

‘You Haven’t Been Too Horrible to Us Recently’: Lyndon Johnson and Apartheid South Africa

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ABSTRACT

This analysis explores the efforts of the Lyndon Johnson Administration, for both moral and pragmatic reasons, to distance itself from apartheid South Africa during the 1960s. By 1964, the bilateral relationship with Pretoria was becoming a diplomatic liability for the White House. The international community, especially newly independent Afro-Asian states, was increasingly vocal in condemning South Africa, and domestically, the United States was seeking to remove the legacy of racial discrimination from its own society. Washington’s close economic and strategic ties to Pretoria, however, made taking a tough line with South Africa and broader disengagement from the apartheid state a difficult balancing act.

On 29 April 1964, Assistant Secretary of State Jeffrey C. Kitchen met with South African Charge d’Affaires A. Gardner Dunn. During the course of a broad conversation regarding the state of the relationship between South Africa and the United States, Dunn remarked that in terms of Washington’s actions towards the apartheid state, “You haven’t been too horrible to us recently.” His comment, while made in the early months of the Lyndon B. Johnson administration, was a particularly apt description of the approach adopted by the White House to the vexed issue of United States policy towards South Africa during the 1960s.¹

During the Johnson era, for both moral and pragmatic reasons, Washington sought to distance itself from practitioners of apartheid. The international community, especially the newly independent Afro-Asian states, was increasingly vocal in its condemnation of South Africa and domestically the United States was seeking to remove the legacy of racial discrimination from its own society. Washington’s close economic and strategic ties to Pretoria combined with South Africa’s growing economic and military strength, however, made taking tough line with Pretoria and broader disengagement from South Africa a difficult balancing act.

As early as 1964, the issuance of National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) 295 was demonstrative of the desire of the Johnson administration to disengage and disassociate from the apartheid state. The differing racial trajectory of the two nations also led to a series of vexing diplomatic clashes between Washington and Pretoria including over the hosting of multi-racial receptions at the American Embassy and intruded into the sphere of military cooperation regarding racial restrictions on American naval personnel during shore leave in South Africa.

The White House, took a strong stance on these issues, typically forcing Pretoria to back down or in the case of the naval visits indefinitely postponing any future refuelling stops in South African harbours. Under President Johnson, the United States also adhered to a strict interpretation of the UN arms embargo on the apartheid state refusing to sell submarines to

¹ MemCon, April 29, 1964, South Africa, 11/63-10/64, Vol. 1, National Security File (hereafter NSF), Country File (hereafter CF), Box 78, Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library (hereafter LBJL).

Pretoria and preventing the arranged sale of aircraft to South Africa by both Cessna and Lockheed. Washington also took steps to ensure that American manufactured parts arms and aircraft were not used by third parties in manufacturing armaments or aircraft for final usage by the South African Government.

Economic interests and geostrategic concerns, however, dictated a degree of close cooperation with South Africa and the avoidance of an overtly hostile policy towards the National Party government in Pretoria. Despite international and domestic criticism, the White House allowed the export of a nuclear power reactor to South Africa and in 1967 renewed the Atoms for Peace Agreement. In 1968, again in spite of the political repercussions, the Johnson administration amended the Air Transport Services Agreement between Pretoria and Washington granting South African airlines routes to the United States.

The White House also struck a delicate balance when confronting Pretoria in the global arena. Following the Rhodesian Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965, Pretoria defied London, Washington and the United Nations (UN) by continuing to trade with its northern neighbour. The South African Government also refused to give up its de facto control over South West Africa and despite vociferous condemnation at the UN even extended apartheid policy into the territory. In both cases, the United States publicly and privately condemned South African actions and supported UN measures designed to change Pretoria's course of action. The Johnson administration, however, refused to countenance stronger actions that could have led to an economic or military confrontation with the apartheid state.

At the broadest level there exists a range of literature offering diverse perspectives that seek to explain American foreign policy towards southern Africa during the de-colonization era. Nevertheless, there is a comparative paucity of research regarding direct American policy towards Pretoria, during the 1960s, especially in terms of examining relations through the lens of the Johnson administration and the unique challenges and opportunities that apartheid South Africa provided for Washington both domestically and internationally.

U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Apartheid South Africa, by Alex Thomson offers a magisterial overview of United States-South Africa relations throughout the apartheid era. The book, however, does not exclusively focus on the 1960s, and principally examines policy through the lens of a clash between human rights and strategic or economic interests. *The Cold War and the Color Line* by Thomas Borstelmann underlines the struggle faced by successive American presidential administrations in balancing Cold War concerns with the growing movement for racial justice both in southern Africa and the United States. *Apartheid's Reluctant Uncle* also by Borstelmann, provides a broad explanation of American support for the white regimes in southern Africa during the 1950s based on a shared anti-communist outlook, developing economic ties, a shared history of frontier expansion and the inherent racism of many elements in the Truman administration.²

Cold War and Black Liberation by Thomas Noer was published in 1985. The book explores American relations with the white minority regimes of Southern Africa with a particular focus on the influence of domestic Civil Rights movements in shaping foreign policy. The work also highlights the complex and emotive clash between the question of majority rule and immediate pragmatic interests highlighting the variety of diverse domestic and global actors which competed to influence decision making. The more recent work by Gerald Horne, *White Supremacy Confronted*, explores the close linkage between key South African and American anti-apartheid figures and argues that their work in tandem with communist nations was a key factor in forcing the end of white political control in both apartheid South Africa and

² Thomas Borstelmann, *Apartheid's Reluctant Uncle: The United States and Southern African in the Early Cold War* (Oxford, 1993) and Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2001) and Alex Thomson, *U.S. Foreign Policy towards apartheid South Africa, 1948-1994: Conflict of Interests* (New York, 2008).

the United States. While an insightful account of the parallel struggle against white supremacy it is not primarily concerned with the bilateral relationship between Pretoria and Washington during the 1960s.³

In this article, I seek to clarify and add to the previous scholarship especially the work of Thomson. I suggest that while there certainly existed a struggle between the moral issue of human rights and pragmatic interests in the Johnson era, there was also a geopolitical advantage in advancing the cause of racial equality, both domestically and overseas, especially among the newly independent Afro-Asian countries. Thus when weighing up decision making on South Africa it was not a clear cut question of pragmatism or morality but also required considering the different pragmatic consequences of American actions. Indeed, the White House viewed Pretoria's policies as a dangerous course of action that would lead to greater instability and heightened the need for greater disengagement from the increasingly pariah apartheid state on both moral and pragmatic grounds.

On 26 May 1948, the National Party (HNP) led by Daniel Francois Malan ousted long term South African leader Jan Christian Smuts in an election that heralded the onset of the strict system of racial discrimination, known as apartheid in Afrikaans, that would become the prevailing theme in South African politics and society for the following half century. The Population Registration and Group Areas Acts of July 1950 forced all South African residents to be classified into racial groupings and empowered the Governor-General to declare geographical areas, including urban residential and business neighbourhoods, to be for the exclusive occupation of specific racial groups.⁴

In the global arena, by November 1963, when President Lyndon B. Johnson assumed the Oval Office, the overtly racist policies of the National Party government, were coming under increasingly strident condemnation from the ranks of newly independent black African states and also at the UN. Following the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on 23 May 1963, the organization imposed an economic boycott of South Africa and set up a Liberation Committee to assist the movements of southern Africa fighting white minority rule. At the UN, on 1 April 1960, in the aftermath of the Sharpeville massacre, the Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolution 134 which deplored the actions and policies of the South African Government. Three years later, on 7 August 1963, the UNSC, passed Resolution 181 calling upon all member states to cease the sale and shipment of arms, ammunition and military vehicles to South Africa.⁵

In South Africa itself, however, the Nationalist Party was firmly entrenched in power. As noted by the CIA, virtually all the white population supported white supremacy and the limited white opposition was politically weak and ideologically divided. The South African economy

³ Gerald Horne, *White Supremacy Confronted: U.S. Imperialism and Anti-Communism vs. the Liberation of Southern Africa from Rhodes to Mandela* (New York, 2019) and Thomas Noer, *Cold War and Black Liberation: The United States and White Rule in Africa, 1948-1968* (Columbia, Missouri, 1985).

