

THE BIRTH AND DEATH OF A TAR BABY: HENRY KISSINGER AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. THE FATHERS OF A TAR BABY: RICHARD NIXON AND HENRY KISSINGER.....	11
3. THE “MIDDLE OF THE ROAD” IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND THE ORIGINS OF THE ANGOLAN CIVIL WAR.....	44
4. KISSINGER VERSUS THE AFRICAN BUREAU.....	71
5. CONCLUSION.....	122
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	127

INTRODUCTION

Dave Tomkins was one of hundreds of mercenaries paid to fight as part of the United States' operation IAFEATURE in Angola in 1975. Tomkins, a former burglar or "professional thief" worked in a group of mostly Portuguese and Cypriot mercenaries. Much like the small committee of officials in Washington that approved operation IAFEATURE, Tomkins admittedly knew little about Africa and even less about Angola. He claimed that before arriving he knew nothing, "apart from the fact that it [Angola] was having a civil war." When later assessing the failed operation, he reflected, "I mean, we had no chance, whatsoever." Even worse, Tomkins explained, "It was a dirty war." He goes on:

We did kill when we had no particular reason to. We tortured to achieve information that they probably didn't have...these were probably just local civilians.

There was an air of lawlessness there – we were just a loose band of bandits with a very dangerous leader and a few associates, and we just went along for the ride.¹

Tomkins asserted that all mercenaries knew their money was coming from the United States, and more specifically, from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Recruiters told him that it was American money with which he was being paid. In his final assessment, Tomkins stated that the operation was "a complete and utter waste of time and life." He continued:

"Too little, too late. And the wrong people, anyway. We would not have been able to spot a communist at 100 yards, unless they had a red star on and a Russian uniform."²

¹ Dave Tomkins, interview by *Cnn.com*, "Cold War: Good Guys, Bad Guys," Episode 17, *Cnn.com*.

² *Ibid.*

The architect of the disastrous operation IAFEATURE was none other than the Nobel Prize winning, 1972 TIME co-“Person of the Year,” Henry Kissinger. In 1975, however, the so-called Doctor of Diplomacy prescribed the wrong remedy. Against the repeated warnings from regional experts in the African Bureau and the CIA, the advice of numerous African leaders, and ultimately against the wishes of Congress, Kissinger committed the United States to a futile and disastrous operation that cost the lives of thousands of Angolans and damaged American relations with black African nations in the region.

Given the relationship between Kissinger and State Department officials in the African Bureau (AF), however, it is not surprising that he gave little credence to their claim that the civil war in Angola was a regional issue that was best treated as such. Throughout his tenure in Washington, Kissinger referred to officials in the AF as “bleeding hearts,” “anti-white,” and “obsessively liberal.”³ In the short period of time from 1974-1976, Kissinger shuffled three different assistant secretaries in and out of the AF; Donald Easum was the first, followed by Nathaniel Davis in December 1974 and William Schaufele in August 1975. The continued changes led Easum to say that the shuffling of assistant secretaries “showed...a demeaning kind of attitude toward Africa.”⁴

Kissinger did, in fact, exhibit a demeaning attitude toward Africa and black Africans, so it is no surprise that he ignored the argument of several African leaders that the Angolan civil war was a North/South struggle for black liberation. Until the Angolan

³ Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, 24 September 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, E-5

⁴ Donald B. Easum, interview by Arthur Day, 17 January 1990, *The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project*.

Civil War in 1975, Kissinger constantly trivialized the region, disdaining anyone who saw it as a unique region that required evaluation on its own merits. To Kissinger, African nations were only important in the role they could play in the larger Cold War struggle between the United States and the Soviet bloc. Prior to 1975, the secretary admittedly had no Africa policy. “How can I have an African policy when there are 51 countries out there?” he once quipped.⁵ According to Kissinger, any nationalist struggle against a Western power or ally, such as Portugal or South Africa, must be communist inspired and thus part of the East/West global battle of the Cold War.

How had Kissinger had fallen so far from his 1972 stature as the man whose foreign policy had, according to TIME, “changed the world?” Kissinger had helped negotiate a settlement to end the war in Vietnam, co-orchestrated the policy of détente and the diplomatic opening in China with President Nixon, and had won wide acclaim for his shuttle diplomacy in the Middle East. By 1975, however, he had led the US into a foreign policy disaster that dealt a heavy blow to relations with numerous African nations, not to mention the hundreds of thousands of Angolan lives that would be lost over the 25 year long civil war. What was it about Angola that led the secretary to embark on such a reckless endeavor? Why did a policy based on *realpolitik* and balance of power not work for its master architect? How did the doctor of diplomacy come to believe that employing white Portuguese mercenaries alongside the forces of the South African apartheid regime would be a successful plan for supporting black nationalist movements in sub-Saharan Africa?

Looking at the historiography of Henry Kissinger and his foreign policy toward Third World nations sheds some light on why the secretary created such a faulty plan

⁵ Easum.

against the better advice of so many officials. Historians such as Robert McMahon, Mark Atwood Lawrence, and Jussi Hanhimaki have added important analyses in regards to how Kissinger and Nixon reacted to regional crises in nations like Chile, India, Pakistan, and East Timor.⁶ The prevailing argument amongst these analyses is that Kissinger wrongly applied a Cold War, US versus the Soviets, approach to issues that were much more complicated and regionally based. Additionally, in these analyses, it is noted that Kissinger displayed a blatant disregard for issues of human rights and the welfare and lives of those civilian populations affected. The secretary believed there was only one game in town, and that was the Cold War. According to this logic, there were no regional issues – if there was instability in the Third World that went against US interests, there must be Soviets hiding under some rock, somewhere.

While historians have helped elucidate Kissinger’s pattern of failure in the Third World, and his tenuous relationship with the State Department at large, discussions about the relationship between Kissinger and regional bureaus of the State Department never seem to veer from pitting the big picture, geopolitical-thinking Kissinger and his realpolitik against the liberal, Wilsonian idealists of the State Department. Kissinger always stuck to the global perspective while the AF favored the regional. According to this logic, it was merely a matter of rational perspectives and priorities.

But what if the analysis is taken further, to interrogate *why* Kissinger believed the Third World to merely be a playground for the global powers of the Cold War? Why was

⁶ Robert J. McMahon, “The Danger of Geopolitical Fantasies: Nixon, Kissinger, and the South Asia Crisis of 1971,” in *Nixon in the World: American Foreign Relations, 1969-1977*, eds. Fredrik Logevall and Andrew Preston (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 249-268.

Mark Atwood Lawrence, “History From Below: The United States and Latin America in the Nixon Years,” in *Nixon in the World*, 269-288.

Jussi Hanhimaki, *The Flawed Architect: Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

the *realpolitik* of 19th century statesmen like Klemens von Metternich and Otto von Bismarck so appealing to a diplomat in 20th century America? Why did Kissinger refuse to grant legitimacy to the notion that those in the Third World were playing their own game (not the East-West, zero-sum chess match)? It was this disdain that led the secretary to infamously state, “Nothing important can come from the South [southern hemisphere]. History has never been produced in the South. The axis of history starts in Moscow, goes to Bonn, crosses over to Washington and then goes to Tokyo. What happens in the South is of no importance.”⁷

Carol Anderson aptly noted in “The Cold War in the Atlantic World” that after World War II, everything changed. White supremacy and colonialism lost their respectability and acceptability in the new era of internationalism and the United Nations. For the peoples of the Third World, the end of World War II marked the beginning of a war for liberation. Yet, for Washington, the new and only legitimate game in town was the Cold War, a “winner-take-all” ideological duel that made the liberation of nations either “a stunning triumph or humiliating defeat for either communism or capitalism.”⁸ Henry Kissinger was an apostle of such a post-World War II outlook. But the question that begs an answer is why the secretary was unable to break from such anachronistic conclusions even by the mid 1970s?

The analysis presented in this thesis goes beyond the traditional discussion of Henry Kissinger and foreign policy vis a vis *realpolitik*, spheres of influence, balance of power, etc. Although his undying adherence to these philosophical beliefs certainly guided much of his decision-making, Kissinger’s antagonistic interactions with the

⁷ Hanhimaki, *The Flawed Architect*, 101.

⁸ Carol Anderson, “The Cold War in the Atlantic World,” in *The Atlantic World, 1450-2000*, eds. Toyin Falola and Kevin D. Roberts (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 294-314.

African Bureau and his reckless adherence to operation IAFEATURE require additional considerations. Although members of the AF may have been more idealistic than the secretary, they tried to speak his language in the case of Angola, pointing out pragmatic issues that Kissinger would have considered had they been presented in one of the more “important,” traditional theatres of the Cold War, such as Europe or the Middle East.

The issue of race must therefore be added into the equation, in order to broaden our understanding of Henry Kissinger and his foreign policy ideology. While many historians have focused squarely on Nixon in describing the ways in which racism or belief in a racial hierarchy informed foreign policy toward Africa, it is imperative to understand that National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger was with him every step of the way, if not sometimes a step ahead. While Kissinger advocated rational, pragmatic, and amoral foreign policy discussions, he did not live in a vacuum. He was as prone as any human to allow personal feuds, favoritism, and ideological beliefs to influence his view of the world and resulting decisions. In regard to foreign policy toward southern Africa, this meant disregarding advice from “anti-white liberals” in the African Bureau. It also meant ignoring the interests of the black African majorities. Similarly, it meant sympathy toward the plight of white minority regimes.

By analyzing the relationship between Kissinger and the AF during the Angolan civil war, it becomes clear that the secretary’s decisions *were* influenced by cultural and racial convictions. For instance, Kissinger viewed the world in terms of a racial hierarchy – one that relegated black Africans to the lowest rung. Because of this assumption, Kissinger believed it best to let paternal white rulers, such as Portugal and South Africa, remain in power. The “uncivilized” black masses, he believed, would

otherwise have been prone to instability and violence—a breeding ground for Soviet inroads. This belief led to the infamous “tar baby” policy of National Security Study Memorandum 39.⁹ Additionally, anyone who held opposing views about sub-Saharan Africa was irrational and could not be trusted. This principle applied to assistant secretaries of State, CIA officers, Senators—anyone. While the AF argued that the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) sought Soviet aid out of necessity (not because they were a Soviet satellite), Kissinger pressed ahead with operation IAFEATURE in Angola, leaving a wake of frustrated regional experts wondering how the U.S. ended up paying white Portuguese mercenaries to fight in a black, Portuguese-Africa liberation struggle. Due to his racial convictions, Kissinger could not accept the fact that black Africans were mobilizing for liberation from imperial powers and white minority regimes. If the U.S. refused to help them do so, they would ask the Cubans or the Soviets for arms. But for Kissinger, if there was instability in Africa, a grand Soviet plot was the only acceptable explanation. While race has been given impetus in understanding U.S.-Africa policy from the 1940s to 1960s, historians have yet to admit that perhaps the master of *realpolitik* was at least equally influenced by race relations in the United States and racial convictions he held personally.

Ideology, according to Michael Hunt, is “an interrelated set of convictions or assumptions that reduces the complexities of a particular slice of reality to easily comprehensible terms and suggests appropriate ways of dealing with that reality.”¹⁰ In *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, Hunt advocates investigating “private musings” and

⁹ NSSM 39 was a highly controversial foreign policy option chosen by Nixon and Kissinger that called for a partial relaxation of American measures against white regimes, along with increased aid for black Africa and diplomatic efforts to resolve tensions between the white governments and their neighbors.

¹⁰ Michael Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), xi.

“public rhetoric” to get at the ideology of various political figures.¹¹ By analyzing personal memoirs, public rhetoric, memoranda of conversations, and the policies that were enacted during this period, one is able to elucidate some of the convictions that guided Kissinger’s policy-making in the mid-1970s. By analyzing the language and symbolisms Kissinger employed, and considering the actions he took in regards to southern Africa, it is possible to uncover this extant ideology. By uncovering the racial ideology of Kissinger, it is then possible to better understand the belligerent relationship he would have with the African Bureau of the State Department. If ideology is defined as Hunt described it, Kissinger’s ideology, and that of the Nixon and Ford administrations, can be elucidated.¹²

Thanks to the resources of the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, the Foreign Relations of the United States series, and other depositories, such as the Western Manuscripts Collection in Columbia, Missouri, documents of Kissinger’s “private musings” and “public rhetoric” are available. Additionally, interviews of assistant secretaries Donald Easum, William E. Schaufele, Jr., and Joseph J. Sisco are available thanks to the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project at Georgetown University. With the help of so many valuable resources, the prevailing consensus on Kissinger and the Angolan civil war can be augmented to account for the deep rooted disdain the secretary held for the AF and the inferior nature he believed was inherent in black Africans. The decision to send weapons, advisers, money, and mercenaries to Angola, against the advice of his regional experts, and even

¹¹ Ibid., 15.

¹² Ibid., xi.

when the situation became beyond futile, uncovers a new understanding of what guided the supposed architect of *realpolitik* during this period.

The first chapter of this analysis will detail the development of Kissinger's philosophy on foreign policy, as well as the accretion of his racial ideology. From the beginning stages of his career as a graduate student and later professor at Harvard to his first years in the Nixon Administration, policy enactments, memorandums, conversations, and memoirs reveal Nixon and Kissinger's disregard and disdain for the interests of Africans and African-Americans. The second chapter will chronicle previous administrations and their foreign policies toward sub-Saharan Africa (more specifically, Portuguese Africa), as well as the legacy of Portuguese colonial rule and the development of the Angolan civil war. The third chapter will address the hostility between Henry Kissinger and the African Bureau during the mid 1970s. This period serves as the ultimate Petri dish for unpacking the impact of racial ideology on both Kissinger's foreign policy toward Africa and his relationship with those "bleeding hearts" of the African Bureau. Unlike similar cases in Chile and India, where Kissinger and Nixon came to loggerheads with regional experts, Angola showcases the secretary acting more or less alone. Also, black Africans occupied the lowest rung in the racial hierarchy held by many officials like Kissinger, so policy toward southern Africa showcases the effects of race in its most palpable form. Racial tensions in southern Africa were incredibly tense during the 1970s, as the racist regime in Rhodesia held tenuously to power and the apartheid regime in South Africa fought to keep Southwest Africa under its control. The way Kissinger recklessly acted in such a delicate region showcases his blatant disregard for the interests of the black majority. Finally, the example of the Angolan civil war

allows for a clear interrogation of how and why the AF responded to a “Soviet crisis” in Africa with a North/South understanding, while the secretary begrudgingly held firm to his imperious U.S. versus the Soviets perspective.

CHAPTER ONE – The Fathers of a Tar Baby: Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger

Any analysis of Henry Kissinger and his philosophy on foreign policy must ultimately begin with his roots in the Bavarian neighborhood of Fuerth. Although Kissinger downplays the influence his Jewish boyhood in Bavaria during the early days of the Nazis' rise to power may have had, he does admit that it might have helped shape the way he later came to view the world. He told biographer Walter Isaacson, "It was not a lifelong trauma," but then goes on to admit, "It had an impact: having lived under totalitarianism, I know what it's like."¹³ The Kissinger family immigrated to the United States in 1938 (just three months before the atrocities of Kristallnacht), when Henry was 15 years old. Fritz Kraemer, a non-Jewish German who was later Kissinger's mentor in the U.S. army, believed Henry's early life "made him seek order, and it led him to hunger for acceptance."¹⁴ Kissinger later echoed this notion, often stating that when given the choice between order and justice, he would choose order.¹⁵ His experience as a European Jew during the 1930s may not have been a "lifelong trauma," but it gave Kissinger a lifelong discomfort with the passions of democracy and populism, as well as an affinity for stability and order.

After arriving in the U.S. in 1938, Kissinger enrolled in the City College of New York. Much like his native Fuerth, City College was an incredibly homogenous setting; three-fourths of the 30,000 students were Jewish.¹⁶ Kissinger's time at City College was

¹³ Walter Isaacson, *Kissinger: A Biography* (Simon & Schuster, 1992), 29.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 38.

interrupted, however, when the U.S. army drafted him in 1943.¹⁷ World War II helped break down racial barriers and stereotypes for many of the participants who were bonded together in the life and death experiences of combat. Kissinger, however, scored high enough on aptitude tests to be yanked out of regular combat training and enrolled in the Army Specialized Training Program. There, he met 35-year-old, Prussian-born Private Fritz Kraemer, who served as a mentor to him, even becoming a “father figure” to the young soldier.¹⁸ Kraemer, the son of a Prussian prosecutor, was a staunch anti-communist, and considered communists and Nazis to be equally barbaric. Passionate anti-communism was one of the many traits Kraemer instilled in his young tutee. This father figure also “shored up Kissinger’s sense of identity as a German,” insisting that they converse in German and that Kissinger learn German history and philosophy.¹⁹

Kissinger’s ties to Kraemer ultimately led him to a position in a new Counter-Intelligence detachment in 1945. The role of the detachment was to weed out remaining Nazis and provide order throughout the formerly occupied territories. Kissinger was chosen from his detachment to administrate the Allied occupation of a German town named Bensheim. Kraemer said of the position, “He was the absolute ruler of Bensheim.”²⁰ The young ruler enjoyed many perks on the job. In Bensheim, Kissinger disobeyed rules that banned fraternizing with local citizenry by taking up a blond mistress who was the wife of a German nobleman. He also enjoyed driving around in a

¹⁷ Hanhimaki, *The Flawed Architect*, 4.

¹⁸ Isaacson, *Kissinger*, 46.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

Mercedes and setting up house in “a modern palatial villa.”²¹ Life in Germany was very good to the young ruler.

Before returning from the war, Kissinger’s mentor left him with a bit of advice: “Go to a fine college,” Kraemer said. “A gentleman does not go to the College of the City of New York.”²² The 23 year-old took this advice to heart and applied to Columbia, Princeton, and Harvard. Having been vaunted to such a high and prestigious profile in Bensheim, and having spent so much time in admiring Kraemer’s caricature-like figure, it is no wonder that he wanted to follow the path of a true German gentleman. The following year, in 1947, Kissinger joined the Harvard class of 1950.

Walter Isaacson writes that by 1947, Harvard had become “quite liberal” in its student regulations. “Women were allowed to visit in Claverly, alcohol was permitted, and virtually nothing was forbidden. Except weapons and dogs.”²³ African-Americans could also have made Isaacson’s list of forbidden entities. While they were not formally prohibited from enrollment at the university, they were extremely small in number, and it is important to remember the elite, upper-class, and *de facto* segregated environment in which Kissinger lived and learned.²⁴

After completing a ponderous 383 page undergraduate thesis on “the meaning of history,” Kissinger continued on to graduate studies at Harvard. This was arguably the most formative period of his political philosophy, as well as his political career. In 1951, Kissinger launched the Harvard International Seminar (IS), a program created to bring

²¹ Ibid, 54.

²² Ibid, 57.

²³ Ibid, 61.

