situation grew out of local "control". Both in Britain, and in the United States, the dominant response was one of support for the status quo (coupled, perhaps, with increasingly wishful hopes for a United Party electoral victory); and this response was encouraged by the "business lobbies" in both countries. (It was in the mid-fifties that Charles Engelhard began to lead a concerted penetration of US capital into certain profitable mining and manufacturing sectors in South Africa, and that a specifically Southern African business lobby began to emerge). At the same time, the US and perhaps the British, as a secondary response began to search around for an "extra-parliamentary" base for political restructuring in South Africa. The US was particularly pushed in this direction by its need to establish its "anti colonial" credentials in the emerging African states. Within the State Department these partially conflicting responses began to become embodied in the emergence of "Europeanist" and "Africanist" lobbies regarding Southern Africa: the former regarding SA as the bastion of the "Western alliance" in Southern Africa, the latter regarding the regime as an embarrassment. The content of the base which the Africanist lobby encouraged changed from time to time. At one point it seems to have been conceived as a "multi-racial" force comprising elements from the Liberal Party and "moderates" in the Congress Alliance. At another point it seems to have been specifically located in the PAC. There is in fact a fair amount of evidence that an interaction of covert US agencies, "Africanist" lobby encouragement, and African quasi-messianism generated not only PAC activity before and after Sharpeville, but also the Roberto-led uprising in northern Angola in 1960.

The period from 1960 to about 1965 was one of transition. Except for the short-term failure of confidence in the immediate aftermath of Sharpeville, capital began to flow into South Africa at an increasing rate, both from Britain and the United States (and from the EEC). This, through the technology that it brought, and its effects on the balance of payments, began to fuel the massive economic growth (particularly in manufacturing) that South Africa experienced in the 1960's. It also gave the South African state the means and the confidence to engage in its own inimitable forms of political restructuring: on the one hand the massive and brutal repression of the active membership of the mass movement of the 1950's, and on the other hand the initiation of the Bantustan policy and the Urban Council system as a weak "carrot" to black

moderates. The disjunction in the US between "Europeanist" and "Africanist" positions, between economic policies and political posture grew more acute. In 1958 the US for the first time did not veto a resolution concerning SA at the UN; and in the early 1960's, claims the notorious Kissinger memo, "the US played a leading role in the UN in denouncing South Africa's racial policies. We led the effort to establish...the UN arms embargo on South Africa." These conflicting positions could coexist comparatively easily with regard to South Africa itself: their problems became more rapidly apparent in the periphery of the South African region.

The crunch points here were the Congo and Southern Rhodesia. Between 1960 and 1965 there were certain conflicts in US policy in the Portuguese territories: while Kennedy refused to put active pressure on Portugal, CIA covert assistance continued for Roberto. Meanwhile "controlled decolonisation" under British domination was breaking up the Federation under pressure of African nationalism, and leading to independence for Zambia and Malawi. But the US-supported UN intervention in the Congo ran into problems in Katanga...created by the covert assertion of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, (in alliance with reactionary forces in the traditional colonial powers and the US) of a "Southern African role" for the settler states. The suppression of Katangan secession led in turn to the emergence of a new anti-imperialist resistance in the Congo, and pulled the United States into direct military activity in Africa for the first time in 1964-65 (most notoriously at Stanleyville) to eventually install the CIA-groomed Mobutu...just at the same time that the United States was pulled into massive direct military intervention in Vietnam which would dominate its foreign policy for nearly a decade...and weaken its economy vis a vis Europe and Japan. This was the moment (November 1965) at which Smith declared UDI. Evidence from a recent book suggests that in the period leading up to and following UDI there was considerable "Europeanist" versus "Africanist" friction in the State Department, with the "Africanists" keen for a more interventionist stance organised by Britain, the US, etc. British reluctance, the Vietnam question, the criticism which Stanleyville had generated, and the knowledge of a "Katanga lobby" in Congress meant however that the "Europeanists" dominated policy. The British were accorded the dominant role with respect to Rhodesia, and publicly the US marched in step.

With the Nixon-Kissinger administration there was a further retreat. Bugged down in Vietnam, the United States wanted to "decentralise" its responsibilities for organising the domination of the rule of capital. This led to a series of policy studies including the "Kissinger memo" (National Security Council Study) on Southern Africa. This study pointed to the conflicts underlying US Southern Africa policy:

The aim of present policy is to try to balance our economic, scientific and strategic interests in the white states with the political interest of dissociating the US from the white minority regimes and their repressive racial policies. (Objectives which elsewhere in the memo are described as "in some instances conflicting and irreconcilable"). Decisions have been made ad hoc, on a judgement of benefits and political costs at a given moment. But the strength of this policy - its flexibility - is also its weakness. Policy is not precisely recorded. And because there have been significant differences of view within the government as to how much weight should be given to these conflicting factors in any given instance certain decisions have been held in suspense 'pending review of the overall policy.'