⁴ CIA Review, NSC Meetings June 17, 1948, President's Secretary's Files (hereafter PSF), Box 177, Papers of Harry S. Truman (hereafter HSTP), Harry S. Truman Presidential Library (hereafter TL) NSC Report on the Current Policies of the United States of America Relating to the National Security, Vol. I Geographical Areas, National Security Policies, PSF, Box 170, PHST, TL; Policy Statement of the Department of State, November 1, 1948, Foreign Relations of the United States (hereafter FRUS), 1948, Volume V, Part 1, The Near East, South Asia and Africa; Population Registration Act No 30, Apartheid Legislation 1948-1990, O'Malley Archive, Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory

<https://omalley.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/index.php/site/q/03lv01538/04lv01828/05lv01829/06lv01838.htm>

Union of South Africa Act, No.41 1950, Box A1485, Department of Historical Papers, Cullen Library, University of the Witwatersrand; David Aikman, *Great Souls: Six Who Changed the Century*, (Lanham, Maryland, 2003), 81 and Thomas Davenport, *South Africa: A Modern History*, (London: 1977), 253.

⁵ CIA National Intelligence Estimate (hereafter NIE), May 20, 1964, Box 73, South Africa, Papers of Lyndon Baines Johnson (hereafter LBJP), NSF, Box 8, LBJL and CIA Special Report, September 3, 1965, South Africa, 11/64-9/66, Vol. 2, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL.

was booming including a high level of foreign investment notably from the United Kingdom. The international condemnation and boycotts had led to an increasing degree of self-sufficiency. While the anger and frustration of the non-white groups, towards white political and economic supremacy, was exacerbated by their increasingly restrictive and repressive treatment under the Nationalist government the “ruthless efficiency” of the security forces had discouraged and disrupted any attempt at organized opposition.⁶

The White House approach to the apartheid state was shaped by mix of both pragmatic moral considerations. On a geopolitical level, the United States possessed an interest in preventing the spread of communism in Southern Africa. The vehement anti-communism and pro-Western stance of the National Party government combined with its powerful military, the strongest on the African continent, made Pretoria an important but not indispensable partner in the global struggle against the communism threat. The claims of the apartheid state to be a staunch Western ally were bolstered by its record of supporting American military actions in the post-World War II era including South African Air Force participation in the Berlin Airlift and the Korean War.⁷

During the Johnson era, Pretoria continued to collaborate with Washington in a number of important areas. Its strategic location on the tip of Southern Africa allowed the South African military to monitor Soviet activities in the south Atlantic as well as providing facilities for American aircraft and naval vessels on the Cape sea route. The apartheid state also hosted several National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) tracking stations, notably a Deep Space Tracking facility at Hartebeesthoek, near Johannesburg. South Africa also served as the terminus of the Atlantic Missile Range which extended southeast from Cape Kennedy in Florida and accommodated related Department of Defense (DOD) installations.⁸

The vast mineral wealth of South Africa was also significant for the United States both strategically and economically. By the mid 1960s, the apartheid state produced over 70% of the free world output of gold and almost 60% of platinum group metals. Pretoria also largely controlled the world supply of diamonds and South African uranium, a key component in atomic and nuclear weapons, was of particular importance to Washington. The flourishing South African economy also provided lucrative opportunities for trade and investment. By the early 1960s America accounted for nearly 20% of South African imports worth over \$200 million and South African exports to the United States, principally minerals including diamonds, totalled nearly \$260 million. In terms of direct assets, American companies invested between \$600-700 million in South Africa including over \$350 million in corporate investments.⁹

The apartheid state was an integral part of the so called ‘White Redoubt’ in Southern Africa whose other members included Rhodesia (present day Zimbabwe), the Portuguese

⁶ CIA NIE, May 20, 1964, Box 73, South Africa, LBJP, NSF, NIEs, Box 8, LBJL and CIA Intelligence Memo, June, 1966, South Africa, 11/64-9/66, Vol. 2, NSF, CF, Box 78 LBJL.

⁷ MemCon, April 20, 1951, MemCon File, April 1951, Box 68, Dean Acheson Papers, TL; South Africa: A Country Study, (Washington, D.C. : Federal Research Division, Library of Congress 1997), 338, <https://www.loc.gov/item/96048983/> and Thomson, *U.S. Foreign Policy towards apartheid South Africa*, 18-19.

⁸ To Komer from Haynes, July 9, 1965, South Africa, 11/64-9/66, Vol. 2, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; NASA Ground Facilities in South Africa, Undated, Space Tracking Stations-General, NSF, Files of Charles E. Johnson [hereafter CEJF], Box 17, LBJL; Chapter 5: Section C, LBJP, Department of State Administrative History [hereafter DSAH], Vol. I, Box 2, LBJL and Response to NSSM 39, August 15 1969, NSSM - 39 2 of 3, NSC Institutional (“H”) File, Box H-144, Richard M. Nixon Library (hereafter RNL).

⁹ Annex 1, Briefing for the NSC Standing Group, March 10, 1964, South Africa, 11/63-10/64, Vol. 1, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; CIA NIE, May 20, 1964, South Africa, LBJP, NSF, Box 8, LBJL; To President Johnson from Brubeck, July 29, 1964, South Africa, 11/63-10/64, Vol. 1, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; CIA Intelligence Memo, June, 1966, South Africa, 11/64-9/66, Vol. 2, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL and Memo for the President from Rostow, July 17, 1968, South Africa, 10/66-9/68, Vol. 3, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL.

Territories of Angola and Mozambique and South West Africa (present day Namibia) which was under the de facto rule of Pretoria. Like South Africa, both Rhodesia and the Portuguese Territories possessed important mineral deposits, were vehemently anti-communist and active practitioners of white minority rule which denied, to varying degrees, the political rights of their black African populations.¹⁰

Domestically, the white minority regimes of sub-Saharan Africa, especially apartheid South Africa and Rhodesia, enjoyed considerable support among the American public, notably white Americans, and on Capitol Hill especially among conservatives. Johnson feared that any radical steps taken against Pretoria and the broader 'White Redoubt', which led to an intensification of the racial conflict in Southern Africa could stimulate greater domestic support for the increasingly influential conservative movement. The White House also had grave concerns that an escalation of racial animosities in the region could further inflame political and social ethnic tensions in the United States itself in the aftermath of the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts.¹¹

On a personal level, however, Johnson held a deep moral interest in ending white supremacy whether it existed in the Mississippi delta or in a distant African country. On 15 March 1965, in a speech to a joint session of Congress entitled the "American Promise", the President stated unequivocally that if America proved incapable of the task of achieving equal rights for African-Americans then "we will have failed as a people and a nation." This was not simply rhetoric for public consumption. Soon after taking office Johnson privately stated to a White House staffer that "I'm going to be the best friend the Negro ever had". This commitment to racial equality was not merely domestic in scope. In May 1965, in a less than subtle gesture, Johnson dispatched a copy of the "American Promise" to South African Prime Minister Hendrik F. Verwoerd.¹²

The Oval Office also recognized the need to protect strategic, political and economic interests in the newly independent African states. As noted by Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, G. Mennen Williams, not only did Africa's huge land mass and air space have great military importance but African nations also possessed a large free world percentage of certain minerals critical to American interests. Furthermore black ruled Africa offered lucrative markets for export and Washington had both a strategic and humanitarian interest in promoting democracy and encouraging economic and social improvements.¹³

Indeed, Mennen Williams, a strong advocate for aligning the United States alongside black African aspirations, had been appointed by President John F. Kennedy to improve Washington's relationship with the black African nations. In the view of Mennen Williams, as

¹⁰ NSC Meeting December 17, 1969, NSSM - 39 2 of 3, NSC Institutional ("H") File, Box H-026, RNL.

¹¹ To Rusk from Bundy, January 7, 1965, "Africa General, Vol. 2," NSF, Box 76, LBJL; To Komer from Haynes, March 25, 1965, "Africa General, Vol. 2," NSF, Box 76, LBJL; To President Johnson from Margaret L. Clarkin et al. December 30, 1965, Rhodesia, White House Central Files (hereafter WHCF), Box 65, LBJL; Rhodesia/Zambia SitRep (hereafter RZSR) February 26 to March 1, 1966, Rhodesia, Vol. 2, NSF, Box 97, LBJL; To President Johnson from Congressman H.R. Gross, January 5, 1967, Rhodesia, WHCF, Box 65, LBJL; March 1, 1967, Rhodesia, WHCF, Box 65, LBJL; To President Johnson from Senator Moss et al., August 24, 1967, Africa General, Vol. 5, NSF, Box 77, LBJL; A Special Study of South Africa: The Strategic View, by General S. L. A. Marshall, as attachment to Letter from American-African Affairs Association Co-Chairman William A. Rusher, November 30, 1967, South Africa, 4/26/66, LBJP, Box 72, LBJL and Gerald Horne, *From the Barrel of a Gun*, (Chapel Hill: 2001), 15 and 84.