²⁴ For more on the history of African Americans at Harvard University, see *Blacks at Harvard: A Documentary History of African-American Experience at Harvard and Radcliffe*, eds. Werner Sollors, Caldwell Titcomb, et al (New York: New York University Press, 1993).

young leaders—mainly politicians, journalists, and civil servants—together each summer. The Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, and also the CIA, funded the program.²⁵ Through his work with the IS, Kissinger established a powerful network of future leaders from many U.S. ally nations.

As much as the IS helped shape Kissinger’s political network, his doctoral dissertation helped him articulate the political philosophy that would guide his future career as a diplomat. The subjects of Kissinger’s dissertation, “A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace, 1812-22,” were two 19th-century statesmen, Austria’s Prince Klemens von Metternich and Britain’s Viscount Castlereagh, and how they interacted to create “a peaceful European balance” after the defeat of Napoleon.²⁶ “A World Restored” was an ode to the preservation of world order through balances of power. Kissinger argued that diplomacy could not be divorced from the realities of force and power, but that it *can* and *should* be divorced from moralistic concerns, such as the internal policies of other nations.²⁷ The success of Metternich and Castlereagh validated the use of *realpolitik*—“foreign policy based on calculations of power and the national interest”—and showed the power of great statesmen in preserving stability and the status quo.²⁸ Idealists and democracies, however, threatened this stability when they pressed nations to embark on ideological or moral crusades. It was this lesson that would inform Kissinger’s policy-making throughout his career.

Forty years after “A World Restored,” Kissinger still held fast to these same beliefs. In his seminal work, *Diplomacy*, he articulated this understanding in an analysis

²⁵ Hanhimaki, *The Flawed Architect*, 6.

²⁶ Isaacson, *Kissinger*, 74.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 75.

²⁸ Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999), 137.

of power politics in the West from the 17th century to the Reagan presidency of the 1980s. In this book, Kissinger analyzes the world through the lens of history, and looks at great leaders, spheres of influence, and geopolitical power politics. He praises leaders who were able to understand the dynamics of power (as Kissinger defined it), including German politician Gustav Stresemann, who skillfully (in a classic example of *realpolitik*) played Britain and France off of one another in the post-World War I era.

In *Diplomacy*, *realpolitik* exists in dichotomy with Wilsonian idealism, the ideology that would eventually cast the U.S. “adrift on a sea of undifferentiated moralism.”²⁹ According to Kissinger, “Wilsonianism rejects peace through balance of power in favor of peace through moral consensus. It sees foreign policy as a struggle between good and evil, in each phase of which it is the U.S.’s mission to help defeat the evil foes challenging a peaceful order.”³⁰ It is a “quest for absolutes” rather than a “shaping of reality by means of nuances,” something Kissinger finds to be completely unsuitable, because it cannot serve as “a mechanical blueprint for day to day foreign policy.” President Harry Truman’s “fallacious” understanding of the Cold War as a contest between good and evil, “not having to do with spheres of political influence,” was an example of Wilsonian idealism’s prevalence in U.S. foreign policy.³¹

For Kissinger, the U.S. debacle in Vietnam was the most telling example of a nation driven by absolute moralism rather than its national interests. Instead of framing the disruptions in Southeast Asia as a “generic,” geopolitical contest of the Cold War, American policymakers cast it as a death match between good and evil and, therefore, responded in an ill-advised, disproportionate manner to the North Vietnamese. Kissinger

²⁹ Ibid., 658.

³⁰ Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 97.

³¹ Ibid., 447.

believed the U.S. needed to learn that there were limits to even the most sacrosanct beliefs or it would have had to deal with the horrific consequences of “the gap that can arise between power and principle.”³² For Kissinger, this amoral policy made complete sense. If a nation fought to defend innocent victims, he believed, it would find itself spread irrevocably thin and its power would erode in an endless, ideological quest that would be destined to fail. For Kissinger, morality was irrelevant in foreign affairs; it was not the business of nations, but of missionaries and zealots.

Forty years before he would write *Diplomacy*, and shortly after he completed his doctoral dissertation, Kissinger entered the political world. He wrote a *Foreign Affairs* article that criticized President Dwight Eisenhower’s doctrine of massive retaliation, which in turn landed him a position at the Council on Foreign Relations in 1954. In addition to a book deal, the Council offered Kissinger a position as staff director of a study group that analyzed the impact of nuclear weapons on foreign policy.³³ The study group offered him the opportunity to network with the stars of the New York foreign policy establishment, including Nelson Aldrich Rockefeller, who was Eisenhower’s assistant for international affairs at the time. Kissinger met Rockefeller (the heir of Standard Oil magnate, John D. Rockefeller, Jr.) during a meeting of academic experts at the Quantico Marine Base near Washington, D.C. in 1955.³⁴ After the meeting, Rockefeller appointed Kissinger director of his newly launched Special Studies Project, an organization that consisted of hundreds of advisory panels investigating the “critical choices” facing the U.S. Although Kissinger only held the position for one year, he

³² Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, 658.

³³ Isaacson, *Kissinger*, 83.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 90.

remained a part-time, paid consultant for Rockefeller until 1968, when the then Harvard professor became part of the Nixon administration.

By the end of Kissinger's academic career at Harvard, he had written two books that offer important insights into how he would soon formulate policy in the Nixon and Ford administrations. The first, *A World Restored*, was the published edition of his doctoral dissertation.³⁵ The second, also published in 1957, was *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, which addresses the possibility of using nuclear weapons for a "limited" war.³⁶ Both books shared a similar theme that provides a prescient look into how Kissinger would view his future role as National Security Adviser and Secretary State. In both *A World Restored* and *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, Kissinger maintained that the greatest threat to statesmanship came from within the statesman's own nation, from "bureaucratic inertia," or from the "inherent tension between the mode of action of a bureaucracy and the pattern of statesmanship."³⁷ Both books deal with limits imposed upon statesmen by domestic constituencies and slow moving bureaucracies. Kissinger was obsessed with the power of elite individuals, such as the statesmen of the 19th Century, Metternich, Bismarck, Castlereagh, etc. Having single-handedly ruled Bensheim, obsessed over centuries-old statesmen, and lived in the elite, academic world of Harvard, Kissinger sought to emulate these men and live a similar lifestyle. Kissinger's early works similarly portend the blatant disregard he would later exhibit toward principles of democracy, the interests of the third world citizenry, and the machinery of American foreign-policymaking known as the State Department. Kissinger

³⁵ Henry Kissinger, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh, and the Problems of Peace, 1812-22* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957).

³⁶ Henry Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957).

³⁷ Hanhimaki, *The Flawed Architect*, 11.

was bound and determined to bring the *realpolitik* of a century and a world long gone to U.S. foreign policy.

The year 1968 marked Henry Kissinger's formal entrance into the world of U.S. foreign relations. Since he had long been an admirer and paid consultant to Rockefeller, it is not surprising that at the outset of the 1968 presidential campaign, Kissinger supported Rockefeller in the Republican primaries and expressed "grave doubts" about Richard Nixon.³⁸ Once the primary had been decided, however, Kissinger fell in line and helped Nixon behind the scenes against Democratic candidate, Hubert Humphrey. Kissinger's support of Nixon after Rockefeller dropped out of the race was quite characteristic of the relationship Nixon and Kissinger would have in Washington. It was a working relationship--an untrusting and often resenting one. The two were alike in many ways—self-centered, elitist, ambitious, longing for acceptance and acclaim, paranoid, arrogant. But in their personal lives, the two could not have been more different. Nixon was socially awkward and often reclusive. Kissinger, on the other hand, became a celebrity, dating movie stars and relishing the media coverage and acclaim. In 1968, with Kissinger's appointment to national security adviser, the two men embarked on a tight-knit and often turbulent relationship, each man competing to be the grand statesman of U.S. diplomacy.

The one thing that perhaps most bound together Nixon and Kissinger was a zealous adherence to the tenets of *realpolitik*. In his memoirs, Kissinger states, "No American president possessed a greater knowledge of international affairs" than Nixon, who focused on the ideas of equilibrium, spheres of influence, and "sought to navigate

³⁸ Isaacson, *Kissinger*, 127.

according to a concept of America's national interest".³⁹ The two men shared a belief in cold realism and power-oriented statecraft—one that left the "less powerful" nations of the third world forgotten on the fringes of American foreign policy. The Nixon administration, according to Kissinger, "marked America's return to the world of *Realpolitik*."⁴⁰

The story of Nixon, Kissinger, and the return of *realpolitik* in American foreign policy was not free from an antagonist. This role was played by members of the Foreign Service (FS), whose views Kissinger described as completely antithetical to the *realpolitik* he shared with Nixon. Therefore, Kissinger's clash with the Foreign Service members that filled the African Bureau (AF) of the State Department in the late 1960s and early 1970s seems to have been inevitable. As a description of the typical FS member, Kissinger wrote, "Their convictions are conventionally Wilsonian; diplomacy and power are often treated as discrete realms—and diplomacy separate from any other area of national policies."⁴¹ For Kissinger, there was only one way to approach foreign policy: by coldly calculating power dynamics, balance, and geopolitics. His was an amoral approach in which fundamental American ideals such as liberty, democracy, and human rights were too abstract and idealistic to be taken seriously.

The logic of *realpolitik* resulted in a number of controversial and disastrous policies in regard to the third world. One of the first, and perhaps most controversial examples, was Nixon and Kissinger's African foreign policy, which was ultimately embodied in the infamous option number two of National Security Study Memorandum (NSSM) 39. After entering office, the new Nixon administration began a general review

³⁹ Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, 704.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 724.

⁴¹ Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 76.

of U.S. foreign policies; Kissinger flooded the State Department with requests for new policy analyses and options.⁴² On April 10, he ordered a review of southern Africa policy in NSSM 39. The Interdepartmental Group (IG) for Africa, chaired by Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs David Newsom, was to prepare the report.

The IG's response was submitted by mid-August, and it laid out five options for U.S. foreign policy toward southern Africa. Option number one called for the normalization of American relations with white regimes. The second option called for a partial relaxation of American measures against white regimes, along with increased aid for black Africa and diplomatic efforts to resolve tensions between the white governments and their neighbors. Option number three was very similar to maintaining the status quo: maintain relations with both white and black African governments along existing lines and sustain a policy of opposition to both racism and violence. The fourth option included decreasing contacts with white regimes, and the fifth suggested possibly severing ties in the area to avoid having a stake in either side should the situation explode.⁴³ The first, fourth and fifth options were more or less created to make the second and third seem more moderate.

The previous administration under President Lyndon B. Johnson had made strides toward promoting racial justice in southern Africa. Although the Johnson administration's 1965 "Operation Sparrow" had given Portugal aircraft for use in its African colonies (which violated pledges not to sell weapons for use outside Europe), the president did participate in an airlift of oil to Zambia in 1965. After illegally declaring their independence, Ian Smith's regime in Southern Rhodesia faced international

⁴² Anthony Lake, *The "Tar Baby" Option: American Policy Toward Southern Rhodesia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 124.

⁴³ Lake, *The "Tar Baby" Option*, 128.

sanctions, including sanctions from its neighbor, Zambia. In response, Smith closed the railroads that carried Zambian copper to seaports and blocked incoming shipments of coal and oil, moves that could have crippled the Zambian economy. The Johnson administration responded to Southern Rhodesia's illegal declaration of independence by suspending sugar imports and weapons exports, and by discouraging U.S. residents from traveling to the rogue nation. Additionally, the U.S. participated in an operation to airlift oil to Zambia, which signaled where U.S. allegiance lied.⁴⁴

Turning away from the strides made by Johnson, however, Kissinger and the National Security Council (NSC), adopted option number two of NSSM 39, the "tar baby" option. Option two became known as "tar baby" in reference to a famous Uncle Remus story. In the story, Br'er Rabbit gets stuck to a tar baby made by Br'er Fox, who later devours Br'er Rabbit. State Department officials opposed the second option and were instead advocates of the third option. They argued that once the United States adopted a policy of partial relaxation, they would be unable to abandon it if it did not work, thus making it a sticky, "tar baby" approach.⁴⁵ A key official in charge of the NSSM 39 review later assessed, "its only real result would be to mire the United States deeper on the side of the oppressors" in southern Africa.⁴⁶

According to former Kissinger aide, Anthony Lake, on January 2, 1970, Kissinger sent Nixon a memorandum, recommending adoption of the NSC option (number two) and agreed with its premise, which stated:

The whites are here to stay and the only way that constructive change can come about is through them. There is no hope for the blacks to gain the political rights they seek through violence, which will only lead to chaos

⁴⁴ DeRoche, *Black, White, and Chrome*, 114.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁴⁶ Gabriel Kolko, *Confronting the Third World* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), 239.

and increased opportunities for the communists. We can, by selective relaxation of our stance toward white regimes, encourage some modification of their current racial and colonial policies and through more substantial economic assistance to the black states help to draw the two groups together and exert some influence on both for peaceful change.⁴⁷

As evidenced in the “tar baby” option (a nickname given to NSSM 39) and relations with Portugal, South Africa, and Rhodesia, Kissinger and Nixon had a clear view on Africa policy. It was a policy that favored the needs of minority white regimes over black majority rule. It was a policy that set out to control, moderate, and slow the struggle for decolonization. It was a policy that viewed complex, regional conflicts as an extension of the global Cold War. Although this approach may have been a somewhat successful blueprint for Kissinger in Europe, it failed to take into account the unique situation—southern Africa was in a period of decolonization and struggle for black liberation. Although southern Africa was in reality an arena for the struggle between colonial powers and their white minority allies (the North) versus their colonial subjects and the greater majority of black Africans (the South), Kissinger and Nixon continued to cast it as a third world arena for the East/West battle of the Cold War. The “tar baby” option was influenced by a racial ideology that both Nixon and Kissinger held; it placed the aspirations of the black majority in Africa well below the more “civilized” white anti-communist leaders.

The “tar baby” approach became a guiding policy that led Washington to openly work with the racist, white minority regime in Pretoria, “encouraging U.S. investment and trade, selling computers, helicopters, and planes with military applications, and abandoning the practice of shunning South Africa’s diplomats.”⁴⁸ Following NSSM 39,

⁴⁷ Lake, *The “Tar Baby” Option*, 276.

⁴⁸ Kolko, *Confronting the Third World*, 241.

the Nixon administration welcomed the chief of South Africa's defense force to a reception and Vice President Gerald Ford also received Pretoria's minister of interior and information for a meeting.⁴⁹ What was on paper a "relaxation" seemed to become an almost fraternal relationship, rather than simply relaxed.

Nixon's bent toward white regimes in Africa is hardly surprising given the president's attitude toward Africans and African-Americans in general. In *The Cold War and the Color Line*, historian Thomas Borstelmann writes, "Nixon participated in the casual racism common among white Americans of his generation."⁵⁰ The president did not spare the Oval Office references to "niggers," "jigs," and "jungle bunnies." On one occasion, Nixon was informed of a new scholarship program for black students only to reply, "Well, it's a good thing. They're just down out of the trees."⁵¹

Nixon's "casual racism" was evident not only in his language, but also in the rather insensitive moves he made, moves such as the appointment of John Hurd as ambassador to Pretoria. Hurd, a conservative businessman from Texas, had served as one of Nixon's campaign managers during the 1968 election. The new ambassador outraged Africans and African-Americans alike when he alone of all foreign representatives attended the opening of a segregated theater in South Africa. He later added insult to injury when he joined a hunting trip on Robben Island that used black prisoners as beaters.⁵²

The Nixon Administration's relationship with imperial Portugal was another example of blatant favoritism for white Western interests that was guided by the precepts

⁴⁹ Noer, *Cold War and Black Liberation*, 241.

⁵⁰ Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line*, 226.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 226.

⁵² Noer, *Cold War and Black Liberation*, 241.

of the “tar baby” approach. In 1971, Washington began selling military equipment to Lisbon, “including napalm, capable of being used against guerillas, to provide \$400 million in credits, and to ignore, in effect, the United Nations prohibition on any aid which might help Portugal’s colonial wars.”⁵³ Piero Gleijeses writes that to Nixon and Kissinger, rewarding a loyal ally (Portugal) and maintaining U.S. prestige came at little cost—“the unhappiness of a bunch of Africans and the self-righteous indignation of a few minor NATO allies who were openly sympathetic to Portuguese Africa rebels.”⁵⁴ Having initiated the sale of destructive weapons that were obviously to be used against black nationalists—even in spite of UN prohibitions—demonstrated that the Nixon administration would oblige the interests of white powers, including South Africa and Portugal. It also contradicted America’s Cold War claim to be the flag bearer of the “free world” and self-determination abroad.

Nixon’s inclination to favor white regimes in Africa is not surprising when one also takes into account his administration’s domestic record on racially influenced policies. In fact, Nixon’s successful presidential campaign in 1968 was predicated upon the exacerbation of racial tensions in the U.S. and the use of white racism and resentment. Historian Kenneth O’Reilly argues, “Nixon and his southern strategy brain-trust created and exploited a message identifying ‘new liberalism’ as a doctrine sympathetic to the ‘excessive demands’ of blacks.”⁵⁵ Although some historians might argue that Nixon paid little attention to domestic policy (and, therefore, that his *foreign* policy is most reflective of his ideology), the administration’s southern strategy and subsequent domestic policies

⁵³ Kolko, *Confronting the Third World*, 242.

⁵⁴ Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 232.

⁵⁵ Kenneth O’Reilly, *Nixon’s Piano: Presidents and Racial Politics from Washington to Clinton* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 8.

on race belie a pattern of decisions and attitudes that show the southern strategy “turned out to have international reach.”⁵⁶

The political landscape of 1968 presented Nixon with an opportunity to defeat the entrenched New Deal coalition and bring southern Democrats into his election formula. According to O’Reilly, “Nixon became the white man’s champion against special pleading and privileges of the blacks” and “racism equaled opportunity ... a way to smash the New Deal coalition and realign the American political landscape now and forever to the Republican Party’s advantage.”⁵⁷ White resentment was on the rise as the nation experienced an economic stagnation that was exacerbated by Vietnam War spending and the expansive social programs of Johnson’s Great Society. Additionally, the increase of black violence and militant movements in the late 1960s intensified fears in white society, “producing a conservative backlash against black demands.”⁵⁸ Nixon decided to cast himself in defense of the white working and middle class and in opposition to elite liberalism. He used terms such as “hardcore unemployed,” “welfare cheats,” “laggards,” “muggers,” “rapists,” as a general code for black people.⁵⁹ Nixon also touted an agenda of law and order, and promised the southern delegates a slow approach to Civil Rights.

In addition to his blatantly divisive rhetoric, Nixon also associated himself with politicians who embodied his southern strategy of white over black. He relied on South Carolina Senator Strom Thurmond, a former Democrat and then Dixiecrat, and also worked with Mississippi Senators James Eastland, John Stennis, “and virtually every

⁵⁶ Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line*, 241.

⁵⁷ O’Reilly, *Nixon’s Piano*, 279.

⁵⁸ Peter N. Carroll, *It Seemed Like Nothing Happened: America in the 1970s* (New York: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 39.