In moving to rationalise policy, the study and the decisions which flowed from it represented (a) a bowing to the de facto strength of the white-ruled regimes in Southern Africa and an accordance, particularly to South Africa itself, of an increased role in the whole sub-continent (b) an attempt to detach the "bordering states" from their activity in support of liberation movements in the Portuguese colonies, in Zimbabwe and Namibia, and in South Africa, and to encourage detente with South Africa.

We would take diplomatic steps to convince the black states of the area that their current liberation and majority rule aspirations in the south are not attainable by violence and that their only hope for a peaceful and prosperous future lies in closer relations with white-dominated states... We would give increased and more flexible aid to black states in the area to focus their attention on their internal development and to give them a motive to cooperate to reduce tensions...

These moves towards the "rationalisation" of policy...and its rationalisation in a conservative direction, had various effects at various levels. With respect to the Portuguese colonies, it brought (especially after the renewal of the Azores agreement with Caetano in 1971) much more direct US military support, and enhanced technical capacity therefore to pursue its colonial wars. In respect of Rhodesia, the major shift was represented in the Byrd amendment, though a detailed examination of the dynamics of this suggests that it resulted from White House permissiveness towards the activity of an extremely narrow special interest group. In respect of Namibia, the US had already supported a UN resolution

denouncing South Africa's occupation as illegal, and in 1970 announced it would discourage investment in the area. At the same time, it must have been US pressures (coupled with other related pressures, British, and from South African multi-nationals) which led to a relatively declining (or at least not rapidly increasing) commitment from relevant African states to the liberation struggle in the South. The Lusaka Manifesto of 1969, though affirming its commitment to armed struggle, is in fact a cautious document looking for "peaceful ways out": in Namibia through the UN, in Rhodesia, through a resumption by Britain of "colonial responsibility". The section on South Africa does not mention armed struggle, but only UN actions towards isolation.

Towards South Africa in this period there was an increasingly liberal interpretation by the US of the arms embargo, and in 1971-2 a reversal of a 1964 Eximbank policy to provide only medium-term loans of five years maximum duration. Ideologically, there was an increased dissemination both in Britain and the US of the "Oppenheimer thesis", the argument that, left to itself politically, and its economic growth fostered by foreign capital, apartheid would dissolve automatically. Of course this hardly accorded with the facts: the fact that the economic boom on the contrary provided the South African state with the means for maximising repression, implementing apartheid to the full through in particular the development of the contract labour/labour bureaux/Bantuatan system. For both political and economic reasons, South Africa correspondingly pursued detente in Southern Africa politically, to contain the liberation movements, and economically, to generate the economies of scale on the basis of which further accumulation (particularly in manufacturing) could proceed. Americans doing business in SA, wrote a symptomatic article in US News and World Report in 1968, "are looking forward to the day when South Africa will be the industrial and financial hub of the whole continent... American business here wants to be in on the ground floor when the political climate eases and SA exports can move more freely in Africa." Such "constructive engagement" found its supporters in Britain: and its assumptions are in fact reflected in the results of the 1973/4 Parliamentary Enquiry into British Companies in South Africa and subsequent government policy on this question.

This period of US (and, in line with it, British) policy came to an end not with the wave of working class action which swept Namibia and South Africa from 1972, nor with the Portuguese coup and the

transition to FRELIMO and MPLA rule in the Portuguese colonies. In this period it was the South African state which was being encouraged to accelerate its activities as the guarantor of capitalist relations in the sub-continent. Vorster, with the ground prepared by Oppenheimer, initiated the first talks between Smith and the nationalists in 1974-5. Vorster was indirectly under pressure to set up the Turnhalle talks in Namibia. The new period has been initiated by the failure of the South African intervention in Angola, and by the uprisings in Soweto etc in South Africa in 1976. The "Kissinger memo" cannot be interpreted simply as a reflection of a transition from one President to another: it was a response to the real dynamics of the Southern African situation by the US state in terms of the real interests of the US state. Likewise the new period cannot be interpreted in terms of the replacement in the US of Ford by Carter: the current Anglo-American initiatives are a new mode within which a historically consistent set of objectives are being pursued, a new mode necessitated by the situation in Southern Africa itself.

## 2. THE CURRENT PERIOD IN UNITED STATES AND BRITISH SOUTHERN AFRICAN POLICY

The failure of the South African intervention in Angola forced the United States to move in to "pick up the pieces" and attempt a stabilisation. The South Africans appear to have believed the US would come to their military assistance; but the emergence in the US Congress (strengthened vis a vis the Executive in the post Watergate situation) of a bloc supporting the "Africanist" stance, and countering the "Katanga cum Rhodesia/southern plus steel producing" Europeanist lobby) was one of the impediments to this. Kissinger's aim, with South African diplomatic credibility destroyed, was to pressurise a settlement in Rhodesia (and, hopefully, in Namibia) which would take place on the most conservative lines possible in a situation where the liberation movements strength was vastly increased by the existence of two new supportive base areas (Mozambique and Angola). At this stage Kissinger made no departure from policy rhetoric towards South Africa itself from the guidelines of the 1969 memo: his April 1976 speech in Lusaka confined itself to a plea for ending "institutionalised inequality of the races" in South Africa, rather than calling for "majority rule" as was the demand for Zimbabwe. While Kissinger was pursuing his shuttle diplomacy, however, the uprising of Soweto and elsewhere erupted. And, once the conference had been established in Geneva, it fell rapidly apart: Smith used it as an opportunity to try and launch

a surprise offensive against Mozambique, and the liberation movement withdrew over the crucial issue of the control of power in the transitional period. Those events have established the framework for the current policy initiatives.

