

January 19, 1979

Political Action Committee, Guidelines to Formulate a Total National Strategy for Rhodesia

Citation:

"Political Action Committee, Guidelines to Formulate a Total National Strategy for Rhodesia", January 19, 1979, Wilson Center Digital Archive, South African Archives, Department of Foreign Affairs Archive, BTS 1/156/3. Included in "Southern Africa in the Cold War, Post-1974," edited by Sue Onslow and Anna-Mart Van Wyk.
<https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/118541>

Summary:

There is not a contradiction between the proposed short term approach regarding Rhodesia and the proposed longer term approach regarding Angola, Mozambique, Rhodesia and South West Africa.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Transcript - English

Comment

Above-mentioned two studies were discussed on 5 December 1978 by heads of departments. It was pointed out that the aims set out in the short term strategy for Rhodesia, namely to maintain a stable moderate anti-communist government, do not accord with the concept [draft] recommendations especially regarding Mozambique, namely to co-operate on economic level. It was further pointed out the South African Government would like to create an anti-communist bloc in Southern Africa and that attention must be given to how we could achieve this goal.

About the aim of an anti-communist bloc there is of course unanimity. There could, however, be differences about the methods which should be applied to achieve this aim. Regarding the methods certain factors have to be considered, inter alia the practical implementation, costs, the attitude of the international community and the effect on South Africa's status and credibility.

In the case of Rhodesia we have to deal with a fluid situation and with a government that is moving in a certain direction but which is not enjoying recognition from the international community. Due to the country's dependence on South Africa it is possible for South Africa to try to influence the course matters take in such a way that the ideal of a stable moderate anti-communist government may hopefully be achieved.

The picture in South West Africa is the same, although the involvement of the U.N.O. somewhat limits South Africa's room to maneuver. In the case of Mozambique and Angola, however, we are dealing with governments which, in spite of their ideology and their history of taking over the reins of government, are recognized by the international community and enjoy membership of the United Nations. It is clear that South Africa has to act circumspectly to achieve its aim. Our freedom of movement to bring about changes to the governments of these two countries is limited, because we are already under threat of sanctions. We have to apply more orthodox diplomatic methods, of which the economic weapon constitutes an important part. Looking further to the vitally important development task in South Africa itself and the importance of removing difficulties that could lead to violence, it is of the utmost importance that a stable situation, where possible, be maintained along our borders and that means are spent on aims according to priority.

The present relations between South Africa and Mozambique do not cause concern. They are pragmatic and based on the recognition of mutual interests. In discussions with spokesmen of the Mozambican Gov., and during the present negotiations with Mozambique on the revision of the Mozambican Convention, we were repeatedly told that Mozambique desires peace in South Africa and that it would like to live in good neighborliness with South Africa. The Mozambican Gov.'s first priority presently appears to be economic development. Without lessening our vigilance towards the communist threat, economic co-operation with Mozambique, over the medium term at any rate, ought to serve the best interests of South Africa. That is especially so if the high expenditure involved in the protection of our border with Mozambique, in case of hostility, has to be taken into consideration, whilst the situations in South West Africa and Rhodesia remain unsolved.

Angola presently shows signs of wanting to approach the West and there are even signs that it would like to normalize its relations with South Africa. The position has not yet developed to such an extent that we could say with any degree of certainty that Angola would like to live with us in good neighborliness, but in the present unfolding situation our approach should be the same as that in the case of Mozambique.

There are certain political currents in both Mozambique as well as Angola which could

be developed to the advantage of South Africa's relations with the two countries. Assistance to and co-operation with these two states can bring about their being weaned away from Russian imperialism and militarism and that they themselves realize that their interests will best be served by being part of a developing and stable Southern Africa.

With an eye on the preceding analysis it is felt that there is not a contradiction between the proposed short term approach regarding Rhodesia and the proposed longer term approach regarding Angola, Mozambique, Rhodesia and South West Africa. The ideal remains the same, but the different circumstances have to be taken into consideration.