⁵⁹ O’Reilly, *Nixon’s Piano*, 281.

other segregationist politician of stature regardless of party affiliation.”⁶⁰ Nixon rounded off his champion-of-whiteness credentials by adding Maryland Governor Spiro Agnew to his Republican ticket. Much like then vice presidential candidate Nixon had red baited Democrats for the Eisenhower campaign, Agnew “baited blacks and kids—proving himself a crude specialist in the art of ‘positive polarization.’”⁶¹

Nixon’s southern strategy successfully catapulted him into the White House, and his subsequent nominations demonstrated his commitment to his platform. He also rewarded those who had helped him divide and conquer the American political landscape. The new president did not appoint any African-Americans to his new cabinet, instead continuing his alliance with southern segregationists. His campaign manager and architect of the southern strategy, John Mitchell was appointed to the “racially sensitive” position of attorney general.⁶² Moreover, Nixon’s first two nominees to the Supreme Court had segregationist records. Nominees Clement Haynesworth and G. Harrold Carswell were both rejected by the Senate after investigations found the former to be an anti-labor, pro-segregationist who had presided in a case involving one of his own holdings, and the latter a southern arch-segregationist who had harassed civil rights lawyers from the bench, campaigned on a segregationist platform and lied to a Senate committee about participation in a shady business deal to prevent integration of a municipal golf course.⁶³

The attitudes of law and order and white backlash were ripe among Nixon’s new staff. When his men arrived to the White House, they received a stack of blank executive

⁶⁰ Ibid., 284.

⁶¹ Ibid., 286.

⁶² Carroll, *It Seemed Like Nothing Happened*, 40.

⁶³ Ibid., 44.

orders from the Johnson administration declaring martial law, in case the racial tensions and violence of the late 1960s broke out once more. Kevin Philips, a Nixon official responded, “That cycle’s over. If there are any more [riots], we might have to choose a key city, bring in the troops, and just cream ‘em. That will settle it.”⁶⁴ Similarly, Nixon’s Department of Justice, headed by Mitchell, “prepared for armed war against blacks.”⁶⁵ The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration saw its budget increase from \$63 million in 1969 to \$268 million in 1970. By 1972, the budget had increased to almost \$700 million. Most of these funds went to police hardware, crowd control equipment, weapons, and armored transport.⁶⁶

The target for this new war of law and order quickly became clear. One of Attorney General Mitchell’s first official decisions was the authorization of electronic surveillance of the Black Panther Organization. This decision was part of a broader campaign against the Panthers in which Director J. Edgar Hoover and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) joined local police departments in attacking Panthers around the nation. Between 1968 and 1969, 31 raids were launched on Black Panthers headquarters in which hundreds were arrested on “spurious charges.”⁶⁷ After arresting the Panthers’ Chief of Staff David Hilliard, the FBI moved against likely successor Fred Hampton in Chicago. Federal authorities launched a surprise raid in cooperation with Chicago police, and unleashed “a terrible fusillade on a Panther apartment, killing Hampton while he lie in bed.”⁶⁸ Substantial evidence later indicated that the massacre of Hampton and fellow

⁶⁴ O’Reilly, *Nixon’s Piano*, 289.

⁶⁵ Carroll, *It Seemed Like Nothing Happened*, 49.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

Panther Mark Clark was unprovoked, but this was just an unfortunate but necessary tragedy in the war for law and order.

President Nixon did not leave execution of his campaign promises solely to his appointed officials. The president instead took a “hands-on approach” that led to his personal involvement in a purge of civil rights advocates and a slow-down of school desegregation. Under direction from Nixon, “enthusiastic civil rights lawyers in the Justice Department, like Texas-based Joseph Rich, were ordered back to Washington and fired.”⁶⁹ Nixon encouraged Mitchell’s crusade against black civil rights leaders and asked Hoover to supply “the details” regarding Martin Luther King Jr., which involved spying and wiretapping.⁷⁰ The president hoped to find some damning information that could be used to defame King’s legacy and to discredit members of organizations such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). According to Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Nixon set up a secret White House posse with Mitchell to burgle offices, forge historical documents, and wiretap officials, embassies, or any other types of “enemies,” such as supporters of the civil rights movement.⁷¹ The president also had his Justice Department petition federal courts to further delay desegregation in Mississippi’s 33 school districts.⁷² The official reasoning was that there was not sufficient time to produce alternative plans.⁷³ Nixon was so fervently against busing and desegregation that he told Congress, “What we need now is not just speaking out against busing. We need action to stop it.” The president suggested a constitutional amendment that would outlaw busing forever

⁶⁹ O’Reilly, *Nixon’s Piano*, 302.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 294.

⁷¹ Arthur M. Schlesinger, *The Imperial Presidency* (New York: First Mariner Books, 2004), xvi.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 296.

⁷³ Carroll, *It Seemed Like Nothing Happened*, 42.

and told his counsel and then Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs John Ehrlichman, “put some of your boys on this.”⁷⁴ Ehrlichman was a key figure in setting up the first Watergate break-in and was later convicted of conspiracy, obstruction of justice, and perjury, so it is not surprising that he had some “boys” to delegate for such an important role.

Through the so-called southern strategy, Nixon catapulted himself into the White House in 1968 and established a political framework that gave clear priority to white interests while disregarding, vilifying, and often racially typecasting African-Americans and their interests. As the southern strategy guided the Nixon administration on domestic issues, so the “tar baby” option of NSSM 39 guided policy toward southern Africa. The same qualities in the domestic framework would be transposed onto a region in which the vast majority of the population was black.

Although many historians have focused squarely on Nixon in describing how racism and belief in a racial hierarchy informed foreign policy toward Africa, it is incredibly important to understand that National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger was with him every step of the way, if not sometimes a step ahead. Historians such as Kenneth O’Reilly argue that “Nixon and Kissinger cared as little about racial justice abroad as Hoover and Mitchell did at home.”⁷⁵ It was, in fact, Kissinger who had most strongly championed the “tar baby” option as the framework for U.S. policy toward southern Africa. It was Kissinger who pushed strongly for Portugal’s \$436 million in credits, stating, “I do want the Portuguese to be rewarded for having been the only

⁷⁴ O’Reilly, *Nixon’s Piano*, 305.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 291.

European country to help us in the Middle East.”⁷⁶ Historical evidence shows that Kissinger was right with the president in creating a foreign policy for southern Africa—one not only based upon Cold War priorities, but also a belief in a racial hierarchy, a disdain for black nationalist aspirations, and “the casual racism common among white Americans of [their] generation.”⁷⁷

The Nixon administration’s racial ideology, as demonstrated through its domestic policies, neatly aligns with the philosophy and lifestyle that Kissinger had cultivated his entire life. He had lived an elite lifestyle since his days in Bensheim and his positions at Harvard and Rockefeller’s Special Studies Project. He had studied and tried to emulate the lives of grand, old-school European statesmen like Bismarck and Metternich—men who did not care about the majority of the populous, lower-class peasants in Europe, but only the powerful. It was a mentality that coldly sacrificed concerns about nations’ internal policies in order to maintain stability and the status quo. Kissinger could not, therefore, have cared less about the aspirations and lives of oppressed black Angolans or South Africans. The real power—at least militarily and economically—was in the hands of the Portuguese and the apartheid regime of South Africa. Therefore, these were the people Kissinger wanted to befriend. Their concerns were the only ones that mattered. In the end, according to this logic, blacks were “just out of the trees;” they were of no interest and only mattered when they threatened to upset the all-important global balance of power.

⁷⁶ Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 231.

⁷⁷ Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line*, 226.

Kissinger was, during Nixon's first term, the "*de facto* Secretary of State." He ran foreign policy from his office in the basement of the White House.⁷⁸ The president wanted to maintain an incredibly tight rein over American foreign policy, largely confining the decision making process to meetings between him and Kissinger. Kissinger later recalled that Nixon "was determined that foreign policy be conducted from the Oval Office, but he never said as much to his Secretary of State."⁷⁹ William Rogers, though appointed secretary of state, was "marginalized" by the president, and Kissinger believed "the result was that the State Department would often pursue a course of action that was in direct conflict with what I was doing on behalf of the president and of which the department was unaware."⁸⁰ The relationship between old law partners Nixon and Rogers became so detached and Rogers felt so maligned that when Nixon had Alexander Haig ask Rogers to resign in 1973, Rogers responded, "Tell the president to go fuck himself."⁸¹

In 1973, Kissinger was named secretary of state in addition to his previous role as national security adviser. This makes it much easier to pinpoint the ideology behind foreign policy created during the period. Kissinger later recounted that "whenever possible, Nixon avoided holding meetings with Cabinet members and heads of agencies," instead drafting memorandums for correspondence with the national security adviser or having telephone or face-to-face meetings.⁸²

One of the first examples that illustrated Kissinger and Nixon's "tar baby" in action related to the U.S. consulate in Southern Rhodesia. In 1969, the State Department pressed strongly for the closure of the U.S. consulate in Southern Rhodesia, especially

⁷⁸ Schlesinger, *The Imperial Presidency*, 251.

⁷⁹ Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 69.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Jussi Hanhimaki, *The Flawed Architect*, 294.

⁸² Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 68.

because the British were in the process of withdrawing their residual mission in the nation. On June 20, white Rhodesians had voted overwhelmingly for Rhodesia to become an independent republic, no longer under British authority, a move that would secure white rule against any interference from the British Parliament. U.S. Consul General in Southern Rhodesia Paul O'Neill recommended closure largely because the consulate "had become a symbol for white Rhodesians of their importance to the United States."⁸³ Nixon and Kissinger, however, did not want to make a move, because the consulate served as a listening post for their new policy of "communication" with white settler regimes. Additionally, Vice President Agnew and his foreign policy assistant Kent Crane "went out of their way to indicate their belief that the consulate should be retained."⁸⁴ The "tar baby" option called for retaining the consulate and eventually recognizing the Ian Smith government, while the State Department's preferred NSSM 39 option called for closing the consulate immediately.

At midnight on March 2, 1970, Ian Smith formally and illegally declared Rhodesia to be an independent republic, further complicating the existence of the U.S. consulate in Rhodesia. Secretary of State Rogers submitted a memo fervently urging withdrawal of the consulate, but Nixon and Kissinger continued to stall. It was not until the British presented an ultimatum that the U.S. consulate was closed. On March 9, 1970, Secretary Rogers announced the closure.⁸⁵

At the same time as the consulate debate had been occurring, Congress and the Nixon administration were dealing with an even bigger issue regarding relations with Southern Rhodesia: United Nations imposed sanctions. Since December 1966, at the

⁸³ Lake, *The "Tar Baby" Option*, 137.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 143.

request of Britain, the United Nations Security Council had imposed selective, mandatory economic sanctions on Southern Rhodesia.⁸⁶ However, several different factors made sanctions against Rhodesia a very divisive issue in American politics. Economically speaking, Southern Rhodesia's mines supplied the world's best metallurgical grade chrome ore, which was used to produce steam turbine blades, nuclear reactors, rockets, nuclear submarines, and mufflers on automobiles.⁸⁷ Britain's willful disregard for U.S. sanctions on North Vietnam was a second factor that made the sanctions controversial. Many opponents of the sanctions referenced this double standard. A third factor was cultural: Ian Smith and his followers in Southern Rhodesia were "Christian," anti-communist, white, and in rebellion against Great Britain—four facts that made their case palatable to many Americans.⁸⁸

Leading the charge against the Rhodesian sanctions were southern Senators Harry Byrd, Jr. (I-VA) and Strom Thurmond (R-SC). The two senators were part of an especially powerful group of "leviathans" in Congress—southern senators who controlled some of the most important and powerful committees.⁸⁹ Byrd and his supporters listed several reasons to end the sanctions, including the illegality of the sanctions, the anti-communist friendship of Rhodesia, the inability of Africans in Rhodesia to govern themselves, the danger of letting the Afro-Asian bloc of the UN dictate international policy, and the British double standard.⁹⁰ It is, however, quite clear that many, like Byrd, had other motives at work. As Andrew DeRoche notes in *Black, White, and Chrome*, Byrd "descended from one of the arch-segregationists of United States history, Harry

⁸⁶ Ibid., 1.

⁸⁷ DeRoche, *Black, White, and Chrome*, 144.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 145.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 205.

⁹⁰ Lake, *The "Tar Baby" Option*, 116.

Byrd, Sr.”⁹¹ George Ball, who was also opposed to the sanctions, expressed concern that sanctions against Smith’s regime would eventually lead to the use of force to topple the government, “establishing a dangerous precedent for the other areas of white Africa with more direct U.S. interests.”⁹² Supporters would clearly rather have propped up a racist, illegal white minority government than have allowed a victory to encourage the black nationalist cause.

Byrd and others in Congress pushed forward a bill that came to be known as the Byrd Amendment. According to the bill, the president could not prevent the import of any “strategic and critical” material from non-communist nations if it was also imported from any communist nation. Because chrome was imported from the Soviet Union, it would thenceforth be imported from Southern Rhodesia, in spite of the fact that it clearly violated UN sanctions against the illegal Smith regime.

The Nixon administration remained eerily silent on the Byrd Amendment. DeRoche argues that Nixon and his top aides “manifested nothing but inertia and apathy” toward Southern Rhodesia, but that the administration’s failure to act “cannot be attributed to racism or corporate influence.”⁹³ Sometimes the sin of omission is just as culpable as that of commission. The “tar baby” option Nixon and Kissinger had chosen called for maintenance of the status quo, if not for creating even closer relations with Southern Rhodesia. The administration proved very willing to let the debate unfold and then blame Congress for the Byrd Amendment’s passage. In fact, DeRoche inadvertently blames Nixon for the Byrd Amendment’s passage by arguing that the president was following the lead of one of the amendment’s staunchest supporters, former Secretary of

⁹¹ DeRoche, *Black, White, and Chrome*, 176.

⁹² Noer, *Cold War and Black Liberation*, 198.

⁹³ DeRoche, *Black, White, and Chrome*, 144.

State Dean Acheson. Acheson, “Smith’s most famous champion in the United States,” deemed Southern Rhodesia a sovereign state, and therefore deemed UN sanctions immoral and illegal.⁹⁴ Acheson took this line of thinking even further by stating that the sanctions were “totally contrary to our national interests” and that he believed friendly relations with South Africa and Portugal were much more important than those with black African nations.⁹⁵ Allegedly, Acheson even accused Britain and the U.S. of conspiring to overthrow the Rhodesian government.⁹⁶

In March 1969, Acheson, the hard-line white rule advocate, was the man President Nixon looked to for advice on foreign policy. Sitting by a roaring fire in the Oval Office, Nixon, Acheson, and Kissinger discussed the UN imposed sanctions. They questioned whether it was the proper business of the United Nations to deal with such “internal” issues. Although neither Nixon nor Kissinger would later publicly take a stand during the Byrd debates, “Nixon concurred that the internal affairs of southern African nations were no business [of] the United States or the UN.”⁹⁷ In other words, Nixon opposed the sanctions, and believed the U.S. should continue to allow the oppressive, racist regimes of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia to rule the majority population. According to Nixon and Kissinger, the U.S. was not in the business of promoting human rights or majority rule.

Not surprisingly, Nixon signed the Byrd Amendment into law on November 17, 1971.⁹⁸ Senators Byrd and Thurmond, as well as others such as Acheson, had gotten their wishes, and the U.S. was back in business with Ian Smith’s illegal regime. The

⁹⁴ Ibid., 151.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 158.

⁹⁶ Lake, *The “Tar Baby” Option*, 115.

⁹⁷ DeRoche, *Black, White, and Chrome*, 160.

⁹⁸ Lake, *The “Tar Baby” Option*, 198.

amendment did not, however, end U.S. chrome trade with the Soviet Union. That was not the real goal, anyway. Instead, the U.S. gave the renegade white government new hope that they could hang on to power and act as they pleased in southern Africa. Two years after the bill's passage, Assistant Secretary of African Affairs David Newsom stated in a letter, "In my four years as Assistant Secretary the exemption on Rhodesian sanctions has been the most serious blow to the credibility of our Africa policy ... The fact that we have in African eyes chosen to go counter to a mandatory Security Council resolution and have for our own purposes weakened sanctions suggests to the Africans that we do not attach importance to the interests and issues significant to them."⁹⁹

As will be shown, Nixon and Kissinger *did not* attach importance to the interests and issues significant to Africans. The only African interests that were important to them were those of the white South Africans, the Rhodesians, the Portuguese, and anyone who could maintain "stability" in the region and play a role against the Soviets. It was for this reason that President Nixon and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger were constantly on a collision course with the AF. They did not share the same perspective and ideological framework from which to view Africa and African affairs. The president and his advisor instead viewed Africa through a combination of racist stereotypes and through the prism of the Cold War, both of which led to the use of the "tar baby" option. To them, Africans did not have legitimate aspirations and interests. They were an uncivilized mass that needed the paternal guidance of white rulers and protection from Soviet manipulation.

One specific conversation between the president and Kissinger helps illustrate their turbulent relationship with members of the AF. On September 23, 1972, at 4:50 pm,

⁹⁹ Ibid., 247.

Henry Kissinger received a call from Nixon while both were in their own respective rooms at Camp David. Two days prior, the president had received a report on Uganda that detailed the possible evacuation of 7,000 Britons who were scattered in the chaotic violence that ensued in the region.¹⁰⁰ Nixon and Kissinger wanted swift action in cooperation with the British, but the State Department said disagreed. Part of their conversation was as follows:

Nixon: I want you to follow through and get that ambassador from Burundi the hell—get his ass back here ... I mean, what, what is the matter – what is the matter with the State Department, Henry? They’ve [the Burundis] killed 100,000 people. Is—are, are we callous about it? Don’t we care?

Kissinger: Absolutely ... They’ve [the AF] been going to put into Roger’s speech at the UN some stuff that we want more self-determination in Africa. And I said, “absolute nonsense.” That applies—they’ll apply that to Mozambique and South Africa. They won’t apply it to black [unclear].

Nixon: Yeah. Goddamn. Just think, 42 countries in Africa. 42 countries. That’s ridiculous.

Kissinger: And, and really a murdering bunch of characters.¹⁰¹

It is clear from this discussion—as well as from many others—that Nixon and Kissinger had preconceived ideological attitudes toward black Africans and African issues. Any time ambassadors or AF officials took a stance that could have been seen as sympathetic to unique African interests and concerns, they were negatively labeled

¹⁰⁰ In September 1972, Uganda’s Idi Amin assisted Burundi President Michel Micombero (a Tutsi) in suppressing an attempted coup. Hutus refugees had organized in surrounding nations, but they were repulsed in their attack on Micombero. Following the attack, government-organized ethnic violence killed some 150,000 Hutus, while over 100,000 others fled to neighboring countries and did not return. Information from Katherine Murison, ed., *Africa South of the Sahara, 2003* (New York: Europa Publications, 2003), 1067.

¹⁰¹ Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, 23 September 1972, 4:50-5:10 pm, Camp David, *Foreign Relations of the United States, E-5*.

“Africanists.” Additionally, Kissinger and Nixon’s conversations about a specific issue in Burundi make plain the stereotypes they employed—stereotypes that believed black Africans to be murderous, uncivilized cannibals.