¹² Letter to Verwoerd, May 8, 1965, "Africa-Letters from the President to African Leaders, "The American Promise", NSF, Box 77, LBJL; Backgrounder: The President's concern for Africa; Files of Ulric Haynes (hereafter UHF), NSF, Box 1, LBJL; Andrew DeRoche, *Black, White and Chrome*, (Trenton, New Jersey: 2001), 8 and 98.

¹³ To Ambassadors et al. from Mennen Williams, May 10, 1965, Africa General, Vol. 2, NSF, Box 76, LBJL and Strengthened Africa Program, Africa General, Vol. 3, NSF, Box 76, LBJL.

observed by Noer, Africa belonged to the black Africans and Washington “needed to stop its temporizing and deference to Europeans and white South Africans”. While his impact on White House policy was limited in the Johnson administration due to the more conservative outlook of senior figures such as Secretary of State Dean Rusk and National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy, his appointment by Kennedy and retention by Johnson was demonstrative of the growing importance of black Africa in White House decision making.¹⁴

By the 1960s, the newly independent African nations also represented an increasingly powerful voting bloc in the UN General Assembly. Indeed, the number of postcolonial Afro-Asian member states meant that it became impossible for America and its Western allies to muster enough votes to form the two thirds majority needed for resolutions without African or Asian assistance. The White House was cognizant that the extent of American strategic and economic influence in black Africa, as well as in terms of garnering support for American diplomatic goals at the UN, was intrinsically linked to the stance or perceived stance that Washington took on the vexed question of apartheid South Africa.¹⁵

The White House was also disquieted by the growth of communist interest in and effect on African affairs. The early Sixties witnessed a startling increase in communist economic and military aid to the newly independent black nations as well as funds, covert arms shipments and guerrilla training to the black liberation movements. Indeed, the ‘White Redoubt’ provided a particularly potent opportunity for communist meddling and exploitation. The Soviets and Communist Chinese were unburdened by a colonial legacy and unlike Washington were not encumbered by close geopolitical or economic ties to the white regimes. Moreover, the longer the minority governments remained in power the greater the opportunities for communist sway over the leadership of the liberation groups.¹⁶

In the case of South Africa, therefore, the White House strove to tread a delicate line between these competing dynamics. The Johnson administration, was cautious in this balancing act, and while prepared to make minor strategic and economic sacrifices to demonstrate its opposition to apartheid, especially when discriminatory legislation impacted American diplomatic or military personnel, the Oval Office was not prepared to risk an outright economic or military confrontation with Pretoria either over apartheid or its overt defiance of the UN over Rhodesia and South West Africa.

On 24 April 1964, Johnson approved NSAM 295 relating to policy towards South Africa. The actions required by the NSAM clearly demonstrate a growing desire to disassociate with and disengage from the apartheid state. A sacrifice of strategic and military assets in order to be able to take a clear and principled stance against the continuation of white minority rule in Southern Africa.¹⁷

In terms of the sale of military equipment, a particularly nettlesome issue, the NSAM required the continuance of the arms embargo imposed by the Kennedy administration. The

¹⁴ Thomas Noer, *Soapy: A Biography of G. Mennen Williams* (Ann Arbor: 2005), 239-241 and Carl Watts, “G. Mennen Williams and Rhodesian Independence: A Case Study in Bureaucratic Politics”, *Michigan Academician*, 36/3 (2004), 237-241.

¹⁵ From Department of State to all African Diplomatic and Consular Posts et al. April 1, 1964, , Africa General, Vol. 1, NSF, Box 76, LBJL; To Ambassadors et al. from Mennen Williams, May 10, 1965, Chapter 10: Sections A and B, DSAH Vol. 1.Box 4, LBJL; To President Johnson from Komer, November 23, 1965, Africa General, Vol. 3, NSF, Box 76, LBJL and Glenda Sluga, “The Transformation of International Institutions” in Niall Ferguson et al. eds., *The Shock of the Global*, (Cambridge: 2010) 224-225.

¹⁶ CIA Memo, January 22, 1964, Africa General, Vol. 1, CF, NSF Box 76, LBJL; To Rusk et al. from Bundy, February 13, 1964, Africa General, Vol. 1, CF, NSF Box 76, LBJL; CIA Special Report, June 19, 1964, Africa General, Vol. 1, CF, NSF, Box 76, LBJL; CIA Special Memo, December 1, 1964, Africa General, Vol. 2, CF, NSF, Box 76, LBJL; CIA Special Report, April 16, 1965, Africa General, Vol. 2, CF, NSF Box 76, LBJL and CIA Memo, April 30, 1965, Africa General, Vol. 2, CF, NSF Box 76, LBJL.

¹⁷ National Security Action Memorandum (hereafter NSAM) No. 295, April 24, 1964, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa.

embargo had prohibited American companies and citizens from selling military hardware to South Africa with the exceptions of arms and munitions that the United States considered vital for the defence of the region against the communist expansion. In terms of the latter point, Johnson took a harder position than Kennedy, In December 1963, Washington supported UNSC Resolution 182 which added equipment and materials for the manufacture and maintenance of arms and ammunition to the voluntary UN embargo imposed four months earlier in August.¹⁸

In relation to American investment in the apartheid state, NSAM 295 ordered a suspension of action on any applications for United States Government loans and investment guarantees with respect to South Africa. The NSAM, however, stated there should be no avoidable disclosure of this policy to interested parties and no policy of warning private investors not to finance ventures in South Africa. The relevant agencies were to continue and accept and process applications as per normal.¹⁹

The State Department was further directed to develop a program to persuade Pretoria to defer implementation of the Odendaal Report in South West Africa and accept the upcoming International Court of Justice (ICJ) decision on the status of the territory (see later section). In a sign of potentially stronger action against Pretoria, the department was also asked to produce a comprehensive analysis of the various sanctions that could be considered if South Africa did not accept the ICJ ruling on South West Africa including an estimate of the effectiveness on South Africa of the sanctions if general compliance were obtained and of the prospects for obtaining such compliance from the international community.²⁰

In a sign of the growing importance accorded to relations with black ruled Africa, the State Department, in consultation with other interested agencies, was charged with developing a program to inform African countries of the nature and objectives of the American approach towards Southern Africa and especially the issues of apartheid and South West Africa. It was hoped that such an approach would help to foster understanding of the White House position and moderate criticism of American decisions and policies.²¹

The issuance of NSAM 295 offers a clear demonstration of the increasingly tense relationship between Washington and Pretoria as early as April 1964. Indeed, it was significant that the only opposition to the measures contained in the NSAM stemmed from the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) who wished to continue the sale of arms and other military equipment to Pretoria on strategic grounds. Even this opposition, as noted by National Security Adviser Bundy, was merely stated as a note for the record, as the JCS were well aware that their position had already been overruled.²²

In December 1963, five months before the issuance of NSAM 295, a “minor diplomatic war” had almost broken out over the question of a transit visa for a State Department official. The official in question, Ulrich Haynes, was a young African-American who had been appointed a few weeks earlier as the Africa Bureau’s desk officer for South West Africa and the British High Commission Territories. Upon learning that Haynes had been scheduled to visit the American Embassy in Pretoria and would then travel through South Africa to the so

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid; Department of State Paper, July 30, 1964 FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa; Department of State Paper, July 31, 1965, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. Africa.

²² From Joint Chiefs of Staff to McNamara, April 13, 1964, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa; To President Johnson from Bundy, April 20, 1964, NSAM 295, LBJP, NSF, NSAMs, Box 27, LBJL.

called Hicom Territories the South African Government refused to issue a visa in line with standard diplomatic protocol.²³

The decision of Pretoria, allegedly coming from Prime Minister Verwoerd himself, stemmed not only from the fact that Haynes was an African-American but also a broader objection to the classification of South West Africa as separate from South Africa itself. Under pressure from Secretary of State Rusk, including a threat to cut American representation in Pretoria, South Africa backed down and reluctantly issued Haynes a limited transit visa. Ironically in August 1965, while serving as an NSC staffer, Haynes was erroneously invited to a reception at the South African Embassy. Haynes clearly found the irony amusing and stated that he intended to put in a brief appearance if only to prove the point that “some of my best friends are South Africans, but I wouldn’t want my daughter to....”²⁴

