

October 8, 1976

**Background Papers, Kissinger Proposals at Geneva
Conference**

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Summary:

An examination of the consequences of Kissinger's proposal at the Geneva Conference. An overview of South Africa's predicament when it comes to Rhodesia.

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The Basic UK terms offered 22 March 1976 were modified to Rhodesia's advantage under Kissinger's influence...

It remains RSA prime concern there should be no economic collapse in Rhodesia resulting from mass exodus of whites, and no consequent power-vacuum which would be filled by Communists.

In this event Pretoria judges the whole of central Southern Africa would fall to communist hegemony and the time which South Africa requires to put its own house in order would not be so readily available.

Consequently, the Rhodesian acceptance of the settlement proposals has been widely acclaimed with only the electorally insignificant Herstigte Nasionale Party, among organised opinion, dissenting. The risks of a sudden influx of penniless white refugees have been averted by financial guarantees and, wherever may happen in the longer term, an internationally acceptable transitional government will ensure relative and short term stability in the region. Above all, the dilemma faced by the Government of risking either electoral opprobrium by abandoning the whites or international opprobrium by continuing to support them, has been obviated.

The Government probably regards itself as having fully discharged its responsibilities towards Rhodesia and plans to behave with strict decorum towards the transitional government. Whilst it is in SA's interests that a non-Marxist black government should accede to power on independence, it is doubtful whether the Government contemplates exerting any overt political influence to secure this for fear of the attempt being counter productive. For the same reason, having reconciled itself to a black Zimbabwe, the Government would not wish to jeopardise its future standing by showing itself unduly sympathetic any signs of intransigence on the part of white members of the Government.

However, on the economic plane South Africa will be anxious to assist although such assistance will be tempered by the knowledge that Rhodesia will become a competitor in certain commodities, especially in Central Africa.

Cooperation that has hitherto existed in sensitive areas, eg interchange of intelligence will tail off.