Two days prior to their discussion of Burundi and the UN, Nixon and Kissinger had a similarly animated discussion about Africa, the State Department, and more specifically, the African Bureau. That night, Nixon called Kissinger at 7:42 p.m. because he was “not satisfied with the report on Uganda, which came from State”:

Nixon: Now, the man we have there is [Thomas] Melady, who is a sweet guy. He’s a great supporter of ours, but totally African, all African. He doesn’t understand ... I want hard action. And second, I want to get that Burundi ambassador’s ass out of there right now and that’s an order.

Nixon (later): No we—I think you will agree, Henry, we really have a double standard here on this whole thing.

Kissinger: Oh, sure.

Nixon: In the Africa division, you know what I mean, do we care when they kill a poor goddamned Pakistani? Do we care when those damn Africans eat 100,000 people? I mean, it’s really gone too far.

Kissinger: I couldn’t agree more.¹⁰²

As mentioned previously, President Nixon was well known for regularly employing a vulgar lexicon, including such offensive and racist terms as “nigger” and “jigaboo.”¹⁰³ Kenneth O’Reilly writes, “If Kissinger constantly complained about such pejoratives to his staff, he tolerated much the same thing in his basement office at the White House.”¹⁰⁴ Countless examples illustrate this point. For instance, Roger Morris, who covered African issues for the National Security Council staff, “remembered

¹⁰² Conversation between Nixon and the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs Henry Kissinger, 21 September 1972, 7:42-7:43 pm, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, E-5.

¹⁰³ O’Reilly, *Nixon’s Piano*, 292.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

ubiquitous racist humor about apes and smells.”¹⁰⁵ En route to a White House dinner for African ambassadors, Kissinger bumped into Arkansas Senator J. William Fulbright and offered this greeting, “I wonder what the dining room is going to smell like?”¹⁰⁶

Similarly, in meetings with Kissinger, Alexander Haig would make Tarzan jokes and beat his hands on the table like a tom-tom. Roger Morris recounted, “You couldn’t find ... subjects less important [to Kissinger] and more the object of ridicule” than African affairs.¹⁰⁷

On September 24, 1972, Nixon and Kissinger had their third phone conversation about the continuing deterioration of the situation in Uganda. The British had tried to have secret talks with the United States about logistical help in evacuating their citizens, but the State Department refused this proposal.

Nixon: Screw State! State’s always on the side of the blacks. The hell with them!

Nixon (later): I’m getting tired of this business of letting these Africans eat a hundred thousand people and do nothing about it.

Kissinger: And it’s—and when they have—and all these, these bleeding hearts in this country who say we like to kill yellow people.

Nixon: The State—Newsom’s attitude—the attitude of State is to be for whatever black government is in power. Is my—right or wrong?

Kissinger: One hundred percent right.

Nixon: We need a new Africa policy. But first of all, we shouldn’t have 42 ambassadors to these goddamned countries...some federation down there is what are needed, or something.

Nixon (later): We can’t have a British slaughter down there [Burundi]. The British have got enough problems ... Isn’t it awful though, what these—that this goddamn guy at the head of Uganda, Henry, is an ape.

¹⁰⁵ Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line*, 228.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ O’Reilly, *Nixon’s Piano*, 292.

Kissinger: He's an ape without an education.

Nixon: That's probably no disadvantage. I mean that— [laughter from Kissinger]. He's a, he's a prehistoric monster.

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: I really, really got to shake up the Africa—while all the Departments—but the Africa department of State, Henry, is a disgrace.

Kissinger: Oh, the whole—

Nixon: When I receive those—you know, I receive ambassadors. All I receive is Africa—three out of every four every time are African ambassadors. They're nice little guys, and so forth and so on, but they don't add anything.

Kissinger: Yeah ... they're anti-white in Africa. They are, they [AF] are obsessively liberal. But you don't hear them say a peep—you know, when one of these governments is, is not fully democratic that they don't like, they scream. But when they murder people in Burundi, when there's—get a fellow in, in Uganda has a reign of terror, you don't even get a protest.

Nixon: This goddamn double-standard is just unbelievable.

Kissinger: Out of the question.¹⁰⁸

Another phone conversation between Nixon and Kissinger took place after Secretary of State Rogers had returned from a tour of Africa. Apparently, the amount of favorable press coverage Rogers received during the trip put Kissinger into a “jealous fit.” The president, however, called Kissinger to smooth things over, “Henry, let's leave the niggers to Bill and we'll take care of the rest of the world.”¹⁰⁹

Considering conversations like these, it is no wonder that Nixon and Kissinger reformulated American foreign policy to favor the besieged minority white regimes in southern Africa. The president and his national security adviser seemed to have felt

¹⁰⁸ Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, 24 September 1972, *FRUS*, E-5.

¹⁰⁹ O'Reilly, *Nixon's Piano*, 292.

overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of blacks in Africa, from all of those “goddamn” 42 nations. Much like the South Africans and Rhodesians, they felt like they had their backs against the wall, fighting off the alliance of “anti-white” officials in the AF and the man-eating blacks of nations like Uganda. To Nixon and Kissinger, sub-Saharan Africa was a land full of “pre-historic monsters,” “uneducated apes,” smelly, tom-tom thumping cannibals, or at best, “nice little guys” that did not have anything of value to offer American foreign policy interests.

Ideological assumptions, such as Kissinger and Nixon’s racial stereotypes toward black Africans, are used to reduce “complexities of a particular slice of reality to easily comprehensible terms.”¹¹⁰ The issues that arose in Africa during the late 1960s and early 1970s were hopelessly complex for Nixon and Kissinger. Because the two paid so little attention to Africa, and because their understanding of *realpolitik* favored stability and the status quo in the region, they relied on the work of colonial powers, “anti-communist,” pro-Western regimes, and contemporary racial stereotypes to navigate their way through foreign policy decisions.

In a memorandum he sent to White House Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman and Kissinger on March 2, 1970, President Nixon vocalized his disinterest in the affairs of Africa. Africa, he said, “is not, in the final analysis, going to have any significant effect on the success of our foreign policy in the foreseeable future.”¹¹¹ When he reflected on his first year as president, Nixon believed he had spread himself “too thin,” and believed he needed to cut out any time spent on unimportant issues. “All I want brought to my attention are the following items,” he stated, and then he went on to list an order of

¹¹⁰ Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, xi.

¹¹¹ Memorandum from Nixon to Haldeman, Kissinger, Washington, D.C. 2 March 1970, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, E-5.

prioritized issues and regions, with East/West relations at the top, followed by policy toward the Soviet Union and China. At the very bottom of the list was southern Africa, of which he noted, “I do not want matters submitted to me unless they require presidential decision.”¹¹² Haldeman and Kissinger were instructed to follow these same rules, thus southern Africa was ignored by the president and by his two top advisers.

This memorandum essentially put reality into writing. Nixon and Kissinger had given southern Africa the lowest priority the previous year, and would continue to do so. A CIA memorandum in March 1969 had speculated that nationalism would remain the dominant theme in Africa, but African elites would remain attuned to the West instead of the East. It stated, “once in office, African leftists tend to be more African than leftist. Such radicals would not necessarily be very susceptible to Soviet guidance or even follow policies pleasing to the USSR.”¹¹³ For Kissinger, as long as the Cold War was not influencing affairs in Africa, it was of no interest to the U.S. He would later recount that he allowed the AF to do as it pleased “because, so long as all major powers stayed aloof from Africa, it had considerable merit.”¹¹⁴ He paid so little attention to the region that he admitted, “The Africa bureau had much to teach me about Africa. I was not familiar with the internal relationships among key leaders.”¹¹⁵ Instead, Kissinger knew the Portuguese. If white regimes and colonial rule were “here to stay,” what was the point in acknowledging and listening to “nice little guys” with ludicrous aspirations such as self-determination and majority rule? As historian Piero Gleijeses argued, “the Nixon

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ CIA memorandum, 13 March 1969, *FRUS*, E-5.

¹¹⁴ Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 800.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 805.

administration looked askance at embassy contacts with African rebel leaders, especially those of Portuguese colonies.”¹¹⁶

As long as the Cold War stayed out of southern Africa, Kissinger would allow AF to play its own game. Although he disdained the way they viewed African issues as inherently African, and not part of some broader, global chess match between the forces of capitalism and communism, he would let them continue to play their misguided game. They were like children playing some make-believe game of house. In his memoirs, he later recalled that AF officials cast themselves as “defenders of American idealism.”¹¹⁷ This is hardly a compliment from the man who held religiously to the precepts of *realpolitik*. He continued, “Since they were not part of mainstream policymaking, many officers in the Africa bureau evolved a siege-like mentality in which they transmuted their isolation into a claim on moral superiority.” They were “passionate apostles of the view that African issues had a special character requiring a unique kind of ‘African’ solution.”¹¹⁸ His disdain is clearly evident in these remarks.

During the early to mid 1970s, things began to develop in southern Africa that would end the tolerance Kissinger once had for the misguided crusade the “apostles” in the AF were undertaking. By 1975, “the Cold War was intruding.”¹¹⁹ It was the build-up of this “intrusion” and the sudden interest Kissinger had in African affairs that would send him on a violent collision course with the “insulated” bureau of African Affairs.

¹¹⁶ Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 278.

¹¹⁷ Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 800.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 800.

CHAPTER TWO – THE “MIDDLE OF THE ROAD” IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND THE ORIGINS OF THE ANGOLAN CIVIL WAR

Portugal was the first and last European nation to employ convicts in the colonization process. Gerald Bender writes, “By the middle of the 17th Century, practically all positions in the army, police, trading, skilled crafts ... which were not filled by Africans were taken by *degradados* [ex-convicts].”¹²⁰ It was nearly impossible for imperial Portugal to get any of its citizens to immigrate to its colonies, especially Angola. “Most visitors were happy to leave the colony alive and few expressed a desire to return;” one departing Portuguese stated, “We say goodbye, and goodbye forever, to that burning furnace called Luanda and to its cohort of mosquitoes, spiders, lizards, and cockroaches.”¹²¹ Portugal, a small and insecure but ambitious player in the scramble for Africa, was determined to make its colonies successful and “civilized,” so *degradados* “convicted of almost every crime imaginable in the colony, from murdering and counterfeiting to raping young orphan girls” were used up until 1954 as a major resource for colonial settlement.¹²² The tide of convicts may have comprised up to 20% of Angola’s immigrants before World War II.¹²³

It is not surprising that such a corrupt class of individual settlers led to a heavily impoverished colonial structure in Angola. Although coffee and diamond production in

¹²⁰ Gerald Bender, *Angola Under the Portuguese: The Myth and the Reality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 61.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 77.

¹²³ David Birmingham, *Empire in Africa: Angola and Its Neighbors* (Ohio University Press, 2006), 82.

the colony led to extreme wealth for a few, the vast majority of colonial citizens and native Angolans were incredibly poor. Norrie MacQueen writes, “It is reasonable to suggest that the indigenous populations of Portuguese Africa, at least up until the 1960s, were the most disadvantaged of the European Empires.”¹²⁴ The uneducated and poor convicts, who settled the fertile agricultural plots, often returned unprofitable results. African labor was one resource that was incredibly cheap and widely available. The Portuguese government enacted a contractual labor system in Angola that sowed the seeds for intense racial animosity. Under this system, black Africans were highly dispensable. Employers cared little, if at all, about the well-being of their laborers, mainly because of the unending supply of workers.

In 1932, Antonio Salazar came to power in the “New State” regime of imperial Portugal. Salazar’s popularity was due in large part to his promotion of a paternalist mythology of Portugal that viewed the country as a civilizing and racially harmonious power ordained by God. Although Portugal could not match the military or economic might of its imperial rivals, Salazar sought to cultivate national pride “manufactured not by machines but with the tip of the pen.” In the ideology of the New State, images of colonies and empire played a major role in nationalist propaganda.¹²⁵ Central to this ideology and mythology was the notion that Portugal would civilize new, harmonious “multiracial societies.” According to this logic, the Portuguese were different from other colonial powers because they did not engage in exploitative practices. Instead, the

¹²⁴ Norrie MacQueen, *The Decolonization of Portuguese Africa: Metropolitan Revolution and the Dissolution of Empire* (London: Longman, 1997), 12.

¹²⁵ Fernando Guimaraes, *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 9.

Portuguese were “poor and humble” settlers who did not have the exploitative motivations of their European counterparts.¹²⁶

This mythology, which was also known as “lusotropicalism,” served well as a justification for Salazar’s renewed focus and economic and military consolidation in Angola. The word empire was replaced in Portuguese public lexicon by the term *ultramar*, which meant “overseas provinces,” and the colonial government began to reap cheap raw materials from their overseas brethren while setting obligatory production quotas and exchange fund restrictions, fixing prices to fit their own domestic needs.

The New State’s *indigenato* system was another part of the lusotropical myth that divided Angolan society and sowed seeds for civil war. The Portuguese characterized Africans as intrinsically inferior and in need of a civilizing, paternal colonizer to help them advance. The colonial government therefore granted Africans the opportunity to become *nao-indigena*, or “civilized” (*assimilado*).¹²⁷ The process of becoming *assimilado*, however, was completely arbitrary; Africans had to “Europeanize” and be highly educated, both of which were opportunities afforded to very few. In fact, by 1950, only .7% of Africans were *assimilados*—24,221 of the 3,665,829 native Africans in Angola.¹²⁸ *Assimilados*, while not obligated to provide contractual labor like the vast majority of *indigena* class Africans, were still subject to higher taxes, military conscription, and lower wages than their white counterparts.

¹²⁶ Bender, *Angola Under the Portuguese*, 3.

¹²⁷ Bender, 15.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 151.

By the end of World War II, “the undeniable stirring of the African freedom struggle was clearly discernable.”¹²⁹ Kwame Nkrumah, the future prime minister of Ghana stated, in “1942 ... I was so revolted by the ruthless colonial exploitation and political oppression of the people of Africa that I knew no peace.”¹³⁰ By the 1950s, a wave of new African nations came into existence as new charters and organizations, such as the United Nations, promoted sovereignty for the oppressed peoples of the Third World.

The same stirrings that had existed throughout the African continent became highly palpable in Angola toward the end of the New State era. By 1961, there were two major nationalist movements bent on expelling the Portuguese and establishing an independent government in Angola. The first of these two movements, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), began to form during the late 1940s.¹³¹ The MPLA has its roots in small, clandestine groups that formed in the urban centers of Luanda and Benguela, mainly *mestizo* and *assimilado*, or those “educated Angolans with a place in colonial society.”¹³² The Luanda-Mbundu, formed by several different ethnic groups, made up the majority of early MPLA members. These groups, which came from more urban areas of Angola, had the longest, most continuous contact with Portuguese culture. As such, it is not surprising that the MPLA, founded in 1956, was an offshoot of the Angolan Communist Party, which was itself an offshoot of the Portuguese Communist Party.¹³³ Many of their members were educated and had studied with

¹²⁹ Anderson, “The Cold War in the Atlantic World,” 294.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Guimaraes, *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War*, 37.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ W. Martin James, III, *A Political History of the Civil War in Angola* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1992), 28.

Portuguese radicals either in Angola or in the metropole. The MPLA therefore developed a radical anti-colonial program based on Marxist political language, and by the early 1960s, their anti-colonialism had become violent and revolutionary.

The other Angolan nationalist movement in 1961 developed more around one individual figure, Holden Roberto. Roberto was born in Sao Salvadore, Angola on January 12, 1923. He grew up near the Baptist mission where his father worked, and he was educated in missionary schools in nearby Belgian Congo. Roberto eventually got a job as an accountant for the Belgian government in Leopoldville, where he met Patrice Lumumba, Cyril Adoula, and other Congolese nationalists. It was not until a trip home to Angola, in 1951, however, that Roberto was inspired toward political activism. According to former CIA agent John Stockwell, it was during this visit that Roberto witnessed the brutalization of an old African man by a callous Portuguese *chefe de posto*, an event that shocked him into radicalism.¹³⁴

In 1957, Roberto rallied a group that primarily consisted of Bakongos in northwest Angola and southwest Zaire to create the Union of Northern Angolan Peoples (UPNA). A year later, Roberto changed the name to Union of Angolan Peoples (UPA) to drop the obvious ethnic base and attempt a more broad-based appeal. Whereas the MPLA established early contacts with the Portuguese communists, Roberto quickly made favorable relations with the U.S. In 1959, he traveled with the Guinean mission to the United Nations to cultivate support for Angolan freedom. There he made important and lasting contacts with American academics and politicians.¹³⁵ Roberto also had powerful

¹³⁴ Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies*, 115.

¹³⁵ Noer, *Cold War and Black Liberation*, 68.

regional allies. He was heavily tied to Mobutu of the Congo (later Zaire), because he married Mobutu's sister-in-law. Although this relationship allowed the UPA an advantage in receiving aid and protection, it also seemed to make the movement "more interested in an independent Congolese state than a united Angola."¹³⁶

In order to appeal to the U.S. and other Western powers, Roberto publicly rejected Marxist advances. Even so, he seems to have espoused Maoist lines in writing to friends that "without bloodshed revolution is impossible." In fact, according to Stockwell, "Roberto was only 'conservative' in so far as the word applies to East/West competition. Apart from ideological trappings, he and Neto [later leader of the MPLA] preached the same thing for Angola: national independence, democratic government, agrarian reform, economic development, pan-African unity, and the total destruction of colonial culture."¹³⁷ Although the MPLA and UPA would later become polarized, belligerent enemies, in 1961 they had many of the same goals and also employed the same violent tactics in attempts to expel the Portuguese.

As the year went on, however, the UPA and MPLA headed in different directions. The MPLA was still a fledgling organization, structurally speaking, while the UPA was internally cohesive and consolidated under the leadership of Holden Roberto. It was the MPLA, however, that escalated the struggle for liberation by launching an attack against the Portuguese on February 4, 1961.¹³⁸ The MPLA forced Roberto's hand and pushed the UPA into the forefront against the colonial authorities in March 1961. Both organizations, in a battle for nationalist credentials, claimed to have initiated the rebellion

¹³⁶ Hanhimaki, Jussi, *The Flawed Architect*, 404.

¹³⁷ Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies*, 116.

¹³⁸ Guimaraes, *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War*, 53.

in 1961. According to MPLA accounts, on February 4, 1961, 200 of their members launched a futile attack on a Luandan prison, as well as other government targets. Even though those who were involved knew the plan was destined to fail, they were also correct in surmising that it would attain for them a mythical importance in the history of Angolan liberation.¹³⁹ In March, the UPA followed suit by orchestrating violent rebellions in the coffee producing regions of northern Angola; 1,500 Africans died in order to kill between 300 and 500 Europeans.¹⁴⁰

After observing a violent transfer of power between Belgium and Africans in the Congo in 1961, the Portuguese were not about to take any chances in Angola. Salazar's regime reacted by sending the Portuguese air force to Angola to bomb villages of starving cotton farmers and to use herbicides against rural guerilla enclaves. The National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) created a public relations disaster for the Portuguese when it televised a report on the U.S.-made napalm that was used on Angolan civilians.¹⁴¹ At the same time, white settlers in the city of Luanda armed themselves with knives, cudgels, and even firearms to kill the educated Africans who could threaten the expatriate hold on white-collar jobs.¹⁴² The violence of both the official and unofficial reactions imposed a "sullen calm" by October 1961.¹⁴³

At the onset of the 1961 revolt, the U.S. stance in the UN was against Portuguese colonialism. That March, the U.S. had approved a UN Security Council Resolution that condemned the Portuguese repression in Angola—a measure that the Portuguese used to

¹³⁹ MacQueen, *The Decolonization of Portuguese Africa*, 24.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line*, 150.