The impression created in the present round is of an attempt by the British government to prevent an "escalated" US intervention which is concerned with South Africa as well as Rhodesia and Namibia. A recent report (June) in the Financial Times made the claim that a settlement in Rhodesia was regarded by both Callaghan and Owen as a priority second only to domestic economic policy in order to convince the United States that "moderate" (sic) solutions were possible in Southern Africa. The message was clear: that it was the nature and level of the interests of British capital in the South African economy itself which was dictating such a strategy towards South Africa's "peripheries". To "contain" these areas within a moderate form of political restructuring might ease the pressure on the South African regime itself. That this is the position of the British government seems to be confirmed by a speech made by the British Ambassador in South Africa in March: Britain, he said, found itself left with "very little ammunition" to defend itself against "intense international criticism" that it was "leaning over backwards" to defend South African internal policies:

Unless you can give us more ammunition we may not be able to go on doing so. What form this ammunition takes is not for us to say, but I have to warn you that the stocks are running perilously low... As evidence of our goodwill we have thought it right to take a line in the United Nations which has brought down much criticism on us from the world at large. The only four occasions on which Britain has exercised the veto in the Security Council during the life of the present government - a Labour Government - has been in support of South Africa... The need for friends in a troubled world has perhaps never been greater for all of us than it is today. But friendship is a two-way affair and sometimes it has to be worked for.

(The Star Weekly, 26/3/1977)

The British Ambassador pointed out, moreover, that Britain spoke up for South Africa because "we have so many interests in common with you, which we want to maintain if possible."

It is these anxieties on the part of the British government which explain why Britain has come, during and since the Geneva conference, to be "compelled" to play such an active diplomatic role in the recent settlement strategy in Rhodesia. At the same time, these anxieties are misplaced, though, from the British point of view, conveniently misplaced. Indeed, since the inception of the

Carter Presidency, United States policy has appeared to call for rather more serious "reforms" in South Africa than were implied in 1968-1974 period. The Kissinger memo stated that pre-1968 US policy towards South Africa sought

progress towards majority rule through political arrangements which guarantee increasing participation by the whole population. Tangible evidence of such progress has been considered a precondition for improved US relations with the white states.

Such "tangible evidence" was taken to include

Eliminate job reservation and abolish pay differentials based on race. Recognise African labour unions as bargaining units. Abolish pass laws and repressive security legislation. Move towards franchise for non-whites.

After 1968 the objectives were shifted

To encourage this change in white attitudes, we would indicate our willingness to accept political arrangements short of guaranteed progress towards majority rule, provided that they assure broadened political participation in some form by the whole population.

It was the "progress towards majority rule" mandate that appeared to have been reinserted by the Carter administration, particularly in statements by Andrew Young. However it is essential to realise the context of this. What seems to have happened in the Nixon-Ford period is that the "Africanist" group, deprived of a direct linkage to policy-formation began to develop a Congressional lobby which, in the post Vietnam, post-Watergate conditions of a changed Executive-Congressional balance, was able to intervene in the new Southern African situation in such forms as (a) curbing the provision of US funds to anti-MPLA forces in Angola (b) secure the repeal of the Byrd amendment. It was this lobby which Andrew Young came to "represent" within the Carter administration...thus restoring the Africanist role in policy-formation, but by no means constituting it as a determinative one. What the rhetoric of the initial Carter period has therefore temporarily concealed is the objective bases on which US policy towards South Africa must be and is determined.

These objective bases are clearly spelt out in the Kissinger memo. Against the "political embarrassment" of South Africa in US pursuit of an African policy are set the economic and strategic interests of the US:

US direct investment in southern Africa, mainly in South Africa, is about 1 billion dollars and yields a highly profitable return. Trade, again mainly with South Africa, runs a favourable balance to the US. (Our exports to South Africa were about 450 million dollars in 1968 against imports of 250 million dollars). In addition, the US has direct economic interests in the key role which South Africa plays in the UK

balance of payments. UK investment in South Africa is currently estimated at 3 billion dollars, and the British have made it clear that they will take no action which would jeopardize their economic interests. The US has an important interest in the orderly marketing of South Africa's gold production which is important to the successful operation of the two-tier gold price system.

Strategically, the situation is summed up as the existence of a "geographically important area" which has "major ship repairs and logistics facilities which can be useful to our defence forces".