In South Africa itself, the issue of multi-racial receptions at the United States Embassy created further tension between Washington and Pretoria. In 1963, the State Department had instructed Ambassador Joseph Satterthwaite to begin holding multi-racial receptions on Independence Day and other days of national importance. In March 1965, the American decision was criticized by the South African Minister of the Interior Jan de Klerk who stated that “As our representatives in other countries honor customs of those countries...we expect the same courtesy here.” In a private conversation on 5 May, Satterthwaite himself was reprimanded by Foreign Minister Hilgard Muller who informed the ambassador that Pretoria felt very strongly that diplomats should observe the customs of the country in which they were stationed. One month earlier, approximately five thousand, primarily Afrikaner, University of Pretoria students engaged in a mass demonstration decrying the multi-racial diplomatic receptions at the American Embassy.²⁵

Two months later, a related diplomatic confrontation, this time over naval visits, sparked further tension between Pretoria and Washington. On 7 April 1965, Pretoria granted permission for the aircraft carrier, USS Independence, to make a routine refueling and provisioning stop at Cape Town between 28 May and 31 May. The United States Embassy was informed, however, that it would be appreciated if only white American crew members were used for aircraft flights to and from the carrier to make the arrangements for docking the ship. In late April, the State Department, via Satterthwaite, informed Pretoria that Washington would not accept any stipulation of racial segregation among crew members and further stated that if this were made a “condition” then American naval ships would be routed to avoid calls at South African ports.²⁶

In a meeting with Satterthwaite on 5 May, Foreign Minister Muller acknowledged that the “suggestion” was now a “condition” and in the future “where groups of Americans wished to use South African facilities they would be required to observe South African rules”. Muller then directly linked the issue to the multi-racial receptions at the American Embassy stating that since Washington persisted on pursuing its legal right to do what it pleased within its

²³ To Bundy from Brubeck, December 5, 1963, South Africa, 11/63-10/64, Vol. 1, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL and Department of State Memo, May 7, 1965, South Africa, Files of Edward K. Hamilton (hereafter EKHF), NSF, Box 3 LBJL.

²⁴ To Bundy from Brubeck, December 5, 1963, South Africa, 11/63-10/64, Vol. 1, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; From Department of State to Embassy Pretoria, December 13, 1963, South Africa, 11/63-10/64, Vol. 1, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; Department of State Memo, May 7, 1965, South Africa, EKHF, NSF, Box 3, LBJL and To Komer from Haynes, August 31, 1965, 3/1/65-6/15/66, NSF, UHP, Box 1, LBJL.

²⁵ U.S. Ambassador Rebuked by South African Minister, New York Times, March 10, 1965, 3/1/65-6/15/66, NSF, UHP, Box 1, LBJL; To Bundy from Haynes, March 12, 1965, 3/1/65-6/15/66, NSF, UHP, Box 1, LBJL; To Komer from Haynes, April 10, 1965, 3/1/65-6/15/66, NSF, UHP, Box 1, LBJL and State Department Memo, May 7, 1965, South Africa, EKHF, NSF, Box 3, LBJL.

²⁶ To Department of Defense from Embassy Pretoria, April 7, 1966, South Africa, (2 of 2) EKHF, NSF, Box 3, LBJL; Department of State Memo, May 7, 1965, South Africa, (2 of 2) EKHF, NSF, Box 3, LBJL.

diplomatic missions then Pretoria will exercise its rights regarding the use of South African facilities by the American military. The White House was not prepared to submit to this kind of quid pro quo and cancelled the visit of both the USS Independence and a planning docking of the USS Enterprise in November 1965.²⁷

On 25 June 1965, Verwoerd in a speech in De Aar, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the National Party, caused further difficulties for the Johnson administration when he alleged that “SA has told the US that it cannot send non-white scientists to man American tracking stations in this country.” In fact, Verwoerd had never made such a demand and the provisions of the tracking stations agreements contained no such racial clauses. It should be noted, however, that the clauses did state that access was subject to South African immigration laws and regulations which Washington had quietly complied with by not sending African-American officials to represent the United States.²⁸

While Muller swiftly assured Satterthwaite that Pretoria sought no confrontation over the issue the White House was aware, however, that the injection of race into the manning of the tracking stations, however, would potentially jeopardize Afro-Asian diplomatic support for American initiatives at the UN and lead to greater domestic pressure to disengage from the apartheid state. At an inter-agency meeting convened to consider the problem caused by Verwoerd’s speech it was therefore agreed by the State Department, the Department of Defense and NASA to accelerate the development of alternate facilities with the aim of transferring the majority of the installations by June 1966.²⁹

On 19 July 1965, Ambassador Satterthwaite received a request from South African Acting Foreign Minister Dr. Willem C. Naude, that under his own responsibility he should remove three senior staff members at the American Embassy within a timeframe of approximately two months because the South African Government had “lost confidence in them.” In a terse response, Rusk informed Pretoria that Washington had full confidence in the officers and considered the move made by the South African Government to be “unfriendly and unacceptable”. He stated that the decision to declare them persona non grata rested with Pretoria but unless that action was taken they would remain on assignment in South Africa. He further added that the situation created by the South African request has done “serious damage” to relations with the United States.³⁰

In late September, the issue caused a media storm when a remarkably accurate version of events was leaked to the press in South Africa. The Johnson administration, which suspected the South African Government of orchestrating the leak to stir up trouble, issued a statement that “Our officers are continuing in their assignments in South Africa. Any question concerning their acceptability, if such should exist, would be a matter for the South African Government”.

²⁷ From Embassy Pretoria to the State Department, May 5, 1965, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa; Department of State Memo, May 7, 1965, South Africa, EKHf, NSF, Box 3, LBJL and Briefing Paper, July 15, 1965, Space Tracking Stations-General, NSF, CEJF, Box 17, LBJL.

²⁸ From Embassy Pretoria to State Department, June 26, 1965, Space Tracking Stations-General, NSF, CEJF, Box 17, LBJL; State Department Telegram, July 1, 1965, South Africa, 11/64-9/66, Vol. 2, NSF, CF, Box, 78, LBJL; State Department Telegram, July 5, 1965, South Africa, 11/64-9/66, Vol. 2, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL and To President Johnson from Charles E. Johnson, July 13, 1965, 3/1/65-6/15/66, NSF, UHP, Box 1, LBJL.

²⁹ From Embassy Pretoria to State Department, June 26, 1965, Space Tracking Stations-General, NSF, CEJF, Box 17, LBJL; To President Johnson from Philadelphia CORE Chairman Williams, June 28, 1965, South Africa, Gen CO 296, LBJP, Box 71, LBJL; State Department Telegram, July 1, 1965, South Africa, 11/64-9/66, Vol. 2, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; State Department to Embassy Pretoria, July 3, 1965, Space Tracking Stations-General, NSF, CEJF, Box 17, LBJL; To President Johnson from Charles E. Johnson, July 13, 1965, 3/1/65-6/15/66, NSF, UHP, Box 1, LBJL and To Komer from Haynes, July 12 and 14, 1965, 3/1/65-6/15/66, NSF, UHP, Box 1, LBJL.

³⁰ State Department Telegrams, July 28, 29 and 30 1965, South Africa, 11/64-9/66, Vol. 2, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL and From Haynes to Komer, July 29, 1965, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa and State Department Telegram, July 30, 1965, South Africa, 11/64-9/66, Vol. 2, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL.

Verwoerd, however, then chose to cause Washington further trouble by publicly denying that Pretoria ever requested the transfer of the officers.³¹

Following the assassination of Verwoerd on 6 September, 1966, the former Minister of Justice, Balthazar Johannes Vorster, became the new South African leader. As observed by the CIA, Vorster while as dedicated as his predecessor to preserving white rule, also initiated a “foreign policy more pragmatic, imaginative and flexible than that of Verwoerd”. This included a push to normalize relations with black African states and an effort to lessen diplomatic conflicts with foreign powers. In the case of America, however, the issue of naval visits continued to vex relations between Washington and Pretoria.³²

In January 1967, the United States Navy scheduled the aircraft carrier USS Franklin D. Roosevelt to dock at Cape Town in early February on a refuelling stop en route from Vietnam. The South African authorities, apparently under the personal direction of Vorster, went to “unprecedented lengths” allowing flights from the ship without racial conditions and ordering local authorities to handle the shore leave in such way as to avoid any ill-treatment or indignity to any crew member regardless of race. As noted by Thomson, however, the only official multiracial entertainment provided by South Africa was a bus tour of Cape Town and in consultation with the State Department the navy cancelled all shore leave. The USNS Sword Knot, a missile range instrumentation ship approved to dock at Durban in early February, was subsequently diverted to Mombasa.³³

In the aftermath of the USS Roosevelt incident, the Johnson administration decided that despite the clear strategic and tactical advantages to continued usage of South African ports, the potential diplomatic repercussions due to the constant issue of racial restrictions on American personnel dictated an end to naval visits to South Africa. The end of naval port calls demonstrated that for Washington, Pretoria was becoming an increasingly awkward ally. In terms of economic ties, however, the drift of disengagement from the apartheid state would prove harder to manage.³⁴

On 2 August 1963, during the Kennedy era, the United States Ambassador to the UN Adlai Stevenson voted in favour of UNSC Resolution 181, a voluntary total arms embargo on South Africa. Stevenson further stated that from 1964 American corporations and citizens, would no longer be permitted to sell arms and other military equipment to South Africa. The United States, however, reserved the right to “interpret this policy in light of any future requirements for the common defense effort in assuring maintenance of international peace and security” as well continuing to provide dual military-civilian usage items and fulfil existing contracts.³⁵

³¹ To President Johnson from Komer, September 20, 1965, 3/1/65-6/15/66, NSF, UHP, Box 1, LBJL and To President Johnson from Komer, September 20, 1965, 3/1/65-6/15/66, NSF, UHP, Box 1, LBJL.