¹⁴² Birmingham, *Empire in Africa*, 91.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 28.

accuse the U.S. of courting the third world vote at their expense.¹⁴⁴ The Portuguese responded to the vote by hiring a New York public relations firm, Selvage and Lee, to release articles and books in the U.S. that condemned the Angolan revolt as a communist plot and attacked the U.S. for “serving the cause of communism.”¹⁴⁵

In addition to this manufactured public pressure, later events in Western Europe and arguments from various U.S. officials for a “Europe first” policy would eventually reverse Kennedy’s attempt at a new “Africanist” departure in U.S./Africa policy. Once again, this reversal eventually aligned the U.S. with imperial Portugal. Kennedy had made a new approach to Africa part of his campaign plank, and he had criticized the Eisenhower administration for approaching decolonization with a “head in the sand policy” that warranted Africans’ suspicion.¹⁴⁶ But that August, rising tensions between the U.S. and the Soviet Union over Berlin stopped the new approach short in its tracks. The tensions between the two powers resulted in the construction of the Berlin Wall on August 13. The use of the Azores base for U.S. aircraft during the Berlin airlift, and the base’s significance as a staging area for possible troop deployment gave the Portuguese new leverage in its campaign for support on Angola. It also served as a wedge that divided the Kennedy administration between Africanists and Europeanists. The latter emphasized the preeminent importance of Azores, NATO, and communist Angolans, while the former, including Under-Secretary Chester Bowles, focused on the harsh treatment of Angolans, including their lack of education and forced labor. George Ball, according to Noer, was “the most obvious spokesperson for ‘Europe first.’” Ball, a

¹⁴⁴ Guimaraes, *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War*, 54.

¹⁴⁵ Noer, *Cold War and Black Liberation*, 74.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 51.

protégé of Dean Acheson, stated, “Acheson cared nothing for Africa. Acheson was a Europeanist. I’m considered one, too.”¹⁴⁷

With the Azores lease set to expire in December 1962, Kennedy eventually reversed his administration’s stance on Angola, and the Europeanists won the day. Thanksgiving weekend, the president dismissed Bowles from his job at the State Department, and replaced him with George Ball. In a “bitter twelve-page, single spaced letter” to the president, Bowles attacked the heavy European orientation of the administration and warned, “No one at a high level, closely associated with you, has been giving priority or attention to what are frequently referred to as ‘outlying areas,’ in other words, to the rest of the world where most of the human race lives.”¹⁴⁸ Anti-communism and the global Cold War were the focus of Kennedy’s foreign policy outlook, and so events within Africa were viewed as part of the arena of the East/West power competition. Although Kennedy had campaigned with promises of improving U.S./Africa relations and criticized the Eisenhower administration’s approach, Africanists in the State Department quickly learned that, rhetoric aside, little had changed. The U.S. would still, at best, tow a middle-of-the-road policy by voicing support for African self-determination while aligning itself with the policies of colonial and white regimes.

By 1963, the Kennedy administration’s reversal on Portugal had gone even further. In July, the president sent a memorandum to the State Department ordering all anti-Portuguese initiatives by the U.S. government to be called off.¹⁴⁹ Similarly, former vice president and presidential hopeful Richard Nixon visited Lisbon in 1963 as a private

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 65.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 93.

¹⁴⁹ Guimaraes, *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War*, 181.

citizen and told the foreign minister that independence was “not necessarily the best thing for Africa or the Africans.”¹⁵⁰ The Portuguese took advantage of this reversal, as well as the U.S.’ obsession with the anti-communist crusade, by strongly supporting the developing war in Vietnam and then drawing an analogy to its own battle against “communist aggression” in Africa.¹⁵¹ The U.S. responded in May 1965 with the CIA’s Operation Sparrow, which gave Portugal U.S. aircraft to use in Africa. At the same time, the U.S. was also using a CIA front company, Intermountain Aviation, to sell seven B-26 bombers to support Portuguese attacks against nationalists in Angola and Mozambique.¹⁵² All of this was done in violation of a long-standing U.S. pledge not to sell any weapons to the Portuguese that would be used outside of Europe. As noted by Gleijeses, the administration’s policy was clear: “the base in Azores was more important than self-determination in Angola.”¹⁵³

Although the Angolan revolt of February 4, 1961 ended in a matter of months, it was really the end of the beginning. The defeat only gave the movements impetus to change their tactics and seek support from foreign powers. From the end of 1961 to the early 1970s, the Portuguese were able to hang on to their control of Angola, which gave the U.S. (especially Henry Kissinger) the false impression that they would remain in power for a long time to come. A 1974 military coup in Portugal, however, created an opening that the Angolan nationalists seized, and it was this power vacuum that altered the playing field and set three nationalist movements into a violent struggle for power, ultimately resulting in the Angolan Civil War of 1975.

¹⁵⁰ Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line*, 238.

¹⁵¹ Noer, *Cold War and Black Liberation*, 123.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 195.

Augustinho Neto, a black African gynecologist and poet, eventually came to front the MPLA. During the violence of 1961, Neto was imprisoned in Portugal for openly criticizing the colonial administration. He was held in Portugal from 1956 to 1962, when he, along with the majority of MPLA leaders, moved to establish a base for training in Brazzaville. The Congolese revolution of 1963 brought in new president Alphonse Massamba-Debat, who formed a government of radical leftist teachers and university students who had studied in France. After the MPLA was crippled by Portuguese reprisals in 1961, Massamba-Debat invited the organization to move its headquarters to Brazzaville to open training camps and to use Radio Brazzaville for propaganda.¹⁵⁴

Up until 1964, the MPLA had tried to maintain a non-aligned, nationalist orientation, and was willing to appeal to any nation for aid. After their move to Brazzaville, however, the movement became more pro-Soviet in its alignment, and their loose body of thought increasingly characterized the anti-colonial fight as a global “class-struggle” for the third world’s global working class.¹⁵⁵ In 1965, the MPLA also established invaluable contacts with Cuba. Ernesto “Che” Guevara made a trip to Brazzaville in January of that year. There he met several MPLA leaders, who appealed to the Cubans for aid in their struggle against the Portuguese. Piero Gleijeses interviewed one of the MPLA leaders present at the meeting, Lucio Lara, who recalled, “We wanted only one thing from the Cubans: instructors. The war was getting difficult, and we were inexperienced.”¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 82.

¹⁵⁵ Guimaraes, *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War*, 171.

¹⁵⁶ Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 83.

Cuban aid to the MPLA began with training assistance for the Brazzaville regime in 1966. There, more than 1,000 Cubans provided support for the revolutionary government.¹⁵⁷ When Fidel Castro came to power in 1959, the Cubans had only one diplomatic link with Africa: a legation in Cairo. But by 1961, the Cubans had begun to aid the Algerians in their struggle for independence, and 100 to 200 Africans were receiving military training in Cuba.¹⁵⁸

After a successful foray into Algeria, the Cubans began expanding their missions to African nations. Guevara was convinced that sub-Saharan Africa was “imperialism’s weakest link,” and the Cubans began using Algiers as a base from which to foray into Angola and Congo.¹⁵⁹ Guevara told a journalist during his trip to sub-Saharan Africa in 1965, “I have found here in Africa...entire populations that are, if you’ll allow me this image, like water on the verge of boiling.”¹⁶⁰ The Cubans considered Africa ripe for revolutions, and, after the failed Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, it was a convenient way to keep the U.S. focused elsewhere.

Just as the Cubans were stepping up their aid to nationalist movements in Africa, things began to change in Portugal. In 1968, Portuguese dictator Antonio Salazar had suffered a disabling stroke and was replaced by his finance minister, Marcello Caetano. Caetano was then 62 years old and had served in the regime for nearly 30 years. He was clearly not enthused about changing Portugal’s colonial practices. Only days before he was ousted, Caetano proclaimed, “We are fighting to defend the right of all men to live

¹⁵⁷ Guimaraes, *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War*, 139.

¹⁵⁸ Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 30.

¹⁵⁹ Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The World Was Going Our Way: The KGB and the Battle for the Third World* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 433.

¹⁶⁰ Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 105.

together in Africa, and, above all, to defend the multiracial society we formed there.”¹⁶¹

The reality, however, was very different and had long been known to those within the regime. A secret report from a member of the Angolan Council on Counter Subversion, Afonso Mendes, was presented to the regime in January 1969; he outlined a list of “errors and abuses”:

Slavery, wars of pacification, the abuses of power, physical violence carried out by the administrative authorities, forced labor ... the lack of protection during the indigenato regime, the confiscation of lands ... the dislocation of population, the compulsory cultivation, numerous offenses against the traditional laws and the African system of values, etc, etc ... Among Africans the white man will always be presented as a bad and greedy human being, as the sole cause of all the misery of the past, and perhaps as the traditional enemy of the black.¹⁶²

In addition to the revelation of blatant human rights abuses in Angola, the struggle to hold onto its colonies was bleeding Portugal economically and caused an extreme manpower crisis that heavily burdened the Portuguese army. Compulsory military service in Portugal had one-fourth of all men wearing a military uniform in order to fight for lands for which they had no real concern. The percentage of Portugal’s population that was enlisted at the time was exceeded only by Israel and Vietnam.¹⁶³ Additionally, many of the Portuguese troops serving in Africa were conscripted blacks. Desertion was a reality and mutiny was a frightening possibility. By April 1974, a movement of young Portuguese military officers, led by General Antonio de Spínola, launched a coup that ousted the Caetano regime from power.

¹⁶¹ Bender, *Angola Under the Portuguese*, xxi.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 155.

¹⁶³ MacQueen, *The Decolonization of Portuguese Africa*, 77.

The coup in Portugal created a new era of chaos and uncertainty in the African colonies and also a clear opening for the three liberation movements that had risen to power: the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). By 1974, the three movements all touted very different ideological trappings, but their histories showed they were not so different. The MPLA had begun mainly as an anti-colonial nationalist movement that had a number of Marxists among its leadership. After moving their bases to Brazzaville, however, the MPLA established strong links with the leftist regime there, as well as with the Cuban delegation that had been left to support them. Additionally, the coup in Portugal and the overthrow of U.S. ally Haile Selassie in Ethiopia in 1974 gave the Soviet Union a renewed fervor to support the MPLA, which led to its reputation (in the Western world) as a communist-inspired Soviet puppet. According to Soviet Ambassador to the U.S., Anatoly Dobrynin, these international developments created a “new wave of optimism” in Moscow about Soviet prospects in Africa.¹⁶⁴

Though they were by 1974 strongly tied to communist Cuba and the Soviet Union, the MPLA had only become more radical for pragmatic reasons. At the outset, they were first and foremost an anti-colonial, nationalist movement. They were anti-Portugal and anything that was associated with the imperial power. Because the U.S. provided funding, weaponry, and vehicles that were used to kill both MPLA members and Angolan civilians, the movement began to take an anti-Western posture.

¹⁶⁴ Anatoly Dobrynin, *In Confidence: Moscow's Ambassador to America's Six Cold War Presidents, 1962-1986* (University of Washington Press, 2001), 429.

Additionally, by 1974, the U.S. was providing funding and support to the MPLA's most vehement opponent, Roberto and the FNLA.

Roberto's first contact with U.S. officials dated back to his trip to New York in 1959. He traveled with a group of Guinean nationalists to the UN to work for international support for Angolan freedom. During the 1961 rebellion in Angola, however, the Kennedy administration was not ready to cast its lot with black liberation movements. Instead, the U.S. sided with the Portuguese and granted millions in credits that were used for military suppression in exchange for a new lease on the Azores air base.

This break in 1961 was not the end of the U.S.' relationship with Roberto. Instead, the U.S. kept a very close eye on the rebel leader, mainly via U.S. contacts in Leopoldville such as Roberto's brother-in-law, Mobutu. In December 1963, the embassy in Leopoldville sent an urgent cable to Secretary of State Dean Rusk warning that Roberto was "turning left." He was becoming "completely disillusioned with Western, and specifically U.S. policy on Angola" and "convinced that the U.S. would never jeopardize its military ties with Portugal."¹⁶⁵ Additionally, Roberto had begun soliciting and receiving military aid from China. He announced this fact publicly in January 1964, and claimed that he would also accept aid from any other communist nation in his fight for freedom.

A year later, the Johnson administration was working with Belgium to lead a mercenary operation in neighboring Congo. There, U.S. client Moise Tshombe faced a

¹⁶⁵ Noer, *Cold War and Black Liberation*, 109.

revolt against his corrupt regime. At stake was the stability of a nation with vast mineral wealth and a regional ally in Tshombe.¹⁶⁶ The U.S. did not want to overtly take the lead in such an operation, so Washington worked with the Belgians, who would eventually send 450 soldiers to the Congo.¹⁶⁷ Additionally, the CIA organized a private air force to bolster Tshombe's regime and worked with him to hire 700 white South Africans, Rhodesians, and Europeans.¹⁶⁸ This aid was provided in spite of the fact that Tshombe was "perhaps the most hated black political leader throughout his leadership" because of the unsuccessful secession of Katanga, the use of white mercenaries against his fellow Congolese, ties to Belgian colonialist enterprises, and his responsibility for the murder of Congo's first elected Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba.¹⁶⁹

Probably next on the most-hated list would have been then General Joseph Mobutu, the man who captured Lumumba and brought him to Tshombe. By the mid 1960s, the CIA had already begun working with Mobutu by cooperating in Lumumba's arrest and murder. The U.S. government had believed him to be the Castro of central Africa. The CIA and Mobutu had been working together for five years by the time Mobutu came to power in a bloodless coup in 1965. The CIA felt that Mobutu's takeover was "the best thing that could have possibly happened."¹⁷⁰ Not only was Mobutu avowedly anti-communist, but he had also proved willing to work with white, Western mercenaries against his own countrymen. Over time, he would prove a corrupt, but

¹⁶⁶ For more on the mercenary intervention in Zaire, see Piero Gleijeses, "*Flee! The White Giants are Coming!: The United States, Mercenaries, and the Congo, 1964-1965*," in *Empire and Revolution: The United States and the Third World Since 1945*, eds. Peter Hahn and Mary Ann Heiss (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2001).

¹⁶⁷ Gleijeses, "*Flee! The White Giants are Coming!*" 128.

¹⁶⁸ Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line*, 183.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 182.

¹⁷⁰ Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 147.

reliable ally for the U.S. in its fight to contain black radicalism in the region. He was part of the regional power bloc that Nixon and Kissenger would later count on to maintain equilibrium and the U.S. sphere of influence in southern Africa.

Given Holden Roberto's familial relationship with Mobutu, it is not surprising that he and the FNLA rode the Zairian leader's coattails into a cozy relationship with the U.S. during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Although the U.S. was still closely allied to Portuguese interests, in 1969, CIA African Division Chief Jim Potts sent CIA officer John Stockwell to an FNLA camp and headquarters in Kinshasa. The agency had no coverage inside Angola during the late 1960s, so Stockwell was sent to gather information and analyze the situation. Other than Stockwell's trip, almost all of the CIA's field intelligence about the country came from Roberto.¹⁷¹ Stockwell's account of the trip reveals a dilapidated, dirty and crowded set of facilities with extremely ragged and under-armed forces:

It had been sleepy and undisciplined, and perhaps the experience inclined me to underestimate the tenacity of the Angolan nationalist movement ... A few leaderless soldiers in ragged uniforms and seminaked women and children, shambled between dilapidated brick buildings. It [the FNLA headquarters' inner compound] was crowded with small brick buildings, their screenless wooden doors and windows unpainted and in many cases splintered and broken. For every soldier there seemed to be several women and children.¹⁷²

After his trip to Kinshasa, Stockwell tried to send a report to Washington in order to warn them of the dilapidated and pitiful state of the movement to which the U.S. seemed to be increasingly aligned. The CIA chief of station in Kinshasa, however, sent a note back to Stockwell that the agency was not interested in Angola. According to

¹⁷¹ Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies*, 52.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 48, 112.

Stockwell, “We didn’t support the black fighters and we didn’t want our NATO ally, Portugal, picking up reports that we were visiting Angola rebel base camps.” In the CIA, “it was tacitly agreed that communist agitation was largely responsible for the blacks’ continued resistance to Portuguese rule.”¹⁷³ Apparently any information that contradicted this assumption was not welcome in Washington.

Nixon and Kissinger’s affinity for white minority rule sent the signal to the intelligence and State bureaucracies that contact with African liberation movements was heavily frowned upon. Instead, the only information gathered came through Portugal and contacts in Kinshasa, the home of U.S. client Mobutu, via FNLA leader Roberto. Even the fact that Roberto and the FNLA proclaimed a leftist ideology and received Chinese support was inconsequential to Kissinger, because Soviet support for the MPLA trumped all other factors. Stockwell argues that with most of the information on Angola from Roberto, “it was obvious that he was exaggerating and distorting facts in order to keep our support.”¹⁷⁴ This policy would later come back to haunt Kissinger in 1975, when tensions among the three movements exploded and the MPLA was beyond persuasion and diplomatic appeals.

The third Angolan nationalist movement, and the last to enter the scene, was Jonas Savimbi’s National Movement for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). Savimbi was a stark contrast to MPLA leader Augustinho Neto. Whereas Neto was described as a shy, soft-spoken, and very thoughtful leader, Savimbi was an “impressive

¹⁷³ Ibid., 49.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 90.

figure,” acknowledged by both friend and foe as an intellectual and charismatic leader.¹⁷⁵ CIA officer John Stockwell, after first meeting Savimbi, described him as “a stocky man in a dark green uniform ... this skin was very black and his beard full and shiny. His wide, prominent eyes flashed at me briefly.”¹⁷⁶ Savimbi, both charismatic and highly educated, was perfectly equipped to lead his own liberation movement in Angola.

Before Savimbi broke away and created UNITA, he was a key leader of the FNLA. After the rebel violence in March 1961, Roberto’s Union of Angolan Peoples (UPA) tried to establish credentials as a non-ethnic movement by appointing Savimbi as secretary general. Savimbi had joined the UPA over the MPLA after his Kenyan friend, Tom Mboya, told him, “The MPLA are mesticos and communists ... the UPA is the organization for black people, so that’s the one you should join.”¹⁷⁷ A year later, on March 27, 1962, the UPA was formally established as the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA).¹⁷⁸

Savimbi’s tenure in the FNLA did not last very long. A political opportunist, Savimbi was likely biding his time for a chance to take matters into his own hands. Being an Ovimbundu gave Savimbi political advantage over Roberto and Neto. The largest ethnic group in Angola, the Ovimbundu were not yet drawn into anti-colonial politics. Savimbi had a massive political base just waiting to be enlisted. In July 1964, Savimbi resigned from the FNLA, accused Roberto of “tribalism and corruption,” and began cultivating his own nationalist movement.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁵ Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 239.