Have there been any changes in these interests since 1968? Both economically and strategically, this needs to be assessed in terms of (a) the special and particular interests of the United States (b) the more general interests and role of the United States in the preservation of Western capitalist interests. Since 1968 the volume of United States investment and of trade with South Africa has increased substantially...though it is important to note that since 1974 the US appears to be being replaced as second to Britain in these respects by West Germany. However it is important to note the changing character of this particular economic interest, associated with the changing condition of the South African economy. By the end of the 1960's, the South African boom was beginning to display its contradictions: inflation, rising unemployment, and a tendency to a crisis in the balance of payments. Export production did not increase in volume terms in mining and agriculture, and there was no "breakthrough" into foreign markets for manufacturing. Meanwhile the growth of manufacturing created a high propensity to import in that sphere. The problems were staved off initially by inflows of direct investment, and then by the rise in the gold price. But declining profits slowed down inflows of direct investment which were compensated (largely on the basis of the security of the gold price) by an increasing search by the state and private capital in South Africa for indirect flows in the form of loans. Much of this loan inflow went into infrastructural investment intended to show a payoff in production and exports only in the 1980's. With the decline in the gold price South Africa suddenly appeared, therefore, as massively overborrowed with the effect that loan inflows began to dry up and a latent balance of payments crisis has become acutely manifested. Simultaneously, the South African regime has been faced with an escalated momentum of resistance, leading from the mass strikes of 1972-3 into a series of prolonged and bitter trade union recognition disputes and into the uprising of Soweto, and the political general strike of August and September 1976. Numerous grievances underlay this resistance but central

factors involved have been rising living costs and rising unemployment. However, in order to secure IMF credits to tide the situation over, the South African state has been forced to pursue a policy of economic stringency, deepening rather than easing the recession. Declining profitability, coupled with continued "political instability" has meant an increasingly cautious approach by foreign investors. In the medium-term, these problems for the South African economy cannot but persist. The "way out" envisaged by South African economic decision-makers depends crucially on a recovery in world trade and the stimulus that this would provide to South Africa's export production. This entails expanded exports of minerals, with coal and base metals added to the "traditional" gold and diamonds, and exports of beneficiated ore (ferrochrome, ferromanganese). The "special" interests of US capital in South Africa reflect this situation: they are (a) the existing stake in manufacturing industry (b) the loan stake of US banks (c) the increasing US investment in base mineral production and beneficiation in South Africa (and Rhodesia). A number of surveys made in the US have also pointed to the strategic significance of SA production of base minerals because of the percentage of SA production and reserves in numerous such raw materials; though at least one recent survey has questioned this. (These special economic considerations also apply, by and large, to British and European investment in South Africa, though with specific modifications in each case).

In more general terms, it is the "indirect economic interest" of the US, as the continued major guarantor of world capitalist relations, which remain crucial however; i.e. (a) South Africa's role in the production of the capitalist world's money-commodity (b) the role of South African trade in the UK balance of payments situation. These factors are the objective constraint on the "competition" of capitalist powers (UK, US, Germany, etc) in Southern Africa. They are most vociferously expressed (as the Kissinger memo indicated) by the British government, but this subjective expression reflects the real constraints imposed by capital.

Strategically, the terms in which United States (and, correspondingly, NATO) have seen South Africa have undergone subtle alterations. In the 1950's, the very military dominance of the US made the considerations purely "Cold War" ones: South Africa was the lynchpin in the South Atlantic of the anti-Soviet alliance. The reassertion of inter-capitalist competition at the level of states (eg the French

acquisition of nuclear weapons) inaugurated the gradual transition towards US-Soviet "detente" (ie towards the limitation of the forms of confrontation, rather than the abolition of such confrontation). The simultaneous emergence of "detente" in this sense, and of intensified political competition between states placed South Africa in the 1960's in a better position of manoeuvre. With the US-British arms embargo, South Africa turned to other states, principally France, for arms supplies. In the 1968-74 period there were attempts by the US and Britain to relax the arms embargo which were defeated, principally by the Commonwealth. Since 1974 there have been two significant alterations in the strategic parameters determining US-British policy. Firstly, the Soviet Union has, because of its support for the liberation struggles in the Portuguese colonies and other factors, acquired a greater measure of influence in Southern Africa. This became particularly manifest in the solidarity action of the Cuban regime in support of the MPLA against South African intervention in Angola, and the logistical support given to this by the Soviet Union. What was particularly important here was that, despite the sabre-rattling of Kissinger, the US was not in a position to challenge "detente" by coming directly to the aid of the South African forces. Secondly, South Africa had been able to manipulate inter-capitalist competition (in this case via West Germany) to acquire a nuclear capability. It is highly significant both that preparations for a SA nuclear test in the Kalahari were first spotted by Soviet reconnaissance, and that the United States, Britain, and France very rapidly associated themselves with the condemnation of this attempt to extend the "nuclear club". These two factors, however, are important in understanding both the urgency and the problem of the current Anglo-American strategy in Southern Africa.