³² To Rostow from Hamilton, September 6, 1966, South Africa, 11/64-9/66, Vol. 2, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL and CIA Special Report, May 19, 1967, South Africa, 10/66-9/68, Vol. 3, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL.

³³ State Department to Embassy Cape Town, January 4, 1967, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa; State Department to Embassy Cape Town, February 3, 1967, South Africa, 10/66-9/68, Vol. 3, NSF, CF, Box 78 LBJL; From Embassy Cape Town to State Department, February 12, 1967, South Africa, 10/66-9/68, Vol. 3, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; State Department to Embassy Cape Town, February 12, 1967, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa; From Embassy Cape Town to State Department, February 13, 1967, South Africa, 10/66-9/68, Vol. 3, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; State Department to Embassy Cape Town, February 15, 1967, South Africa, 10/66-9/68, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL and Thomson, *U.S. Foreign Policy towards apartheid South Africa*, 52.

³⁴ From Nitze to Vance, March 4, 1967, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa; From Joint Chiefs of Staff to McNamara, April 5, 1967, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa. From Nitze to Katzenbach, October 19, 1967, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa and To Rostow from Saunders, December 3, 1968, South Africa, EKHF, NSF, Box 3 LBJL.

³⁵ To Chairman of Operating Committee from State Department, August 30, 1963, Africa, General, Vol. 1 2/64-6/64, NSF, CF, Africa, Box 76, LBJL; To Rusk from U. A. Johnson, January 21, 1964, Africa, General, Vol. 1 2/64-6/64, NSF, CF, Box 76, LBJL and Memo for President Johnson, South Africa, 11/63-10/64, Vol. 1, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL.

For the Johnson administration the implementation of the UN resolution presented both domestic and international difficulties. While the JCS criticized the arms embargo as compromising American military interests in the region the Departments of Commerce and Treasury also pressed for a loose interpretation of the loopholes due to domestic employment and balance of payments considerations. The problem was exacerbated by a lack of adherence to the UN embargo by a number of other nations, including Western allies. This not only allowed the apartheid state to continue the enlargement and modernization of its armed forces but damaged America economically as Washington's stricter interpretation of the UN resolution allowed other countries to expand their commercial ties with Pretoria.³⁶

The White House, despite these factors mitigating against a strict enforcement of the embargo, nevertheless, adopted a tough stance regarding military sales to Pretoria. In March 1963, the South African Government had expressed an interest in purchasing three Barbel class submarines from the United States. Kennedy, prior to his assassination, remained conflicted on the matter, approving a plan for preliminary discussions with South African officials but indicated that the final decision would be made "in light of the circumstances at the time." Under Johnson, however, the White House took a stronger stance on the issue. In April 1964, NSAM 295, indefinitely postponed any decision regarding the sale of submarines to the South Africa.³⁷

The White House also rejected export licences for Lockheed and Cessna, in the fall of 1964 and February 1966 respectively, to sell P-3A antisubmarine aircraft and civilian marine patrol aircraft to the South African Government. Despite the domestic pressure on Capitol Hill and the Departments' of Commerce, Defense and Treasury favouring the sales the administration was unwilling to risk the global criticism including a "highly emotional Afro-Asian adverse reaction" and also feared opening the administration to vocal criticism from African-Americans and liberals. In the words of NSC staffer Robert Komer, the administration should avoid the "kind of furor which can be raised over such minor issues".³⁸

The White House also took steps to ensure that American manufactured parts were not used by third parties to produce military hardware destined for South Africa. The Johnson administration blocked the sale of British Beagle 206 and French Mystere 20 aircraft to Pretoria

³⁶ Briefing for NSC Standing Group, March 10, 1964, South Africa, 11/63-10/64, Vol. 1, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; From Joint Chiefs of Staff to McNamara, April 13, 1964, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa; From the Joint Chiefs of Staff to McNamara, May 22, 1964, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa; To Bundy from Brubeck, September 23, 1964, South Africa, 11/63-10/64, Vol. 1, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; To Komer from Haynes, March 25, 1965, 3/1/65-6/15/66, NSF, UHP, Box 1, LBJL; CIA Special Report, September 3, 1965, South Africa, 11/64-9/66, Vol. 2, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; CIA Intelligence Memo, June, 1966, South Africa, 11/64-9/66, Vol. 2, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; From Rostow to Katzenbach, December 20, 1967, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa.

³⁷ From State Department to Embassy Pretoria, November 26, 1963, South Africa, 11/63-10/64, Vol. 1, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; From Sloan to U. Johnson, January 25, 1964, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa; Memo for President Johnson, South Africa, 11/63-10/64, Vol. 1, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; Naval Department Telegram from Embassy Pretoria, Africa General, Volume 1, 2/64-6/64, CF, Box 76, LBJL and NSAM No. 295, April 24, 1964, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa and Thomson, *U.S. Foreign Policy towards apartheid South Africa*, 43-44.

³⁸ To Rusk from Hodges, September 16, 1964, South Africa, 11/63-10/64, Vol.1, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; To President Johnson from Senator Kuchel, September 17, 1964, South Africa, 11/63-10/64, Vol. 1, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; To Bundy from Brubeck, September 22 and 23, 1964, South Africa, 11/63-10/64, Vol. 1, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; To Bundy from Wyman, November 18, 1964, South Africa, 11/63-10/64, Vol. 1, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; To McNamara from Bundy, November 30, 1964 South Africa, 11/63-10/64, Vol. 1, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; To Rusk from Senators Carlson and Pearson, February 14, 1966, South Africa, EKHF, NSF, Box 3, LBJL; To Komer from Haynes, February 18, 1966, South Africa, Files of EKHF, NSF, Box 3, LBJL; To Mann from Komer, February 21, 1966, 3/1/65-6/15/66, NSF, UHP, Box 1, LBJL; To Komer from Mann, February 24, 1966, South Africa, EKHF, NSF, Box 3, LBJL and To Komer from Haynes, February 24, 1966, South Africa, EKHF, NSF, Box 3 LBJL.

as the planes contained component parts, including engines, which had been made in the United States. The State Department also warned Rome that if Piaggio Corporation made aircraft were sold to Pretoria then Washington would be obligated to “scrutinize closely” any future export license applications for American made engines and spare parts destined for Italy.³⁹

While the White House adhered to a strict posture on the issue of arms sales, in terms of broader economic ties, Johnson adopted a more cautious and measured approach neither encouraging nor discouraging investment in the apartheid state. Indeed, the burgeoning South African economy provided a high rate of return for American corporations. By December 1964, American investments in South Africa were valued at almost \$500 million. The United States provided nearly 20% of South African imports and purchased 15% of exports from the apartheid state.⁴⁰

In 1964, Washington permitted the delivery of an Allis-Chalmers experimental 20-megawatt reactor to the South African Atomic Energy Commission for the use of civil atomic energy at its research facility at Pelindaba, outside of Pretoria. The White House, although well aware that the transaction would “unquestionably kick up a nice propaganda storm elsewhere about US nuclear cooperation with South Africa” also approved the shipment of fuel rods containing approximately 4.5 kgs of 90% enriched U-235 which were necessary for the initial start up of the reactor. The Johnson administration, however, through the gambit of a continued supply of enriched uranium fuel for the duration of the existing bilateral atomic energy agreement, persuaded Pretoria to accept International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) controls and safeguards over the Pelindaba reactor.⁴¹

To combat criticism among African countries and the UN the Department of State prepared a background paper for distribution to diplomatic missions emphasizing that American cooperation with South Africa in the atomic energy field was subject to full safeguards control to prevent the diversion of equipment and materials to non-peaceful purposes. Verwoerd, however, raised doubts over the real purpose of the South African enrichment program when he stated, during the inauguration ceremony for the reactor, that it was the duty of Pretoria “to consider not only the military uses of the material but also to do all in its power to direct its uses to peaceful purposes.”⁴²

Under the auspices of the Atoms for Peace launched by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Washington and Pretoria had signed a ten year civil atomic energy agreement cooperation agreement in 1957. The agreement was due to expire on 21 August 1967 and the White House was urged by the Atomic Energy Commission and the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy to renew the agreement for a further ten years. The State Department concurred on the basis that

³⁹ From Rusk to Muller, August 26, 1967, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa; From Rostow to Katzenbach, December 20, 1967, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa and From the State Department to Embassy London, January 17, 1968, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa.