¹⁷⁶ Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies*, 139-140.

¹⁷⁷ Guimaraes, *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War*, 77.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 55.

¹⁷⁹ James, *A Political History of the Civil War in Angola*, 45.

After leaving the FNLA, Savimbi first visited several nations, including China, North Vietnam, North Korea, and Algeria, hoping to receive the support necessary to establish UNITA in Angola. Savimbi came away from the trip with little tangible aid, but he and other members of the “Chinese Eleven” did receive guerilla training from military advisors in China.¹⁸⁰ Upon returning to Angola, Savimbi recruited several members of the GRAE (the FNLA government that operated in exile), as well as his supporters in Brazzaville and some Angolan students abroad, to form the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), which launched in Zambia on March 5, 1966.¹⁸¹ Because Savimbi’s UNITA was working inside the country, these exiled leaders were able to gain the credibility acquired by operating among their countrymen in Angola. It also gave them a leg-up over the MPLA and FNLA, who were still based outside of Angola, as a more legitimate, nationalist movement. Following the establishment of UNITA, the MPLA and FNLA began to escalate military incursions inside Angola to a heightened level.

The political ideology of UNITA was a very equivocal one, and despite attempts by some to pinpoint exactly what it was, Savimbi seemed to change it over time, depending on the circumstances. John Stockwell writes, “Savimbi was too proud to turn to the Portuguese, but otherwise he had no prejudice and no profound ideology. He was neither Marxist nor capitalist, nor even a black revolutionary. He was an Angolan patriot, fighting for the freedom of the Ovimbundu.”¹⁸² UNITA wavered ideologically, touting nationalism on one hand while claiming anti-communism on another, and simultaneously

¹⁸⁰ Guimaraes, *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War*, 79.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies*, 154.

establishing links with China and Maoism. Despite Stockwell's claim that Savimbi was "too proud" to turn to the Portuguese, the "Timber Affair" proved otherwise when UNITA later struck a deal with the colonial power. According to the deal, the Portuguese military would leave UNITA forces alone in the eastern military zone in exchange for information on their revolutionary rivals.¹⁸³ Claims that Savimbi was "anti-communist" also proved false when one takes into account the fact that UNITA received military training from North Korea in addition to money and arms from China.¹⁸⁴ Stockwell was, however, accurate in stating that Savimbi was not a black revolutionary. In fact, as will be detailed later, UNITA took the lead in courting support from South Africa, a move that would discredit the movement in the eyes of nearly every black African government.¹⁸⁵

Savimbi cut deals with whomever would write a check. It was a strategy that had proved to work for Mobutu, the totalitarian ruler in Zaire, so it is not surprising that both FNLA and UNITA would tout their "anti-communist" ideology in order to get a leg-up on their nationalist rival, the MPLA. Although Kissinger later attributed Soviet sponsorship as a reason for intervening against the MPLA, he seems to have completely ignored the fact that UNITA had also begun as a communist-trained and armed movement. Fortunately for Savimbi, during the late 1960s and early 1970s, Kissinger had no interest in the affairs of southern Africa unless it was directly related to the Cold War or America's allies in South Africa, Rhodesia, or its client state Zaire.

¹⁸³ Guimaraes, *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War*, 82.

¹⁸⁴ Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies*, 154.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

By late 1974, the three liberation movements in Angola were still “little more than a collection of guerilla units.” The chaos in the Portuguese metropole, however, offered a chance for the movements to take more bold actions, poise themselves to strike, and solicit arms and support from numerous foreign donors.¹⁸⁶ After the fall of Prime Minister Marcello Caetano in the 1974 coup, the new Portuguese government decided to suspend military offensives in Angola. The foreseeable collapse of colonial power in Angola lent heightened legitimacy to the nationalist movements’ goals. Foreign donors, interested in shaping the outcome and reaping potential benefits, began providing arms, money, and military advisers. Soviet weapons, including thousands of AK-47s, were routed through Brazzaville to the MPLA base. In May, 112 Chinese military advisers arrived at an FNLA base in Zaire with more than 450 tons of weapons.¹⁸⁷ Over the next year, “columns of motorized armored carriers, large mortars, rocket launchers, tanks, and jet fighters” were poured into Angola.¹⁸⁸

In the summer of 1974, each movement began strategically placing itself to fill the power vacuum that would be left by the collapsing Portuguese colonialists. UNITA, drawing from the largest ethnic base of the three, began organizing mainly along political lines; they mobilized the rural, Ovimbundus of southern and central Angola. Savimbi’s organization had already benefited from an exclusive ceasefire with the Portuguese in February 1974, but the following summer was an even more opportune time to consolidate power. UNITA was the weakest movement militarily in 1974, with between 600 and 800 men in April 1974. U.S. consul general Tom Killoran noted, “These men

¹⁸⁶ Guimaraes, *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War*, 97.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 100.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 97.

had much less combat exposure than FNLA or MPLA troops.”¹⁸⁹ Thus, a political solution to the inevitable independence in Angola was in the best interests of Savimbi and his supporters.

It was also during the summer of 1974 that UNITA began to court outside military support. During this period, Savimbi approached the South Africans via Portuguese contacts in Angola, followed by contacts with South African officials. Eventually, mid-level meetings were arranged between UNITA and South Africa, in which UNITA promised to keep South West Africa People’s Organization (SWAPO, a nationalist movement in Pretoria’s colony, South West Africa) units from entering present-day Namibia in exchange for future military support in the case of civil war.¹⁹⁰ Although it is difficult to find commonalities between an Angolan nationalist movement and the apartheid South African regime, their friendly relations were apparently based on noninterference and unity as part of an African anti-communist bloc.

At the same time as UNITA was consolidating politically, the FNLA was busy mobilizing its military. Free from Portuguese attacks, the FNLA was able to move troops from Zaire into the Bakongo regions of northern Angola. In July, Chinese advisors began arriving in Zaire to help train FNLA forces before they headed into Angola.¹⁹¹ The Chinese were most likely motivated by their rivalry with the Soviets; they saw support for the FNLA as a means to thwart Soviet influence in Angola via the MPLA. It was also during this period, in summer 1974, that the U.S. began to fund the FNLA.¹⁹² Roberto

¹⁸⁹ Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 241.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 276.

¹⁹¹ Hanhimaki, *The Flawed Architect*, 405.

¹⁹² Guimaraes, *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War*, 101.

had been the CIA payroll for nearly a decade already, but in 1974, the U.S. began to increase its overall funding for the movement. Before all was said and done, the FNLA would receive aid from the U.S., China, Romania, India, Algeria, and Zaire.¹⁹³ Whereas UNITA was focused on finding a political solution to the strife in Angola, the FNLA was predisposed to a violent solution.¹⁹⁴ By January 1975, the FNLA had a total of around 21,000 troops, by far the largest of the three movements militarily.

Although the Portuguese had suspended military offensives in the spring, violence ensued in Angola during the summer of 1974, and the FNLA and MPLA waited until October to sign ceasefires. Uncertainty and chaos came to embody the summer as a rash of strikes broke out in Luanda, followed by bloody clashes in the city and its suburbs. In July, violent demonstrations broke out between black and white Angolans in the capital, and led to the deaths of 20 people.¹⁹⁵ Weeks later, on August 9, clashes between members of the MPLA and FNLA erupted, wounding 122 and killing 18. Additionally, thousands began to flee the outer suburbs of the city, fearful of further violence.¹⁹⁶ It was rapidly becoming clear that without a quick and firm solution for the transition from colonial government to independence, Angola would erupt into a deadly civil war.

Another result of the coup in Portugal was the ripening of racial tensions in the colonies of Portuguese Africa. On May 5, the *New York Times* reported “a roaring crowd of several thousand whites” jamming a plaza in front of a city hall in Mozambique, demanding that Portugal’s ruling junta maintain control of Mozambique.¹⁹⁷ In both May

¹⁹³ Hanhimaki, *The Flawed Architect*, 404.

¹⁹⁴ Guimaraes, *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War*, 100.

¹⁹⁵ “Angola Protest Said to Kill 20,” *The New York Times*, 16 July 1974.

¹⁹⁶ “Thousands Flee Angola Violence,” *The New York Times*, 9 August 1974.

¹⁹⁷ “Whites Bid Lisbon Keep Mozambique,” *The New York Times*, 6 May 1974.

and July, the *New York Times* reported outbreaks of violence and murder in Angola that were attributed to racial tensions. According to reporter Henry Kamm, the Portuguese military suspected white extremists of “wishing to provoke a major clash ... in an attempt to sabotage the transition of Angola toward almost certain independence.”¹⁹⁸ In 1974, the white population in Angola was only 500,000 of the 5.8 million people living in the country. Additionally, that minority had reaped exclusive benefits throughout the colony’s turbulent history. By 1974, it was estimated that the average white person in Angola earned the equivalent of \$320 per month, whereas the average black Angolan earned \$60 per month.¹⁹⁹ Reporter Henry Kamm argued that white extremists in Angola were attempting to provoke a major clash between races in hopes of intervention from South Africa and Rhodesia, the two remaining white dominated powers in southern Africa.²⁰⁰ For the minority of privileged, white Angolans, the prospect of an independent nation was uncertain and, frankly, quite frightening.

The collapse of the Portuguese empire in Africa threatened a similar fate for the minority regimes of South Africa and Rhodesia. John Stockwell writes that the Portuguese collapse put South Africa “in a dangerously beleaguered position. The 1974 coup in Portugal had exposed South Africa to fresh, chill winds of black nationalism, as Mozambique and Angola threatened to succumb to Soviet-sponsored, radical black movements.”²⁰¹ The black population in southern Africa was becoming increasingly restive, whites were emigrating rapidly, the buffer state created by Portuguese Africa was

¹⁹⁸ Henry Kamm, “Portuguese Blame Whites in Angola for Racial Unrest,” *The New York Times*, 29 May 1974.

¹⁹⁹ Thomas A. Johnson, “Lisbon Coup Creates Political Parties – Mostly White – In Angola,” *The New York Times*, 20 May 1974.

²⁰⁰ Kamm, “Portuguese Blame Whites in Angola for Racial Unrest.”

²⁰¹ Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies*, 185.

disintegrating, and South Africa's economy was sagging. In October 1974, Sir de Villiers Graaf, leader of the United Party, told the South African Parliament, "We face some of the greatest challenges of our times and there is a sense of growing urgency in the minds of the entire population of southern Africa."²⁰² Perhaps it was not the "entire" population that was growing in urgency, but the minority rulers of South Africa and Rhodesia.

Portugal and South Africa had long been regional allies. The Portuguese had, for a long time, allowed the South Africans to launch operations into Angola to attack camps of the South West Africa People's Organization, an organization that sought to free Namibia of South African control. SWAPO was set to greatly benefit from an MPLA-dominated Angola, and the South Africans feared what might happen if they no longer had an ally to repress SWAPO guerilla units in the region. Additionally, Portugal and South Africa co-funded the Cunene River dam in southern Angola, a project that was essential in providing electricity for northern Namibia.

The biggest fear for South Africans and Rhodesians, however, was the possibility that a black, nationalist victory in Angola might inspire and incite instability in their own nations. The fact that the Soviets were arming such factions made this fear even more potent. Pik Botha, South African ambassador to the U.S. in 1974, claimed that the fear was not of Africans as a military threat, instead "the focus was on Soviet penetration and the possibility of the Soviet Union using unstable situations in Africa to benefit itself, to take root, and foment trouble."²⁰³ The "unstable situation," however, was unrest amongst the majority of black Africans in southern Africa, and the "trouble" the Soviets might foment would be an end to the apartheid regime. For the minority regimes in southern

²⁰² Charles Mohr, "For White South Africa, the Winds are Unmistakable," 13 October 1974.

²⁰³ Pik Botha, interview by *Cnn.com*, "Cold War: Good Guys, Bad Guys; Episode 17, 14 February 1999.

Africa, the impact of the Portuguese coup in southern Africa either had to be completely circumscribed or controlled and moderated. As will be shown, it was a matter of survival to them, and they were willing to unleash their military might to affect the situation.

The coup in Portugal in 1974 was a powerful catalyst for a number of events and issues pertaining to southern Africa. It created a clear opening for the nationalist movements in Portuguese Africa to intensify their struggles for liberation. It was a frightening wake-up call for the white Rhodesian and South African regimes. And for Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, the coup in Portugal was the catalyst for his suddenly emergent interest in southern African affairs.

CHAPTER III: KISSINGER VERSUS THE AFRICAN BUREAU

The U.S. was largely in the dark when it came to foreign policy toward Angola after Kennedy's policy reversal in 1962. The American presence in the country was limited to a single consulate in Luanda. Richard Post, who was consular general there from 1969 to 1972 said, "It was a very small consulate. There were five U.S. officials in all, including myself, the code clerk, and the secretary."²⁰⁴ It was into this environment that Donald Easum arrived when he was named assistant secretary of state for African affairs.

In 1974, Donald B. Easum first met Henry Kissinger in the Pierre Hotel in New York. Easum had served as the U.S. ambassador to Upper Volta since 1971. The secretary was in the midst of putting a new diplomatic team together for Africa, and he wanted Easum's input. Recalling the meeting, Easum said:

His suite was up on – I don't know which floor – and I went up there, and he received me in a very obviously elite setting, and I think he offered me a drink, or coffee, or something. And I sat down in a soft chair, and he was seated in another one, and before we really got started in comes this little black Pekinese, scrambling all over and jumping up and down on me and on him, and I couldn't concentrate on what was happening. Then I think it was his mother who came in, who was charming, and he introduced her and that was pleasant, and she left, and we were just about ready to start when his wife came in from a shopping tour, and there was conversation about that.

[Later] he said, "You know I want to do some new things. Some innovative things, and I'm beginning to get my team in order – by the way, how old are you?" And I said, "I'm your age, Mr. Secretary," which was then 50 for both of us. And he asked a little bit about Africa, but relatively little."²⁰⁵

²⁰⁴ Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 278.

²⁰⁵ Easum.

Eventually, the secretary of state asked Easum his interest in the various positions he was looking to fill: executive secretary of the executive secretariat, head of Bureau of Intelligence and Research, assistant secretary for Latin America and also for Africa. Easum said the only position he felt experienced for and interested in was that of assistant secretary for African Affairs. He admitted to Kissinger, however, “I know nothing about North Africa. I’ve no Arabic. I don’t know anything about the Horn of Africa. East and southern Africa I, of course, know what’s going on as any Ambassador should wherever he is in Africa, but I can’t tell you you’d be getting anybody with any particular expertise in those areas.” Kissinger responded, “All right. Go back to whatever that place is—Ouagadougou—and I’ll call you if I need you.”²⁰⁶

Years later, Easum reflected on the “bizarre” first interview with Kissinger and said, “I never knew anything about what he felt about Africa. I’d been, in a sense, too frightened and too put off by the bizarre interview ... and he didn’t ask me anything serious there.”²⁰⁷ Regardless, three weeks after the initial interview, Larry Eagleburger summoned Easum to Washington, D.C., where he was informed that Kissinger wanted to appoint him assistant secretary of state for African affairs.

The discomfort Easum felt upon first meeting with Kissinger was a preview of the tense and hostile relationship to come. After being promoted, Easum realized he did not even know how Kissinger viewed policy on Africa. He would discover over time, however, that the secretary’s view of Africa policy vacillated between the “middle of the road” approach toward white regimes and Black nationalist movements and an overarching obsession with stability, spheres of influence, and balances of power.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

Easum was the most senior of a new group of “Africanists” in the State Department. He greatly opposed the “tar baby” option, and instead favored hardening the U.S.’ stance toward South Africa, Portugal, and Rhodesia. “My long-held view was that FRELIMO [in Mozambique], PAIGC [in Guinea-Bissau], and the MPLA had valid objectives and that their ideology was something we didn’t need to worry about ... the MPLA was a better partner for the U.S. than the FNLA,” said Easum.²⁰⁸

In early April 1974, government officials from various Africa nations gathered in Washington, D.C. for Easum’s swearing in as assistant secretary of state for African affairs. Easum described the turnout as “tremendous.”²⁰⁹ “I think they felt they were getting a friend in the position,” he later recalled. “They were very antipathetic to Kissinger, because it was then public in the press that he had written the famous National Security Council memorandum (NSSM) number 39 for Nixon.”²¹⁰

Donald Easum had a reputation and track record that allowed Africans to hope that U.S. policy toward the continent might have been about to change. He had been appointed ambassador to Upper Volta in 1971, where he was known for his efforts to maintain the presence and function of the Peace Corps while keeping the CIA and U.S. Marines out.²¹¹ William E. Schaufele Jr., assistant secretary for African affairs in 1975, described Easum as “a real African supporter. Very much sympathetic to Africa, its aspirations and its view of the world, he had a habit of speaking out supportively on those subjects, although Kissinger—indeed the United States—did not attach so much of the

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid.

same importance to Africa as he.”²¹² To African leaders, Easum represented an opportunity to actually be heard in light of their own interests, and not as pawns in the larger chess game between the Cold War powers of the East and the West.

During this important moment in U.S./Africa relations, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger was to play the role of master of ceremonies. It was a moment in which Easum would be honored and African leaders and officials expected to hear words of encouragement that exemplified a change in American policy. “For the first time since 1862,” Kissinger began, “we have a bearded assistant secretary, and I’m pleased to swear him in.”²¹³ In place of dignity and honor, Kissinger employed a petty attempt at humor and trivialized the importance of the moment.

This was not to be an isolated incident in Henry Kissinger’s interactions with the African Bureau (AF). Throughout his tenure in Washington, Kissinger referred to officials in the AF as “bleeding hearts,” “anti-white,” and “obsessively liberal.”²¹⁴ In the short period of time from 1974 to 1976, Kissinger shuffled three different assistant secretaries of state in and out of the AF; Donald Easum was the first, followed by Nathaniel Davis in December 1974 and William Schaufele in August 1975. The continued changes led Easum to say that the shuffling of assistant secretaries “showed ... a demeaning kind of attitude toward Africa.”²¹⁵

When Donald B. Easum arrived to his office for his new position as assistant secretary of state for African affairs, he found a briefing book left to him by his

²¹² William E. Schaufele, Jr., interviewed by Lillian Mullin, 11 November 1994, *The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project*.

²¹³ Easum.