What exists, in other words, is a situation where (a) in Zimbabwe and to a lesser extent Namibia the form of the state is under serious but not decisive challenge from popular resistance, and in South Africa there are also continued popular challenges of an as yet more limited nature (b) the Smith regime cannot deal with these on its own in Zimbabwe (c) the political possibility for an "unreformed" South Africa to play a major role in securing a political restructuring in Zimbabwe is (unlike the period of the Kissinger initiative) highly problematic...though the extent to which it has built up a military force in Namibia gives it a de facto role there (d) neither the United States nor Britain can afford to undertake a unilateral military role in Zimbabwe or Namibia... though the

French, in the Zaire escapade, signalled that they saw for themselves a share in the Southern African "sphere of influence".

The White Paper on the Rhodesian settlement represents the level at which the "problems" of the settlement have been resolved...and the level at which they remain unresolved. Without analysing it in detail, it is clear that its major intention is to establish terms on which a political restructuring can occur without any damage to private property relations: it is a blueprint for the perpetuation and expansion of the process of capital accumulation in an independent Zimbabwe. As such it is an attempt to constrain and limit the rights of the people of Zimbabwe to self-determination, rights which include the right to determine the character of the property relation. The problem for the Anglo-American strategy is: how can this restructuring be guaranteed in a political-military fashion. This, it would appear, is that the "diplomacy" of the last few months has been concerned with. This diplomacy can, however, be read in two ways. At face value, or at one level below face value, it seems to have involved considerable arm-twisting of various types by the United States to push African states into a greater involvement in the guaranteeing of the settlement which has, correspondingly, meant conceding of a much enlarged and more secure military and political role in the transitional and post-independence period to the Patriotic Front. Pushed to its "extreme", a scenario exists for the replacement of most of Smith's army by a liberation-force derived (plus some independently-trained refugee Zimbabwean) army, under the auspices of a "return to legality" administered by Britain and the UN, and policed by a UN "peacekeeping force" whose core might well be Nigerian.

These negotiations, and the corresponding negotiations occurring over Namibia, cannot however be viewed in isolation from the situation of South Africa. Even at the diplomatic level this is evident. The current period of negotiation has been accompanied by an escalated US rhetoric demanding "reforms" in South Africa, and a rhetoric about the possibility of creating intensified pressure (sanctions measures) to achieve those reforms. Correspondingly, the spokesmen for the South African state have, by and large, adopted an increasingly defiant tone towards the United States in particular. These spokesmen have clearly and explicitly stated that they are concerned to secure a political restructuring in Zimbabwe and Namibia but (like the British government) they are clearly concerned that this should occur on terms which (a) represent

"moderation" and (b) ease the pressure on South Africa. This has specific implications for the policy positions which they are taking up with respect to Zimbabwe, and for the current domestic practice of the South African state. With regard to the former, the South Africans are clearly unwilling to see a settlement in which the major role of guarantor is being played by African states unless this represents an ultimate return to a modified form of the 1968-74 position, ie a situation in which the capitalist powers accord the role of major guarantor of capitalist relations in Southern Africa to South Africa in a role of senior partner in an "African detente". But this involves, because of the African and other pressures on the United States and Britain, a level of "cosmetic" changes in South Africa sufficient to restore a level of respectability to South Africa's image. In other words, and this is the deeper level of the current diplomacy, the form and possibilities for settlement on the Southern African periphery are crucially linked with the internal political and economic dynamics of South Africa itself.

Here it is clear that the United States and even, to some extent, Britain, have since 1975-6 been searching once again for a "third force" in South Africa, a political base on which a moderate political restructuring could occur. The objective realities of South Africa make this, however, a much more difficult proposition than in the periphery. In "parliamentary" and "business" terms, the major trends in the last couple of years have been (a) an attempt to reconstitute a parliamentary opposition on a broad base, (b) various attempts to assert a more "political" role for businessmen ...from the formation of the Urban Foundation, the reorientation of the South African Foundation to internal propagandising, the suggestions of Wassenaar for some form of "technocratic" government. In both cases the aim has been to secure de facto political alliances into the black community on the basis of an assertion of the values of a "free enterprise" economy. All such endeavours have been a dismal failure: the parliamentary opposition (as in the period around Sharpeville) has instead fragmented (and Vorster has therefore shrewdly called an election, which represents a simultaneous assertion of the legitimacy of the political institutions of South Africa vis a vis "technocratic"/"business lobby" politics. The economic and political carrots which have been mobilised for the black petty-bourgeoisie have been minimal in the extreme, and have bogged down for the moment in a series of bureaucratic conflicts (eg over extension of home-ownership). Moreover, the policies which

have been advocated by the various elements in this spectrum do not represent in any meaningful sense a dismantling of apartheid. Insofar as a "position" has developed in this respect, it is ideologically a substitution for apartheid of the concept of "pluralism", politically a substitution for Bantustans of the concept of a "federation", and economically would perpetuate the key institutions of apartheid (pass laws, influx control, restriction of the rights of workers to organise and strike, lack of universal franchise in a single Parliament).