⁴⁰ International Commerce, Department of Commerce Weekly, February 24, 1964, Africa, General, Vol. 2 7/64-6/65, NSF, CF, Box 76, LBJL; NSAM No. 295, April 24, 1964, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa; Status Report of NSAM No. 295, South Africa, 11/63-10/64, Vol. 1, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; CIA Intelligence Memo, June, 1966, South Africa, 11/64-9/66, Vol. 2, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL and Thomson, *U.S. Foreign Policy towards apartheid South Africa*, 57.

⁴¹ To Bundy from Brubeck, August 17, 1964, South Africa, 11/63-10/64, Vol. 1, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; To Bundy from C. Johnson, December 3, 1964, NUCLEAR-South African Research Reactor, NSF, CEJF, Box 17, LBJL; To Harriman from Kretzmann, December 14, 1964, NUCLEAR-South African Research Reactor, NSF, CEJF, Box 17, LBJL; From C. Johnson to Bundy, December 23, 1964, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa; State Department to Embassy Pretoria, December 24, 1964, NUCLEAR-South African Research Reactor, NSF, CEJF, Box 17, LBJL and State Department from Embassy Pretoria, January 7, 1965, NUCLEAR-South African Research Reactor, NSF, CEJF, Box 17, LBJL.

⁴² State Department Telegram, February 10, 1965, South Africa, 11/64-9/66, Vol. 2, NSF CF, Box 78, LBJL and Jeffrey Richelson, *Spying on the Bomb: American Nuclear Intelligence from Nazi Germany to Iran and North Korea* (New York, 2006) 243.

it would not only grant continued access to South African uranium reserves, which comprised nearly 30% of free world uranium, but also permit the continuation of IAEA safeguards over Pretoria's nuclear research program. The White House, swayed by these arguments, authorized an amendment extending the agreement until 21 August 1977.⁴³

In April 1968, Johnson approved a negotiated amendment to the Air Transport Services Agreement of 1947 between the United States and South Africa. The amendment provided two routes to the United States for South Africa airlines and also expanded the permissible routes to South Africa for American air carriers. While the White House was cognizant that this could lead to potential criticism from black African states and at the UN, the State Department advised that the "legal and practical position" under the 1947 agreement entitled South Africa to a route or routes to the United States. As pointed out by the President's Special Assistant Walt Rostow, South African airlines already flew routes to a number of Western countries and the agreement was "very good economic bargain" for the the United States regardless of the political repercussions.⁴⁴

The issues of Rhodesia and South West Africa, however, caused further tension in the already fraught relationship between Washington and Pretoria. On 11 November 1965, the Rhodesian Government led by Prime Minister Ian Douglas Smith, formally signed a UDI from the United Kingdom. The decision by Salisbury was stimulated by a mix of factors including anti-communism but most significantly the determination of the white community to retain their power and privilege in an "independent" Rhodesia. Globally, the Rhodesian decision was met with condemnation and hostility especially at the UN.⁴⁵

In Pretoria, however, the National Party government adopted a broadly supportive stance towards in its relations with Rhodesia. Smith enjoyed widespread support among the white South African electorate and Pretoria viewed Salisbury as an integral part of its military "cordon sanitaire", a buffer between black-ruled Africa and the apartheid state itself. Verwoerd, therefore, while offering no overt declaration of support or diplomatic recognition of Rhodesia, openly refused to commit to any form of embargoes or sanctions against Salisbury. Rhodesian dependence on South Africa was not lost on the Smith government. In February 1966, the Rhodesian Ministry of Defence observed that "South Africa remains this country's lifeline with the outside world and consequently our main hope of survival."⁴⁶

⁴³ Department of State from Embassy Pretoria, December 26, 1964, NUCLEAR-South African Research Reactor, NSF, CEJF, Box 17, LBJL; To Rostow from Read, July 5, 1967, Africa, General, Vol. 4 6/66-1/69, NSF, CF, Box 77, LBJL; To President Johnson from Rostow, July 10, 1967, Africa, General, Vol. 4 6/66-1/69, NSF, CF, Box 77, LBJL; To Rusk from Rostow, July 11, 1967, Africa, General, Vol. 4 6/66-1/69, NSF, CF, Box 77, LBJL; To President Johnson from Dr. Seaborg, July 12, 1967, NUCLEAR-Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy, NSF, CEJF, Box 47, LBJL and Amendment to the Atomic Energy Agreement between the U.S. and South Africa, 1967, NUCLEAR-Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy, NSF, CEJF, Box 47, LBJL.

⁴⁴ To President Johnson from Katzenbach, March 4, 1968, South Africa, 10/66-9/68, Vol. 3, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; From Rostow to President Johnson, April 19, 1968, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa and Docket 20054, U.S. Civil Aeronautics Board, October 2, 1968, LBJP, Ex CA 7/Puerto Rico-U.S., Box 15, LBJL.

⁴⁵ From Salisbury to Commonwealth Relations Office (hereafter CRO), No.1707, November 11, 1965, PREM, 13/545, The National Archives, London (hereafter TNA); UNSC Resolution 232, as attachment to letter to President Johnson from Rostow, December 31, 1968, "Rhodesia, Vol. 2", NSF, Box 97, LBJL and UNSC Resolution 253, as attachment to letter to President Johnson from Rostow, December 31, 1968; "Rhodesia, Vol. 2", NSF, Box 97, LBJL; Donal Lowry "The impact of anti-communism on white Rhodesian political culture," in Sue Onslow, ed., *Cold War in Southern Africa. White power black liberation*, (London: 2012), 90 and 97-101; Ian Smith, *Bitter Harvest: Zimbabwe and the Aftermath of its Independence*, (London: 2008) 107-108 and Carl Watts, *Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence: An International History*, (New York: 2012), 39.

⁴⁶ To State Department from Embassy Cape Town, June 24, 1964, South Africa, Vol. 1 11/63-10/64, LBJP, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; RZSR, February 18, 1966, Rhodesia, Vol. 2, CF, NSF, Box 97, LBJL; CIA Intelligence Memo, August 30, 1966, South Africa, NSF, CF, Box 79, LBJL; From Hamilton to Rostow,

In Washington, the Johnson administration was well aware of the potentially dangerous repercussions of the Rhodesian UDI including the possibility of a broader racial confrontation in Southern Africa providing further opportunities for greater communist involvement in the region. Johnson therefore sought to assist London in seeking a “quick kill” by bringing Salisbury to its knees through trade blockades and sanctions. The White House, however, was not prepared to support any actions that extended sanctions to include South Africa in the event that Pretoria came to the assistance of its northern neighbour as such steps could lead to a serious confrontation with the apartheid state itself to the detriment of broader Western geopolitical interests.⁴⁷

By the early spring of 1966, it was clear that British hopes of a “quick kill” would fail to materialize. This was primarily due to the growing support that Salisbury had received from her de facto ally south of the Limpopo. Notably, Pretoria openly refused to abide by the petroleum embargo on Rhodesia. In Salisbury, American Consul Stephen Gebelt observed that as oil from South Africa continued to breach the embargo in ever spiralling amounts “this critical weapon in British hands becomes badly blunted.”⁴⁸

While the White House viewed these developments with great concern, the Johnson administration wished to avoid an overt clash with Pretoria especially the possible imposition of Chapter 7 measures at the UN which would have determined the situation a threat to world peace. In March, American representatives in South Africa informally approached the National Party government and simply expressed grave concerns over the violation of the oil embargo. One month later, at the UN, Washington voted in favour of Resolution 221 which authorized London to use force to prevent any vessels carrying shipments of oil destined for Rhodesia from reaching the Mozambican port of Beira. The resolution took no action, however, regarding South African oil imports.⁴⁹

For the duration of the Johnson era Washington continued to support London and maintained a policy of diplomatic hostility towards Salisbury. In December 1966 and May 1968, the White House supported UN resolutions which respectively imposed selective mandatory sanctions and a comprehensive trade embargo on Rhodesia. The administration, however, refused to countenance enforcement actions against South Africa for any violation of sanctions and Pretoria continued to openly trade with Salisbury. Indeed grateful Rhodesians frequently displayed car stickers reading “*Dankie Suid Africa*” and occasionally the more cynical “*Dankie Suid Afrika, plus 10 per cent*”.⁵⁰

November 14, 1966, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa and Ministry of Defence Memo, February 12, 1966, Cabinet Memoranda 1966 42-108, Box 2006 A, Rhodesia-Zimbabwe Papers (hereafter RZP), Cory Library (hereafter CL) and John Daniel “Racism, the Cold War and South Africa’s regional security strategies. 1948-1990,” in Onslow, *Cold War in Southern Africa*, 37.