²¹⁴ Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, 24 September 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, E-5

²¹⁵ Easum.

predecessor, David Newsom. Newsom wanted to help his successor get a head start on the job, and he wanted to give Easum the opportunity to avoid learning many lessons as he had—the hard way. Many of the problems Newsom believed the new assistant secretary would face would come not from issues dealing with the Africa region, but from the man in charge of the State Department. Easum recalled, “[The book] said, in effect, that Kissinger wants to make you think, make all of us ... think, that he thought of everything before you did. And [Newsom] also had something to say about the overriding concern of this man for the East-West prism through which he, Kissinger, would view developing world problems.”²¹⁶

The year Easum succeeded Newsom and entered the assistant secretary position, 1974, was also the year in which the issue of renegotiating a contract for the U.S. base at Azores was quickly approaching, yet again. Three years prior, the Nixon administration had signed an executive agreement that gave Portugal \$436 million in credits in exchange for use of the base until February 1974. Kissinger had argued that it was ample reward for a loyal ally that had been a vital help to the U.S. in the Middle East.

Policy Planning Staff Specialist William de Pree was sympathetic to Easum’s views, and it was by de Pree that Easum was first informed about the upcoming negotiations with Portugal. According to Easum, de Pree said:

Don, I’ve got to tell you something, but I shouldn’t, but I will because we’re friends and because I think it’s important that you know this. We’re going to provide them with sophisticated, ground-to-air missiles and with jet aircraft. And we’re not only going to provide them, but we’re going to permit the Portuguese to say so publicly and that they are receiving them for use in Africa.²¹⁷

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

At the time, it was against U.S. policy to sell weapons to European nations that would be used in African colonies. Doing so would be incredibly damaging publicity for a nation that claimed to be the bastion of the Free World and self-determination. But to then Secretary of State Kissinger, marginalizing the interests of “unimportant” black African nations was a small price to pay in order to reward a loyal ally and maintain the crucial and strategic Azores base.

When Easum tried to convey the immense damage this policy would bring to U.S. relations with African nations, Kissinger employed dismissive and patronizing responses. According to Easum, Kissinger would say in such meetings, “Well, here comes Mr. Guineau-Bissau. Easum, what revolution are you running today in those jungles?” or “Easum, why don’t you tell everybody here all of these dire consequences you foresee?”²¹⁸

Easum believes that Kissinger “didn’t understand Africa, or Africans, and didn’t want to, and didn’t want to be bothered, and thought I could just somehow keep everything quiet, and wouldn’t bug him. Africa was beginning to scare him, and his AF, he began to think was headed by—he used the term—a missionary zealot who was out there leading troops in jungles and tilting with official policy.”²¹⁹ Similarly, he argues, “People used to say to Kissinger, ‘You don’t have any Africa policy. What are your people doing in Africa?’ and he used to say, rather proudly, ‘How can I have an African

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

policy when there are 51 countries out there?’ He was ... all bottled up by his previous belief that minority white regimes were here to stay in Africa.”²²⁰

For Henry Kissinger, viewing the world through the Cold War lens and structuring it in a power-based hierarchy was a neat and rational way to make sense of the world and eschew having to consider nations inhabited by races he believed inferior. He could not have cared less about the opinions of black Africans, and was therefore free to sell them out to the interests of imperialist Portugal. The blacks in Africa were “uncivilized” and “marginal”—they could not even organize themselves properly, making 51 nations out of a continent that did not merit so many ambassadors. It was a waste of time for the United States to consider such trifles. By projecting the Cold War prism on the region, Kissinger could justifiably focus on issues solely pertaining to America’s white allies. While Easum was running around in “jungles” and foreseeing “dire” consequences for the United States, Kissinger was abetting the protraction of imperial rule and apartheid control in southern Africa.

Another memorable conflict between the secretary and Easum, had to do with contrasting views on both the authority of the secretary and U.S. relations with Rhodesia. Easum alleges that the incident occurred after Kissinger had testified before Congress on “something” and when asked about his views of sanctions against Rhodesia, he said, “in effect, ‘I don’t believe in sanctions.’”²²¹ Easum explained that the secretary’s staff had a chance to amend the text of Congressional hearings within certain limitations, and during the staff meeting about this particular testimony, Kissinger had asked for comments.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid.

Easum responded, “Mr. Secretary, when you spoke about sanctions against Rhodesia, you’re leaving yourself open to some pretty heavy weather because the way what you said will be interpreted is, that you don’t accept the U.S. law on this ... if you permit us, we’re in the process of modifying the language for your review.”²²² Immediately following the meeting, when Easum reached his office, his phone rang. It was Undersecretary John Sisco, saying “Get up here right away.”²²³

According to Easum, when he arrived to meet with Sisco, the undersecretary was incredibly terse and livid:

He doesn’t even ask me to sit down – I virtually get just inside the door, and he says, “Don’t you ever criticize the Secretary of State –don’t you ever tell him he made a mistake in front of other people.” That was the spirit. This was the environment ... [it] affects your work habits ...it affects your efficiency. This was our Secretary of State and we had to somehow make the best of it.²²⁴

In his role as assistant secretary for African affairs, Easum’s tense relationship with Kissinger did not last very long. After only nine months of service, Easum was sent to Nigeria as a U.S. ambassador. William Schaufele, then ambassador to Upper Volta, posited a theory on Easum’s dismissal, saying, “He [Easum] developed a habit of going out to Africa and making speeches [in favor of majority rule]. This seriously disturbed Secretary of State Kissinger, so he was gotten rid of, and not badly. He became the ambassador to Nigeria, Africa’s biggest country.”²²⁵

Easum has his own theories on why he was demoted and reassigned. Part of it has to do with his “liberal” views on U.S./Africa policy. On many occasions he publicly

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Schaufele.

promoted ideals antithetical to the “tar baby” approach, such as one instance, in the Dar es Salaam Airport, when he was quoted as saying, “One man, one vote, as being my personal feelings” when asked about apartheid.²²⁶ It is quite ironic that Easum, a diplomat from the country that claimed to be leader of the Free World was demoted for believing in the bedrock of democracy: one man, one vote. This sort of remark, however, flew in the face of the “tar baby” option’s delicate treatment of the internal issues that faced white-ruled South Africa.

Kissinger fancied himself as an 18th Century statesman shaping diplomacy in a world at war amongst a few great powers. He was not concerned with issues such as democracy and self-determination—at least, when applied to those of inferior races and cultures, such as black Africans. Kissinger’s political philosophy of *realpolitik* was suspicious of democracy in Africa, preferring instead the status quo (minority rule) in order to maintain a favorable balance of power for his global chess match against the Soviets. Because he believed blacks were both inherently inferior and susceptible to being duped into communist ideology, Kissinger had aligned the U.S. with the fates of Portugal, South Africa, and Rhodesia; he wanted a stable sub-Saharan Africa policed by his white, anti-communist counterparts, or at least tractable clients like Zaire’s Mobutu, who would allow the U.S. to play the role of paternal patron. Easum, on the other hand, believed African nations were dealing with their own issues, disinterested in being party to the Cold War, and that it was the role of the U.S. to help foster democratic virtues such as self-determination and equal status under the law.

²²⁶ Easum.

Not only did Easum encourage self-determination in Africa, but he also had a contrasting view of what the U.S.' national interests were in the region. To Easum, Africa was on the verge of change. White rule and colonialism could not and should not survive, and it was in America's interest to begin cultivating relationships with the leaders who were set to rise to power. Africans were engaged in the struggle between the North and the South. From Easum's perspective, Africans had valid interests and aspirations that existed outside the Cold War paradigm. Easum believes this perspective was antithetical to Kissinger. He posed as Kissinger and stated, "He [Easum] wouldn't recognize the U.S. national interest if it came around the corner and hit him in the face ... he's always hobnobbing with his black friends."²²⁷

By the time Nathaniel Davis was appointed as the new assistant secretary of African affairs in December 1974, the political climate in both southern Africa and in the U.S. was rapidly altering the secretary of state's approach to Africa policy. Upon Nixon's resignation following the Watergate scandal, U.S. foreign policy became almost directly attributable to the decisions of one man—not President Gerald Ford, but Henry Kissinger. Former Soviet Ambassador to the U.S. Anatoly Dobrynin, said that during the Ford administration, he "had the impression, and even a subconscious conviction, that the new president was going to let Henry Kissinger direct American foreign policy."²²⁸ Kissinger believed Nixon had more knowledge of international affairs than any other American president, and he, like Kissinger, was a student in the school of *realpolitik*. Ford, on the other hand, was a career member of the House of Representatives, who was "enormously

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, 321.

impressed by [Kissinger's] grasp of the nuances of foreign policy."²²⁹ From the start, President Ford made clear that he would continue Nixon's basic foreign policies, above all détente with the Soviet Union, and affirmed his strong support for Henry Kissinger as Secretary of State."²³⁰

Not only did Ford lack the extensive knowledge and experience in foreign affairs that Nixon possessed, but also he was overwhelmed with the domestic and international crises left to him by the former president, most importantly the aftermath of Watergate and the deteriorating situation in Vietnam. Because of these inherited crises and the continued power held by the secretary of state, Ford was unlikely to challenge Kissinger's foreign policy leadership. Upon entering the White House, Ford faced a U.S. trade deficit of a record \$1.1 billion, a private housing decline to its lowest level in five years, and the "worst inflation in the country's peacetime history."²³¹ The president aptly stated, "I think it's fair to say that I took office with a set of unique disadvantages."²³²

Adding to Ford's "unique disadvantages" was the Portuguese coup, which in 1974 took Washington completely by surprise. Kissinger's "tar baby" option held that the colonial government was there for the long haul. Because of this belief, he had allied the U.S. with Portugal in its struggle to maintain control in Angola and to keep the national liberation movements at bay. Also, the State Department was discouraged from meeting with rebel leaders, aside from the U.S.' point man in Kinshasa, Holden Roberto. The U.S. therefore lacked information pertaining to the reality on the ground in Angola, and with

²²⁹ Gerald Ford, *A Time to Heal: The Autobiography of Gerald Ford* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 88.

²³⁰ William Bundy, *A Tangled Web: The Making of Foreign Policy in the Nixon Presidency* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), 473, 476.

²³¹ Ford, *A Time to Heal*, 151.

²³² *Ibid*, 125.

the little information that did exist, Washington chose to ignore reality in order to continue an outdated policy favoring the interests of Portugal and white South Africa.²³³

For Kissinger, the coup in Portugal only immediately raised his concerns about how the metropole's collapse would affect NATO and the Western alliance. The man who thought specifically in terms of "dominos, regional linkages, and credibility" was much more concerned at the time with the outcomes of the situation in Vietnam and Cambodia, SALT talks with the Soviets, and the threat of radicalism in Western Europe.²³⁴ The situation in Angola would only become important if it threatened the stability that had been policed by the Portuguese and the U.S.'s most trusted Cold War ally in southern Africa, South Africa.

Similarly, the racial ideology of Nixon, Kissinger, and many others within the foreign policy apparatus (such as CIA officers), discredited the increasing importance of developing relations with nationalist movements in Angola. In fact, the president and the secretary seemed completely oblivious and insensitive to the rising power and legitimate aspirations of black Africans in southern Africa. In May 1974, South African Admiral Hugo Biermann paid a visit to the U.S.; this was in spite of the fact that visits by South African military officials had long been proscribed in the U.S. Instead, the commander of the South African navy was issued a tourist visa for a "personal and unofficial" trip.²³⁵ During his visit, Biermann attended a dinner that conservative Robert Bauman (R-MD)

²³³ Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies*, 90.

²³⁴ Kolko, *Confronting the Third World*, 246.

²³⁵ Steven Metz, "Congress, the Anti-Apartheid Movement, and Nixon" in *Race and U.S. Foreign Policy during the Cold War* (New York: Garland, 1998), 318.

held in his honor; seventeen American admirals attended, and he also had “unofficial” meetings with Admiral Moorer of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.²³⁶

According to Stockwell, the CIA was engaged in a similar fraternity that blinded it to the realities in Angola. As a former case officer, Stockwell is able to explain how case officers “live comfortable lives among the economic elite” and thus become “ill at ease with democratic and popular movements because they are too fickle and hard to predict.”²³⁷ More specifically, “CIA case officers sympathized with the whites of South Africa, brushing aside evidence of oppression with shallow clichés such as, ‘The only reason anyone gets upset about South Africa is because whites are controlling blacks. If blacks murder in Uganda, nobody cares.’”²³⁸ According to Stockwell, the men who controlled the CIA were “of an older, conservative generation which [had] kept the agency 15 or 20 years behind the progress of the nation at large” and they subjected minorities within the agency to “subtle but firm discrimination barriers.”²³⁹ Such a cast of characters sounds eerily similar to the men President Nixon surrounded himself with during the 1968 Southern Strategy campaign and throughout his one and a quarter terms in the presidency—arch segregationists of a bygone era who fought firmly, but often subtly, against civil rights progress in the U.S. Similarly, Stockwell’s description of those in charge of the CIA sounds very similar to Kissinger and his “tar baby” option allies who were out of touch with the changing realities in southern Africa and thus caught with all the wrong cards in their hands by 1974.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies*, 49.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ibid., 75.

“Shallow clichés” uttered by sympathetic CIA case officers, such as “If blacks murder in Uganda, nobody cares” echoed in more than one place. They were the very same words uttered just two years prior by President Nixon and his National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger, as they bemoaned, “This goddamn double-standard is just unbelievable.”²⁴⁰

All of these factors—Cold War priorities in Asia and Europe, Kissinger’s racial ideology, fraternal ties with South Africa, and obsession with the plight of Portugal and ignorance of its colonies—contributed to the administration’s lack of foresight toward Angola. The U.S. had little accurate information on the realities on the ground in Angola, and also on the conditions of the three competing nationalist movements.

On January 16, 1975, the *New York Times* (NYT) reported, “One of Africa’s biggest and wealthiest nations will be born in November.”²⁴¹ That nation-to-be was Angola. After centuries of colonial rule, the people of Angola were on the cusp of realizing a free, sovereign nation. That day, a ceremonial signing took place in the Penina Golf Hotel in Lisbon, just a few miles from the site where Henry the Navigator planned a voyage of discovery that led to five centuries of empire.²⁴² The Alvor Accord, signed by the Portuguese and the leaders of the three nationalist movements, was going to create a transitional government and promised elections for a Constitutional Assembly in November. Rather than being marked by joyful celebration, however, the moment appeared to be the calm before a storm. As one Portuguese official observer remarked,

²⁴⁰ Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, 24 September 1972, *FRUS E-5*.

²⁴¹ Henry Giniger, “For Independent Angola, a Great Threat of Strife,” *The New York Times*, 16 January 1975.

²⁴² “Lisbon Signs Pact Freeing Angola,” *The New York Times*, 16 January 1975.

the prospects of peace were dicey. “I wondered to myself who among them would be alive a year from now,” he said.²⁴³ The officer’s observation proved eerily accurate. Shortly after the Alvor Agreement was signed, fighting erupted among the three movements, and was exacerbated by a number of foreign powers and interests’ involvement. The Constitutional Assembly would never meet, and the promise of a peaceful transition proved illusive.

It was against this backdrop that the Senate confirmed Nathaniel Davis as the new assistant secretary of state for African Affairs on March 11, 1975; this was a position he filled against his own will. “I asked more than once that the appointment not be made,” he later wrote.²⁴⁴ Not only did Davis feel he lacked sufficient expertise in the region, but also he had recently served as ambassador to Chile during a period in which the country’s democratically elected official, Salvador Allende, was ousted with assistance from the CIA, something Davis felt might “complicate matters.”²⁴⁵ Additionally, Davis was well aware of the message his nomination might send to African leaders. He wrote, “It was clear that the replacement of Donald B. Easum would be widely interpreted as a U.S. withdrawal from Ambassador Easum’s commitment to black African aspirations.”²⁴⁶

According to Kissinger, Nathaniel Davis, was, at the time, an excellent choice for head of AF. The secretary noted that Davis “had served ably and courageously” as ambassador in Chile from 1971 to 1973.²⁴⁷ Kissinger was tired of having to reel in his wandering African Bureau, full of “bleeding hearts” and “missionaries” and was looking

²⁴³ Giniger, “For Independent Angola, a Great Threat of Strife.”

²⁴⁴ “The Angola Decision of 1975: A Personal Memoir,” *Foreign Affairs*, Fall 1978, 1.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁷ Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 801.

for someone who knew how to toe the company line. Davis had proven himself able to do so during his tenure in Chile. Similarly, Davis recalled that Kissinger “used to comment that the African Bureau was full of missionaries. His intention was to get someone who didn’t have those sorts of ties to Africanists and to the whole African point of view.”²⁴⁸ Clearly it was uncomfortable for Davis to be used as a message that he did not agree with and did not want sent.

The message sent by Davis’ nomination was heard loudly and clearly. Congressman Charles Diggs Jr., a member of the Black Caucus, sent one of the boldest messages to President Ford in a telegram in regards to Davis’ nomination:

Action just taken by OAU [Organization of African Unity] Ministers Conference and Addis regarding Davis appointment reconfirmed comments made in my cable to you from African American Conference in Kinshasa last month and reinforced during every stop during my recent itinerary. Your advisors display an incredible combination of ignorance and arrogance to insist upon this nomination under these circumstances. No geographic Assisted Secretary of State/Designate should survive such opposition. [I] urgently reiterate my strong belief that it is better to save face by withdrawing the Davis nomination than for the U.S. Government to suffer consequences of an impaired Assistant Secretary of State for Africa who is only publicly supported as of today by the super racists of the Republic of South Africa.²⁴⁹

The president also received a slew of letters from American citizens who knew enough about the situation to predict the damage it would do to U.S. relations in Africa. One correspondent, Benjamin B. Hawley of New Jersey, urged him to “Withdraw the nomination of Nathaniel Davis ... Mr. Easum is highly qualified to deal with African

²⁴⁸ Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 282.

²⁴⁹ Copy of telegram from Diggs to Ford, 23 February 1975, Nathaniel Davis file, Box 778, White House Central Files, Name File, Gerald R. Ford Library.

affairs, while Mr. Davis is not.”²⁵⁰ Another letter from Christopher Gray in New York called for the withdrawal of Davis, citing, “His conduct as Ambassador to Chile certainly disqualifies him ...”²⁵¹ William Schaufele later recounted that Davis’ appointment “raised a furor in some African circles because he has no experience in Africa and was, in fact, an eastern European expert.”²⁵²

From Kissinger’s perspective, Davis’ confirmation put an end to the annoying idealism and liberalism created by Donald Easum in the AF. The secretary had a freer hand and had wrangled his one rogue bureau under control—or so he originally thought. Easum said of Kissinger and Davis that the secretary “feels, I think, he can keep Davis quiet ... he didn’t know Africa. He didn’t speak French, and they [Africans] saw him as an inadequate person.”²⁵³ Though Kissinger may have thought he had finally silenced the AF, the emerging conflict in Angola would once again place him at loggerheads with the regional office, and Kissinger would once again push another antagonistic assistant through the revolving door that was the AF.

Davis was confirmed by the Senate and left in charge of the AF during the coup in Portugal, as well as the drafting of the Alvor Accord. When civil war erupted shortly after the signing of the Accord, Davis did not panic or push Kissinger to get the U.S. involved. To Davis, “Angola was basically an African problem” and “Africans could and should play a major role in an Angolan solution.”²⁵⁴ Davis’ regional outlook on Angola,

²⁵⁰ Copy of letter from Benjamin B. Hawley to the President, 27 February 1975, Nathaniel Davis file, Box 778, White House Central Files, Name File, Gerald R. Ford Library.