The alternative "third force" has been seen as an "extra-parliamentary" one, rooted on one hand in the black consciousness movement, and on the other hand (though this is less evident) in elements of the trade union movement that has emerged recently. Quite deliberately, cynically, and brutally, the South African state has, since Soweto, and on an escalating scale, set about suppressing any possibilities for the coalition of such elements into a viable "third force".

To the extent that such "third forces" expose their fragility, or suffer repression, the United States and Britain have been, and are, forced back into dealing with the real constraints in the situation. A recent article in the South African press traced, for example, the "taming" of Andrew Young:

Shortly after President Jimmy Carter took office, it was suggested in some circles that intense US pressure on South Africa would only be short-term...period of adjustment and a year at the most...There seems to be truth in the view that pressure would be short-lived. The stance taken by UN Ambassador Andrew Young has already changed considerably in recent months. He is now less radical in his approach, more tolerant of white South Africa and more low key. This has almost been admitted by Foreign Minister Pik Botha...After taking office this year Young categorically told a Press Conference in New York that blacks will probably be administering South Africa in less than five years...He then stated that a timetable had to be set so that majority rule could be introduced within 18 months to four years. In March Young said he would back a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa. This was followed by a more rash statement that he was in favour of a Swedish resolution to ban all future investment in the Republic...Then came the point that almost led to a breakdown in relations between the two countries: Young by implication accused the South African Government of being "illegitimate"...Meanwhile, relations were further strained when it was announced that Mr Young would visit SA while the Vorster-Mondale talks were on the go...Ironically the visit itself, coupled with the Vienna talks, were probably the turning point in US-SA relations. While stating that he would like to see a repetition in SA of the US civil rights strategy, Mr Young stood down on his previous majority rule demand. He astounded most of his local audiences with

his powerful and committed support for the free enterprise system and a moderate political approach...Mr Young was furthermore surprisingly optimistic about South Africa's future, saying that while Mr Vorster appeared uncompromising now, he would probably quietly introduce new changes. He nevertheless explained that he fully appreciated the genuine fears of whites...What have been the positive developments since Vienna? Shortly after the talks President Carter told a group of American publishers that the US would not try to overthrow the SA Government...Mr young then told a House of Representatives International Relations Committee hearing that progress could be made if Washington made a concerted effort to work closely with Mr Vorster. He even dismissed the need for an arms embargo saying that "it would only be seen by the South Africans as provocation"...In an extraordinary interview with Playboy, Mr Young said that he had great respect for Mr Vorster as a politician, and added that white South Africa needed him (Andy Young) to help it deal with the blacks..."the only way the whites can survive is if they are willing to modify their system to involve blacks in the decision-making and economic participation"...Perhaps it would be fair to say that - apart from the Rhodesian issue - he has now succeeded in establishing a new and promising rapport with South Africa. If this is indeed the case, relations between the US and South Africa may soon be normalised again. (Financial Gazette, 9/9/1977)

In other words, Young has been forced back, through the mustering of South African power in internal repression, and through manoeuvring with regard to its role in the Zimbabwe settlement, into acknowledging the primacy of the particular and general interests of the United States in the existing system in South Africa. The South Africans, in their turn, appear to concede the possibility of the Patriotic Front coming to power in Zimbabwe, provided that the heat continues to be removed from South Africa. Botha's most recent statement at present available (FT September 19th, 1977) emphasises that "It is completely counter-productive to hold a sword when you are trying to get the cooperation of people. There is a point beyond which we cannot be pushed, and that point has just now been reached...Britain was attempting to use South Africa to exert pressure on Rhodesia because she was unwilling to use her own power." Meanwhile, in calling an election while the parliamentary opposition is disorganised, Vorster will demonstrate that the character of the cosmetic reforms (in particular the farce of the separate Coloured and Indian "cabinets" in subordination to a white cabinet, etc) will be undertaken on his terms, and not those of the internal "reformist" groups.

At present the British government, in fact, is emerging as the major advocate of this position held by Vorster. In parallel with these cosmetic political reforms, there has been external pressure for certain cosmetic reforms in "industrial relations". Both these

matters are of course under consideration by the Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions. The adoption recently, at British initiative, of an EEC code of conduct for companies operating in South Africa must be seen in this light. With the demand for majority rule now removed from the rhetoric of US strategy, certain concessions can be pushed for of an "in-factory kind". Indeed this Code of Conduct is tougher and better spelt out than either the previous British code of conduct, or the corresponding US provisions: this is the product of the momentum of class struggle in South Africa at this point. At the same time, (as was the case in the earlier adoption of codes of conduct) the broadening of this approach to European capital is a specific response by the British to the building momentum of the disinvestment campaign on South Africa. As the FT reported, "the British Government is not alone...in believing that the Community should exercise prudence in drawing up any further measures ((such as limits on Government aid for exports to South Africa, measures to restrict new investments)) and that at this stage it is wiser to hold the threat of such actions in reserve rather than to try to implement them immediately. Britain is clearly concerned that a resort to more direct pressure could jeopardise the chances of obtaining Pretoria cooperation in securing a Rhodesian settlement. Moreover, like other EEC countries with substantial commercial investments in South Africa, it is cautious about risking inflicting an unacceptable degree of damage on them." (21/9/77).