⁴⁷ From State Department to ConGen Salisbury, September 29, 1965, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa; From Komer to President Johnson, October 4, 1965, FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXIV, Africa; CIA NIE, October 13, 1965, NSF, Box 8, LBJL; From Rusk to Prime Minister Wilson, October 23, 1965, PREM 13/542, TNA and To President Johnson from Komer, October 25, 1965, UHF, NSF, Box 1, LBJL.

⁴⁸ RZSR, January 26-27, 1966, Rhodesia, Vol. 1, CF, NSF, Box 97, LBJL; To Rusk from ConGen Salisbury, February 11, 1966, Rhodesia, Vol. 2, CF, NSF, Box 97, LBJL; RZSRs February 16, 17, 25 and March 2, 1966 Rhodesia, Vol. 2, CF, NSF, Box 97, LBJL and CIA Intelligence Memo, April, 1966, Department of State Vol. 4, Agency File, NSF, Box 60, LBJL.

⁴⁹ From Embassy Cape Town to Foreign Office, February 15, 1966, PREM 13/1137, TNA; To President Johnson from Komer, February 17, 1966, Rhodesia, Vol. 2, CF, NSF, Box 97, LBJL; RZSRs March 11 and 15 1966, Rhodesia, Vol. 2, CF, NSF, Box 97, LBJL; Cabinet Briefing, March 18, 1966, Cabinet Memoranda 1966 42-108, Box 2006 A, RZP, CL; UNSC Resolution 221, April 9, 1966, PREM 13/1113, TNA; To Rhodesian Cabinet from Accredited Diplomatic Representative in South Africa, April 26, 1966, Cabinet Memoranda 1966 109-224, Box 2006 A, RZP, CL; To Rostow from Haynes, April, 1966, Rhodesia, Vol. 2, CF, NSF, Box 97, LBJL; CIA Intelligence Memo, April, 1966, Department of State Vol. 4, Agency File, NSF, Box 60, LBJL.

⁵⁰ CIA Intelligence Memo, December 9, 1966, Rhodesia, Vol. 2, NSF, Box 97, LBJL; To President Johnson from Rostow, December, 1966, Federation of Rhodesia-Nyasaland, CF, WHCF, Box 11, LBJL; UNSC

The issue of South West Africa also led to friction in the relationship between Washington and Pretoria. As observed by the CIA, South West Africa, a large primarily arid expanse with a population of under six hundred thousand (approximately half a million blacks and eight-five thousand whites) was an unlikely arena for a high stakes diplomatic clash. South African de facto administrative control of the territory, however, led to an international confrontation with potentially troubling ramifications for the United States.⁵¹

In 1920 Pretoria had been granted a League of Nations mandate to administer South West Africa, a former German colony, in the aftermath of World War One. Following the dissolution of the League of Nations and creation of the UN South Africa had refused submit the territory to a UN trusteeship or abide by a subsequent ICJ advisory opinion that it should submit reports to the UN. Pretoria administered the territory as a de facto fifth province including the expansion of apartheid racial policies into South West Africa.⁵²

On 4 November 1960, following a resolution of the Conference of Independent African States, Ethiopia and Liberia instituted proceedings before the ICJ alleging South Africa non-compliance with its international legal obligations under the Mandate Agreement, the Covenant of the League of Nations and the UN Charter, notably introducing apartheid and refusing to recognize UN supervisory responsibility for the territory. Notably the case did not include the replacement of South Africa as the mandatory power or ask the ICJ to consider independence for the territory.⁵³

In the view of the CIA, Pretoria's response to these complaints was "typically Afrikaner". A blend of high minded concern for the legal position, interpreted as the mandate survived as an institution but Pretoria's contractual obligations ended because of the dissolution of the League, combined with the usual rigid defence of apartheid. Indeed in 1962, despite the growing international pressure, Pretoria established the 'Commission of Enquiry into South West Africa Affairs', also known as the Odendaal Commission after its head Frans Hendrik Odendaal. In 1964, the commission, described as "wise men recommending wise procedures" by the South African Ambassador Naude, recommended a policy of economic development but also a greater extension of apartheid into South West Africa including the creation of "homelands" for the black population.⁵⁴

The Johnson administration was concerned about the implications of the escalating diplomatic conflict over South West Africa. An ICJ ruling against South Africa and the expectation that Pretoria would reject such a ruling would have placed Washington on a diplomatic collision course with South Africa, not over apartheid but instead the authority of the ICJ. In such circumstances, the White House was well aware that American global leadership and position at the UN would be very much dependent on the stance taken by

Resolution 232, December 16, 1966, as attachment to letter to President Johnson from Rostow, Rhodesia, Vol. 2, December 31, 1968, NSF, Box 97, LBJL; Note from Cabinet Secretary, December 12, 1967, Cabinet Memoranda 1967 193-235, Box 2/007 A, RZP, CL; UNSC Resolution 253, as attachment to letter to President Johnson from Rostow, December 31, 1968, Rhodesia, Vol. 2, NSF, Box 97, LBJL; CIA Intelligence Memo, June, 1968, Rhodesia, Vol. 2, NSF, Box 97, LBJL and Robert Good, *UDI: The International Politics of the Rhodesian Rebellion*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973) 207-218.

⁵¹ CIA NIE, June 2, 1966, 60/70 Africa, LBJP, NSF, Box 8 LBJL.

⁵² CIA NIE, January 31, 1949, Central Intelligence Reports, Box 215, PSF, HSTP, TL; Briefing for NSC Standing Group, March 10, 1964, Africa, General, Vol. 1 2/64-6/64, NSF, CF, Box 76, LBJL and CIA NIE, June 2, 1966, 60/70 Africa, LBJP, NSF, Box 8, LBJL.

⁵³ CIA NIE, June 2, 1966, 60/70 Africa, LBJP, NSF, Box 8, LBJL and Chapter 5 Section C, D and E, DSAH, Vol. 1, Box 2, LBJL.

⁵⁴ MemCon, March 27, 1964, South Africa, 11/63-10/64, Vol. 1, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; CIA NIE, June 2, 1966, 60/70 Africa, LBJP, NSF, Box 8, LBJL and Chapter 5 Section C, D and E, DSAH, Vol. 1, Box 2 LBJL.

Washington. Furthermore, such a situation would produce fertile opportunities for Moscow and Peking to expand their influence in black Africa.⁵⁵

Washington, however, was cognizant it possessed little leverage over Pretoria and was unwilling to risk a economic or military confrontation with South Africa over the issue. The South African economy was increasingly robust and self-sufficient and in the view of CIA Director Richard Helms it was “one of the least vulnerable countries in the world to economic sanctions”. The White House was further aware that any economic sanctions placed on Pretoria would have major commercial and strategic repercussions both for the United States and the broader Western alliance. Military action in support of an ICJ judgement or UN resolution, including the potential invasion and occupation of South West Africa was dismissed as “extreme” and “unrealistic”.⁵⁶

The Johnson administration, placed in an unenviable position sought to stall confrontation until after the ICJ judgement. A key element in avoiding any potential escalation was to persuade Pretoria to defer implementation on the controversial Odendaal Report. In conjunction with London, which had its own economic concerns over a potential confrontation with Pretoria, Washington made representations, both through Ambassador Satterthwaite and also to South African Ambassador Naude, advising the South African Government to delay carrying out the Odendaal proposals. On 29 April 1964, as a result of the bilateral representations, Pretoria issued a White Paper announcing the deferral of the political provisions of the Odendaal Report.⁵⁷

On July 18, 1966, the ICJ rendered judgement on the case. While, as observed by the CIA, the legally minded South African Government had built a “voluminous and well-prepared case” and made a “far abler presentation” than the plaintiffs, it was, nonetheless, expected by Washington that the ICJ ruling would go against Pretoria. The ICJ, however, in a surprising ruling judged that Ethiopia and Liberia lacked the legal standing to bring their case on South West Africa. The ruling delighted Pretoria which felt vindicated by the decision but caused outrage among black African governments who indignantly critiqued the fact that it took the

⁵⁵ Briefing for NSC Standing Group, March 10, 1964, Africa, General, Vol. 1, 2/64-6/64, NSF, CF, Box 76, LBJL; To President Johnson from Brubeck, June 2, 1964, Africa, General, Vol. 1 2/64-6/64, NSF, CF, Box 76, LBJL; CIA Special Report, September 3, 1965, South Africa, 11/64-9/66, Vol. 2, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; CIA NIE, June 2, 1966, 60/70 Africa, LBJP, NSF, Box 8, LBJL and To President Johnson from Hamilton, June 22, 1966, 561st NSC MTG – 7/14/66 – Southwest Africa, Papers of Bromley K. Smith (hereafter BKSP), Box 31, LBJL.