### 3. THE IMPLICATIONS

At present it is still unclear whether or not the Anglo-American strategy will lead to a "settlement" in Rhodesia or Namibia. What is clear, however, is (a) the terms and implications of such a settlement for South Africa itself. In respect of the periphery, the settlement would be secured at the expense of limiting the self-determination of the peoples of Zimbabwe and Namibia, and in particular limiting the self-expression of the working class and poor peasantry. Equally, as the British government in particular has made clear, the settlement of the periphery would give a breathing space to capital in South Africa...whose major foreign advocate is currently the British government (in consequence of the level of British involvement in South Africa). Whatever the character of the cosmetic reforms which are suggested or even introduced in South Africa, a trajectory determined by the settlement in the periphery is likely to have certain similarities to the post-

Sharpeville period. A recovery from the present recession, as has been suggested, will involve in the first place a relative shift of accumulation (and of employment) from the sectors of manufacturing to those of mining, the most repressive sectors of the South African economy. The restoration of profitable levels of accumulation in manufacturing will necessitate a repression of the present levels and forms of struggle of the South African working class. In other words the South African state, by attempting to eliminate the most radical form of a potential base for political restructuring (black consciousness, some forms of trade union) is posing to United States and British capital the struggle as it really is: a struggle of capital against labour, and of the support for the existing form of the state as opposed to support for a liberation movement serving the interests of the working class.

- Martin Legassick

## COLD WAR COMES TO AFRICA

The recent French intervention in Zaire's mineral-rich Shaba province is one of many foreign military interventions in Africa since independence

# A diary of foreign troops

1960

**JULY 1960:** Belgian metropolitan troops intervened in the Congo (now Zaire) following mutiny in the Force Publique, the combined army and gendarmerie. First refused permission, the Belgians, who had only a few weeks earlier granted independence to Congo, reasserted themselves without permission.

**JULY 1960:** United Nations intervention through "peace-keeping forces" began in mid-July, wanted by the Congolese Government of Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba, as a means of getting Belgian troops out and by UN member states as a means of preventing both anarchy and the escalation of the situation into a cold-war confrontation. The UN military contingents were to remain in the Congo for four years, and at one time numbered 20,000 UN soldiers. A high-point of the intervention was the UN offensive against the two-year-old Belgian-backed Katanga Government at the end of 1962, thereby breaking the back of secession in Katanga (now the province of Shaba).

1964

**JANUARY 1964:** British military intervened to quell army mutinies in East Africa. Following a coup in Zanzibar which brought Abeid Karume to power in early January, a mutiny occurred at the Colito barracks, outside Dar es Salaam, Tanganyika. The mutineers locked up their British and African officers and rampaged through the town. Sympathetic outbreaks occurred at two other military stations up country. President Nyerere himself went into hiding but when he came out after two days he had to seek British help. On January 25 a Royal Marine Commando force was landed and the mutineers were speedily rounded up. (Tanganyika became the last country to call in the British.) The Dar es Salaam mutiny, sparked off by, among other things, resentment against British officers and low levels of salaries, encouraged similar outbreaks in Kenya and Uganda, where army conditions were similar. Kenya, which had become independent only a few days earlier, called in British troops, to be followed by Uganda.

**FEBRUARY 1964:** Airborne French troops landed in Libreville to reinstate President Leon Mba of Gabon ousted barely 42 hours earlier in a coup d'Etat. The violent clashes between the insurgents (led by former Foreign Minister Jean Hilaire Aubame, who had already set up a "Revolutionary Committee" to rule the country) made up of a handful of junior army and police officers and the French troops doomed Aubame's short-lived regime. France justified her action by invoking the 1961 French-Gabonese mutual defence treaty, but it was clear that France had acted without any request from the Gabonese government which at that time was, of course, led by M. Aubame.



Zaireans being questioned by French paratroopers

**NOVEMBER 1964:** Belgian and American paratroopers, backed by White mercenaries, fight the rebels in Stanleyville (Kisangani) in Zaire (formerly Congo) whose leadership becomes divided. Holding of European hostages by the rebels (a repeat process after the 1960 outbreaks when a number of Europeans were killed) and mass killings of Congolese, among other things, provoked the operation, which was undertaken with government consent.

1968

**AUGUST 1968:** French troops - numbering about 1,000 men and permanently based in the Chad capital Ndjamena, having briefly intervened several times, were called in by the Chad Government to help fight the rebels of Frolinat (the Front for National Liberation). Chad invoked its defence pact with France and asked Paris for additional French assistance to counter rebel activity in the Tibesti mountains. France sent marines, legionnaires, paratroopers, aircraft and armoured cars.