⁵⁶ Briefing for NSC Standing Group, March 10, 1964, Africa, General, Vol. 1, 2/64-6/64, NSF, CF, Box 76, LBJL; CIA Special Report, September 3, 1965, South Africa, 11/64-9/66, Vol. 2, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; CIA NIE, June 2, 1966, 60/70, LBJP, NSF, Box 8, LBJL; To President Johnson from Hamilton, June 22, 1966, 561st NSC MTG – 7/14/66 – Southwest Africa, BKSP, Box 31, LBJL; Summary Notes of 561st NSC Meeting July 14, 1966, NSC Meetings Vol. 3, Tab 43, 7/14/66, Southwest Africa, NSF, NSC Meetings File, Box 2, LBJL and CIA NIE, December 1, 1966, 60/70 Africa, LBJP, NSF, Box 8, LBJL.

⁵⁷ Briefing for NSC Standing Group, March 10, 1964, Africa, General, Vol. 1 2/64-6/64, NSF, CF, Africa, Box 76, LBJL; From Brubeck to Bundy, March 18, 1964, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa; From Embassy South Africa to State Department, March 19, 1964, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa; MemCon, April 10, 1964, South Africa, 11/63-10/64, Vol. 1, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; From Harriman to Mennen Williams, May 13, 1964, South Africa, 11/63-10/64, Vol. 1, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; To President Johnson from Brubeck, July 29, 1964, South Africa, 11/63-10/64, Vol. 1, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; CIA Intelligence Memo, June, 1966, South Africa, 11/64-9/66, Vol. 2, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; CIA Intelligence Memo, August 30, 1966, South Africa, NSF, CF, Box 79, LBJL and Chapter 5: Section C, D and E, Papers of LBJ, DSAH, Vol. 1, Box 2, LBJL.

ICJ five and a half years to disqualify the applicants on what they considered to be a technicality.⁵⁸

In an effort to demonstrate its solidarity with the UN and mollify the resentment in black ruled Africa, the Department of State issued a statement that the ICJ judgment in no way diminished the authoritativeness of the previous ICJ advisory opinions which had established the UN supervisory authority for South West Africa and South Africa's obligations to "promote to the utmost the material and moral well-being and the social progress of the inhabitants." Pretoria, predictably, expressed irritation at the position adopted by Washington and on August 17 Ambassador Harold Taswell delivered an aide-memoire to to Acting Secretary of State George Ball accusing the United States of "interference" in South African affairs.⁵⁹

At the UN, Washington helped to draft and voted for UNGA Resolution 2145 (XXI) which was adopted on 27 October 1966. The resolution terminated the mandate and placed South West Africa under the direct responsibility of the UN. Following the South African decision to put on trial thirty seven South West African citizens, under a post facto law termed the Terrorism Act, the United States supported UNSC Resolutions 245 and 246, passed respectively in January and March 1968 condemning the South African action. Washington considered the trial to be illegal due to the Terrorism Act violating elementary legal and human rights and because UNGA Resolution 2145 (XXI) had deprived Pretoria of the right to legislate for South West Africa.⁶⁰

The White House, however, took a cautious approach at the UN for any measures that appeared to be either unenforceable or could precipitate an economic or military conflict with South Africa. In May 1967, United States opposed UNGA Resolution 2248 which set up a Council for South West Africa to take over the administration of the territory, as it was deemed unenforceable, and did not support the subsequent UNGA Resolution 2325 which requested the UNSC to take the requisite measures to allow Council to function. Pretoria, aware that the criticism at the UN while an irritant did not pose a direct threat to its control over the territory passed legislation in May 1968, despite a written protest from Washington, which further entrenched apartheid in South West Africa through the establishment of separate ethnic homelands.⁶¹

On 31 March 1968, President Johnson announced that he would not seek the nomination of the Democratic Party for another term as president. As the Johnson era drew to a close the situation in Southern Africa remained fraught as tensions escalated between the white minority governments and black ruled Africa. In South Africa itself, the National Party government held steadfastly to its apartheid policy, continued to back the Smith government in Salisbury and refused to relinquish its hold over South West Africa.

⁵⁸ Summary Notes of the 561st Meeting of the NSC, July 14, 1966, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa; CIA Special Report, September 3, 1965, South Africa, 11/64-9/66, Vol. 2, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; CIA Special Report, March 25, 1966, South Africa, 11/64-9/66, Vol. 2, NSF, CF, Box 78, LBJL; CIA Intelligence Memo, August 30, 1966, South Africa, NSF, CF, Box 79, LBJL and Cabinet Meeting Agenda, July 26, 1966, Cabinet Meeting, 7/26/66, LBJP, Cabinet Papers, Box 6, LBJL.

⁵⁹ From State Department to Embassy South Africa, August 17, 1966, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa and Chapter 5: Section C, D and E, Papers of LBJ, DSAH, Vol. I, Box 2, LBJL.

⁶⁰ CIA NIE, December 1, 1966, 60/70 Africa, LBJP, NSF, Box 8, LBJL; From McNaughton to McNamara, January 18, 1967, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa; National Policy Paper Southern Africa, November 20, 1968, South Africa, EKHF, NSF, Box 3 LBJL and Chapter 5: Section C, D and E, Papers of LBJ, DSAH, Vol. I, Box 2, LBJL.

⁶¹ From the State Department to Embassy South Africa, March 28, 1968, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa; From the State Department to Embassy South Africa, April 11, 1968, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa; From the State Department to Embassy Greece, April 17, 1968, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Africa; National Policy Paper Southern Africa, November 20, 1968, South Africa, EKHF, NSF, Box 3 LBJL and Chapter 5: Section C, D and E, Papers of LBJ, DSAH, Vol. I, Box 2, LBJL.

The relationship between Pretoria and Washington had become a troublesome concern for the White House on both ideological and geopolitical grounds. Johnson himself opposed white supremacy for moral reasons and as the United States moved to redress the racism and racial inequalities in its own society the contrast with the direction of the apartheid state became even starker. In the context of the Cold War, given the increasing diplomatic and economic importance of the newly independent black African states and their implacable hostility towards continued white minority rule in Southern Africa, Washington could garner geostrategic benefit by adopting a pragmatic approach of distancing itself from Pretoria and placing the United States firmly behind the principles of majority rule and racial equality.

The increasingly prickly diplomatic relationship between the two nations based on their differing racial trajectories further heightened the Johnson administration's desire to dissociate itself from the apartheid state. The White House desire for greater disengagement from Pretoria was strongly highlighted by NSAM 295 of April 1964, the tight interpretation of the UN arms embargo and the unwillingness of Washington to back down when apartheid legislation directly affected American government personnel.

Close strategic and commercial ties, however, including the need maintain access to South African mineral resources hindered Washington's efforts to take the necessary steps leading to a tangible disassociation from Pretoria. The renewal of the Atoms for Peace Agreement in 1967 and amending of Air Transport Services Agreement granting South African airlines routes to the United States combined along with the growing American investment in South Africa were demonstrative of the difficulty, perhaps even an unwillingness, to entirely distance itself from the lucrative markets and vehement anti-communism of apartheid South Africa during the 1960s.

The aim of the White House to avoid an economic or military confrontation with Pretoria also hindered Washington's efforts to adopt a strong stance on the issues of Rhodesia and South West Africa. While Washington criticized Pretoria, both publicly and privately, for its support of the Rhodesian regime and the extension of apartheid into South West Africa and supported limited acts to sanction South Africa, in neither case was the Johnson administration prepared to consider more robust measures that could have led caused an economic or military clash with Pretoria. Overall, during the Johnson era, while the White House took limited actions to show its disapproval of and disassociation from South Africa, nevertheless, it is fair to say that the United States had indeed not been "too horrible" to the practitioners of apartheid.

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