1969

**APRIL 1969:** The French undertake an active military role in Chad at the request of the Chad Government. This role continued until September 1972 in view of unceasing rebel activity. In October 1975, the new Chad leader - Gen. Malloum, who had overthrown President-since-independence Tombalbaye - angered by French direct dealings with the Toubou rebels of Tibesti mountains over the kidnapped French archaeologist Madame Clautre, asked the French military mission to close down. Within a month all French troops had gone, leaving behind only 300 French military technical assistants in Chadian uniform. But only six months later (in March 1976) - with

the rebel threat continuing unabated - Gen. Malloum had no choice but to renew the defence pact with France.

1970

**NOVEMBER 1970:** Guinea reported an invasion by mercenaries (that turned out to be a Portuguese-backed operation from neighbouring Guinea Bissau where the Portuguese still ruled) and asked for United Nations military help. But no such help was given: instead a special mission conducted an investigation.

1975

**NOVEMBER 1975:** Cuban military forces, backed by Soviet weaponry and military advisers, intervene in Angola in support of the Popular Liberation Movement in Angola - MPLA - after South Africa had invaded. They enabled the MPLA to rout the invaders and its rivals, the FNLA and UNITA, although they stayed on even after the civil war ended in February 1976.

1976

**JULY 1976:** Israeli commandos launched a successful attack on Uganda's Entebbe airport and rescued 103 hostages from an Air France airbus hijacked by guerillas after it left Athens on June 27. The attack took Ugandans, President Amin and the world at large by surprise. There was only a brief confrontation at the airport with security guards.

1977

**APRIL 1977:** France intervened on the side of the Zaire Government at President Mobutu's request. Although no French troops were provided, France sent 13 transport planes to carry Moroccan troops who led the attacks against rebels in

Zaire's Shaba province. However 65 non-combatant French troops were reported to have been engaged in the Zaire government offensive against the rebels - said to be ex-Katangese.

**APRIL 1977:** Belgium airlifted light arms to Zaire, backed by a \$15m. grant to Zaire of "non-lethal" supplies by the US. Belgian military aid was the first to arrive in support of President Mobutu.

**JULY 1977:** France again intervened in Chad by sending warplanes to help the government fight off a rebel threat in the north. The intervention was confirmed by French Foreign Minister de Guringaud during a later visit to the Ivory Coast.

**OCTOBER 1977:** France sent troop reinforcements to its military base at Ouakam, close to Senegal's capital Dakar, in its first military moves in connection with the abduction of eight French nationals by guerillas of the Polisario Front fighting for the independence of Western Sahara. The same day French television announced that a special parachute commando unit had been put on full alert to leave for Mauritania, where the eight had been captured. Ten Jaguar fighter-bombers were later said to have been moved into Mauritania and resulted in at least three clashes with Polisario guerillas in December.

**OCTOBER 1977:** West Germany sent crack commando units to Mogadishu to free hostages held on a Lufthansa airliner hijacked from the Spanish island of Mallorca. The commandos returned after a successful operation.

## 1978

**FEBRUARY-MARCH 1978:** Cuban soldiers backed by Russian military advisers and equipment, intervened in support of the Ethiopian Government in expelling Somali forces which had occupied about 80% of the Ethiopian region of Ogaden. The Cubans and the Russians had been in Ethiopia for several months before their intervention and continued their presence in Ethiopia after the Ogaden operation. Their involvement in the Ethiopian government's fight against the Eritrean guerillas was alleged by the Eritreans but there was no independent confirmation.

**APRIL 1978:** Several hundred French troops airlifted to Chad to help the Government there deal with a new onslaught by rebels. The intervention, among other things, is said to be intended to protect French citizens and training centres in Chad.

Rebels said French citizens would be considered legitimate targets because of French military aid. At least two French officers were reported killed in the clashes and a French pilot killed in missile attack on his aircraft. Protests against French aid continue.

**MAY 1978:** France intervened in Mauritania to back up Mauritanian resistance against continued Polisario attacks.

French air force Jaguar fighter-bombers engaged in attacks on a column of Polisario vehicles heading for the Mauritanian town of Zouerate, where about 2,000 French men were said to be working on Mauritanian projects.

**MAY 1978:** France sent paratroopers to Kolwezi, the mining town in the Shaba province of Zaire, where some 2,000 Europeans were reported trapped in fighting by rebels who wanted the overthrow of President Mobutu Sese Seko's government.

The French troops were called in by President Mobutu. They began to leave after evacuating the Europeans from Kolwezi and largely clearing the area of the rebels.

**MAY 1978:** Belgium landed troops in Kolwezi, in a French-style intervention, and also began withdrawing them as soon as their "humanitarian mission" was over. President Mobutu praised the French for their prompt military aid - and was joined by several other African leaders gathered coincidentally at a Franco-African summit in Paris ●