²⁵¹ Copy of letter from Christopher Gray to the President, 27 February 1975, Nathaniel Davis file, Box 778, White House Central Files, Name File, Gerald R. Ford Library.

²⁵² Schaufele.

²⁵³ Easum.

²⁵⁴ Davis, “The Angola Decision of 1975,” 4.

as well as his disdain for covert operations, would place him on direct course for a violent collision with Kissinger.

Angola seems to have first appeared on Kissinger's radar April 19, 1975. Kenneth Kaunda, the president of Angola's eastern neighbor, Zambia, was in Washington for a visit with President Ford and the secretary. Kaunda had plenty of experience with the turmoil in Angola. He had cast his lot with Daniel Chipenda, leader of a separatist faction of the MPLA, in 1973. Kaunda allowed his separatist ally, Chipenda, to operate along the Zambian border.²⁵⁵ Additionally, Kaunda had a "particularly strong" relationship with Mao Zedong, and the Chinese had invested a large amount of money in Zambia.²⁵⁶ China was already involved in Angola because they were funneling money to the FNLA and UNITA to try and keep Soviet inroads to a minimum on the continent. Thus the Zambian pleaded for U.S. intervention on behalf of the anti-MPLA forces, which, according to Kissinger, made quite an impression. "Only on the rarest of occasions," the secretary asserted, "does a single state visit change American national policy. He convinced President Ford and me that the Soviet Union was intervening in Angola with military advisors and weapons and that we should oppose this intrusion for the sake of Angola's neighbors."²⁵⁷ Kissinger and Ford were highly smitten with Kaunda after the visit, and the secretary began formulating his rationale for justifying U.S. involvement.

The timing of Kaunda's plea for U.S. intervention could not have come at a more opportune moment. The same day of Kaunda's meeting with Ford and Kissinger, the U.S. was speeding up evacuation of American troops and personnel in South Vietnam. The

²⁵⁵ Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 237.

²⁵⁶ Hanhimaki, *The Flawed Architect*, 407.

²⁵⁷ Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 791.

OPEC oil embargo had been another embarrassing international crisis in which the U.S.' weakening economy and military might was exposed. Kaunda's visit had presented Kissinger with what seemed to be the perfect opportunity to reestablish U.S. global credibility in the face of a communist challenge. The secretary of state had little experience or knowledge in the region, and was easily convinced by the Zambian president.

Kaunda's visit also came at a time when the violence in Angola was increasing rapidly. On March 23, major multi-day skirmishes broke out when the FNLA attacked MPLA installations in Luanda. At the same time, the Portuguese gave up on guarding the northern border, allowing Zairian troops to move into the region in support of Roberto. A month after Kaunda's visit, fighting broke out in black suburbs when MPLA supporters destroyed an FNLA office and occupied a church from which they launched subsequent attacks.²⁵⁸ By June, a *Newsweek* reporter painted a grim scene of the situation in Angola, writing, "Amid piles of uncollected garbage in the downtown section of the Angolan capital, swarms of flies buzzed around the drying stains of human blood. Government health officials in surgical masks collected decomposed bodies for hasty burials in mass graves."²⁵⁹

Following Kaunda's visit to Washington in April, Kissinger requested an NSC task force report on U.S. interests and policy options in Angola. The task force was to be chaired by Nathaniel Davis, and the report was to be submitted by June 30.²⁶⁰ According to Kissinger, however, the request for options papers had begun much earlier and was

²⁵⁸ "500 Dead in Worst Fighting to Date," *Facts on File World News Digest*, 10 May 1975.

²⁵⁹ Raymond Carroll, "Angola: Liberation Blues," *Newsweek*, 23 June 1975.

²⁶⁰ Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 286.

delayed due to the “foot-dragging” of the AF.²⁶¹ Instead of options papers, Kissinger claims he received “homilies irrelevant to our problems.” He says that a memo from Davis on May 7 recommended against “any direct, overt involvement” but the extension of aid to Angola after they had gained independence. He goes on, “Did this memo mean the U.S. should extend economic assistance to any Angolan government, even if it were a communist dictatorship put in power by a Soviet airlift and Soviet and Cuban advisers?”²⁶²

Kissinger argues that the AF’s “foot-dragging” is directly attributable to that ever-present foible: liberal, Wilsonian idealism. Accordingly, Davis “had no stomach for covert operations” and had serious qualms about them in principle.²⁶³ The other reason the AF argued noninvolvement, according to Kissinger, was because covert operations had to be based in Zaire and involve Mobutu, “whose conduct even then was approaching egregious.” Kissinger, however, explains, “I told my staff meeting that I preferred other dinner companions to Mobutu, but he was the ‘only game in town.’ The alternative was to acquiesce in a Soviet scheme to tilt the African equilibrium.”²⁶⁴ In a similar statement on June 16, 1975, Kissinger told President Ford that even though Mobutu was “a bloody bastard,” he was the “only hope” for U.S. interests in the region. He continued, “We don’t want to see a Communist government in Angola. It is not in our interest to knock off a *white* regime right now, which is what would happen with a Communist Angola” (italics added). But unfortunately for Kissinger, “No agency supports doing anything.”²⁶⁵

²⁶¹ Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 803.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid., 801.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Memorandum of conversation between President Ford and Secretary of State Kissinger, 16 June 1975, Box 12, National Security Advisor – Memoranda of Conversations, *Gerald R. Ford Library*.

To Kissinger, it was already clear that the U.S. needed to act against the MPLA in order to control and slow the black nationalization of southern Africa and to defend the apartheid regime of South Africa. In order to do this, Kissinger was willing to ally the U.S. with whomever was necessary, even Mobutu and South Africa, despite the effect it would have on U.S. relations with the rest of Africa. They were just “little guys” in the grand scheme of things. Because of this, it became evident that Kissinger and his new assistant secretary for African affairs’ honeymoon would not last very long.

Just as Kissinger was concluding that U.S. intervention must take place in Angola, Assistant Secretary Davis was gathering information on the ground and coming to a much different conclusion. On May 1, 1975, Davis sent a memorandum to Kissinger about UNITA and Savimbi. In the memo, he noted that Savimbi was not the anti-communist crusader he had claimed to be, but rather, was soliciting arms “everywhere.” Davis added that the wide knowledge of Savimbi’s solicitations and subventions made the assistant secretary very skeptical that U.S. support could be kept secret for very long. He warned, “The political price we might pay—as reports of bloodshed and alleged atrocities multiply—would, I believe, exceed the possibility of accomplishment.”²⁶⁶ Days later, Davis embarked on a two-week trip to western Africa, during which he visited five different nations and called on the chiefs of state, foreign ministers, and other leaders. He believed the best way to make an educated decision had to include discussing Angola with the experts in neighboring nations. Kissinger would later argue that instead of

²⁶⁶ “The Angola Decision of 1975,” 3.

seeking wisdom from African leaders on the issue, Davis was traveling repeatedly as a means of “avoiding the issues.”²⁶⁷

Upon his return, Davis and the NSC taskforce began preparing their policy recommendations, National Security Study Memorandum 224 (NSSM 224). The report was delivered on June 13. According to Davis, a “great majority” of the task force favored the second of three options in NSSM 224, a diplomatic solution in Angola that included encouraging Portugal and influential African governments to press the Soviets to reduce their support to the MPLA.²⁶⁸ Additionally, the U.S. would approach the Soviets or build public pressure against them to reduce their support, or ultimately, to support or promote UN or OAU mediation.²⁶⁹ Davis and the task force hoped this approach would channel competition in Angola back toward the political arena, while also decreasing the impact of Soviet arms. He adds, “The task force also made the point that such a diplomatic-political initiative would probably elicit congressional and public support in the United States.”²⁷⁰

In addition to the diplomatic option, the task force added two other policy options for Angola. One was to remain neutral, making “no commitment of U.S. prestige or resources to influence the course of events in Angola.”²⁷¹ The third and final option was for the U.S. to actively support one or more liberation movements, channeled through Zaire. This option, which was favored by Kissinger and Ford, would involve covert U.S.

²⁶⁷ Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 805.

²⁶⁸ Davis, “The Angola Decision of 1975,” 4.

²⁶⁹ National Security Study Memorandum 224 [NSSM 224], Box 2, National Security Adviser - Memoranda of Conversations, *Gerald R. Ford Library*.

²⁷⁰ Davis, “The Angola Decision,” 4.

²⁷¹ NSSM 224.

intervention.²⁷² Davis and the majority of the task force were sensitive to the sentiment in Congress and the U.S. at large in 1975. The Nixon administration's covert operations had destroyed any tolerance for secret operations, and the task force believed the situation in Angola would prove no different. Davis warned that any leak of covert U.S. involvement "would be highly damaging to U.S. interests in Angola and Portugal, as well as throughout Africa and the Third World in general."²⁷³

After receiving the memorandum, Kissinger scheduled a meeting for the National Security Council to be held two weeks later, on June 27. Before it, however, Kissinger showed his cards much earlier during a meeting in his office on June 18. There, the secretary met with his deputy assistant, Ed Mulcahy, and Walter Cutler:

Cutler: Some of us in the bureau share your activist view.

Mulcahy: Though the present and past assistant secretaries perhaps do not.

Kissinger: He will do as I ask. Doing nothing means that the best armed side will win. It simply cannot be in our best interests to have Angola go communist. It is next to the largest country in Africa [Zaire] and it's next to South Africa.²⁷⁴

In perhaps the most telling remark of the meeting, Kissinger once again showed his everlasting disdain for the AF. He said, "I know Mobutu and I want him to come away with a sense that he's dealt with a man and not with a church representative."²⁷⁵ Diplomatic/political solutions would not be manly enough for Kissinger. The U.S. needed to protect its client, Zaire, and its white apartheid ally, South Africa, with a more macho

²⁷² Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 286.

²⁷³ Hanhimaki, *The Flawed Architect*, 409.

²⁷⁴ Memorandum of Conversation, Secretary's Office, 18 June 1975, *FRUS E-6*.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

show of force. Diplomacy was the weapon of “anti-white,” liberal “church representatives,” and ironically, the doctor of diplomacy would have none of it.

While it is true that Mobutu was a black leader that received Kissinger’s “support,” the reality is much more complicated and does not undercut the argument that race was a driving force for Kissinger’s foreign policy toward southern Africa. For the secretary, Mobutu was a necessary evil. As quoted earlier, Kissinger “preferred other dinner companions” and thought Mobutu was a “bloody bastard.” However, he was the best option; Zaire did not have the entrenched white leaders of Rhodesia or South Africa. Mobutu, however, *was* a strong man that kept the masses of blacks in Zaire under control. Additionally, he was no threat to the status quo in the region—he was avowedly pro-Western, anti-communist, and he had no interest in ousting the racist regimes in Rhodesia or South Africa. Additionally, he had no qualms about allying with white mercenaries against his black countrymen. Mobutu was an important piece holding together the delicate structure of the wall that held the “uncivilized” black masses at bay. Therefore, he was an operable client, at least, as long as he followed the guidance of his white, paternal patron—the United States.

On June 27, Kissinger and Ford convened with the NSC to discuss the results of the Angola task force. Present at the meeting were CIA Director William Colby, Defense Secretary James Schlesinger, Donald Rumsfeld, and the Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General David C. Jones. Also at the meeting were NSC Deputy Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Secretary of State Robert S. Ingersoll, Deputy Secretary of Defense William Clements and NSC staffer Harold E. Horan. As observed by Hanhimaki, “Expertise on Angola—and Africa in general—was sorely lacking in the cabinet room, making it undoubtedly

easier for Kissinger to paint the objectives of American policy in broad terms.”²⁷⁶

Foremost among those lacking any knowledge of Angola, as well as Africa in general, was President Ford. The president’s contribution to the meeting consisted mainly of some trivial inquiries about the white population in Angola, asking such questions as: “What are the white areas within the borders of Angola? Are there many educated blacks? What is the white population? Out of a total of how many? Are these mostly white Portuguese?”²⁷⁷ In fact, these were the only remarks from the president before opening the floor to his secretary of state, an insight perhaps into the president’s main concerns.

Much of the conversation that took place on June 27 is still classified, but the talking points for Kissinger make it quite clear that his rationale pointed to option number three, intervention. In his talking points, the secretary writes,

Instability in Angola would create instability in neighboring states in which we have important interests, such as Zaire. Instability in Angola would also increase the resistance to change by the white southern African states of Rhodesia and South Africa. A Soviet-dominated Angola could be seen as a defeat for U.S. policy.²⁷⁸

The conflict in Angola, according to Kissinger, was much more about Zaire and South Africa than anything to do with Angola. Although he was able to dress his justification in the clothing of U.S. national interests and the global Cold War, it was really about slowing and quelling the push for black majority rule in southern Africa and maintaining order and balance in the region. Kissinger empathized with the white

²⁷⁶ Hanhimaki, *The Flawed Architect*, 410.

²⁷⁷ National Security Council Meeting Minutes, 27 June 1975, National Security Council – Memoranda of Conversations 1974-1977, Box 2, *Gerald R. Ford Library*.

²⁷⁸ Talking points for Secretary Kissinger, National Security Council Meeting on Angola, NSSM 224 (1), *Gerald R. Ford Library*.

holdouts in South Africa, and Ford (through his quick roll of questions) showed that the plight of whites in Africa weighed heavily on his mind, as well.

For the secretary, there was no real debate to be had. During the June 27 Angola Taskforce meeting, he said,

As for the second course [diplomatic-political], my Department agrees, but I don't. It is recommended that we launch a diplomatic offensive [but]...If we appeal to the Soviets not to be active, it will be a sign of weakness; for us to police it is next to impossible, and we would be bound to do nothing.²⁷⁹

The U.S. thus needed to act on behalf of its regional allies: Mobutu, Ian Smith, and Vorster. Anything else would send the signal that the nation was weak and incapable of stopping the terrifying duo of Soviets and black nationalists. Even though Schlesinger, and others at the meeting, argued, "We must have some confidence that we can win, or we should stay neutral ... Roberto is not a strong horse," Kissinger spun events his own way and was easily powerful enough to persuade the president to act.²⁸⁰

As U.S. policymakers were debating what to do, the situation on the ground in Angola was still intensifying. On June 13, 300 white Angolan settlers stormed the government palace in Luanda; they demanded military protection and an expedited departure. Their demonstration came after a gang of black Africans allegedly raided a Luanda suburb, killing and raping a number of whites.²⁸¹ One week prior to the demonstrations, 200 were killed in Luanda during fights between the MPLA and

²⁷⁹ National Security Council Meeting Minutes, 27 June 1975, National Security Council – Memoranda of Conversations 1974-1977, Box 2, *Gerald R. Ford Library*.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁸¹ "Whites Demand Protection, Exit," *Facts on File World News Digest*, 28 June 1975.

UNITA.²⁸² At the same time as Kissinger was arguing that U.S. policy was about national interests in Zaire and South Africa, bodies were beginning to pile up in Angola.

After the NSC meeting on June 27, President Ford asked the CIA—not the task force on Angola—to draft a paper on Angola for the upcoming July 14 meeting of the president’s Forty Committee (an executive branch panel in charge of authorizing covert operations conducted by the CIA and other agencies). Kissinger may have persuaded many in the NSC meeting to favor covert U.S. action in Angola, but he still faced heavy opposition from the AF. On July 12, Davis sent a memorandum to Undersecretary of State Joseph J. Sisco and Secretary of State Kissinger. The message seems to be a last minute effort to persuade the secretary to reconsider his position before the upcoming Forty Committee meeting. In it, Davis argued,

At present, we have no irrevocable commitment of U.S. power and prestige in Angola. So far as concrete interests are concerned, Gulf’s \$300 million stake in Cabinda is the principal one ... The CIA paper significantly notes that the “Soviets enjoy greater freedom of action in the covert supply of arms, equipment and ammunition” and “can escalate the level of their aid more readily than we.”²⁸³

Davis knew that Kissinger cared little about abstract principals and ideals in formulating his foreign policy, so the memo made a direct appeal to pragmatism. Even the Soviets acknowledged the clear advantage they had at the time in directing covert operations abroad. Anatoly Dobrynin, the Soviet ambassador to the United States at the time, writes, “In the climate of the Cold War one of the greatest strengths of American culture—its ability to criticize itself—became a foreign policy weakness.”²⁸⁴ Whereas the

²⁸² “Hundreds Killed in Luanda Violence,” *Facts on File World News Digest*, 28 June 1975.

²⁸³ “The Decision of Angola 1975,” 5-6.

²⁸⁴ Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, 483.

Soviets were able to keep their covert failures secret from the public, the U.S.' were exposed in plain sight. Any possible news leak of CIA actions or U.S. arms going to Angola was more than enough to create public and congressional uproar. Davis argued, rationally, that this sort of policy was just not going to work. He later reflected, "It has remained a mystery to me why the secretary was so determined to push ahead on a course which I thought was so clearly destined to fail."²⁸⁵

Kissinger, the long-time disciple of *realpolitik*, ironically ignored pragmatic and calculated advice from his Africa experts. Instead, he continued to fall back on the claim that the AF was full of idealistic, irrational liberals who were too busy palling around with black leaders to understand the U.S.' national interest and that Africans did not have their own aspirations and interests. After a still-classified meeting on July 14, Kissinger decided to bring matters "to a head" with the AF. On July 16, Kissinger had a "lapidary exchange" with Davis:

Davis: If we take the choice of not doing something, we can be very effective with that in the African community.

Kissinger: Where? Zaire? Zambia?

Davis: The OAU meeting is on the 28th.

Kissinger: But what specific countries will be impressed? Will Zaire be impressed by our nonparticipation?

Davis: No...

Kissinger: What about Zambia?

Davis: Yes, I think so.

Kissinger: Being impressed, what conclusions do they draw?

²⁸⁵ Davis, "The Decision of Angola 1975," 15.

Davis: The Africans should begin to realize that their destiny—

Kissinger: Supposed they realize that their destiny is with the eastern Europeans and then use the Chinese to balance it off?

Davis: They've been surprisingly successful in the past decade.

Kissinger: That was before the Soviets made one of them win.²⁸⁶

On July 17, one day after Kissinger's exchange with Davis, the secretary met with President Ford and Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs Brent Scowcroft in the Oval Office. It was clear that at this point Kissinger was firmly set on action in Angola, despite warnings from the AF. To Kissinger, the fact that Davis opposed the policy so vehemently did not mean he should perhaps reconsider action. Instead, the African Bureau and anyone in the path of Kissinger's decision would become a casualty:

Kissinger: On Angola, I favor action. If the U.S. does nothing when the Soviet-supported group gains dominance, I think all the movements will draw the conclusions that they must accommodate to the Soviet Union and China. I think reluctantly we must do something. But you must know that we have massive problems within the State Department. They are passionately opposed and it will leak.

Ford: How about Davis?

Kissinger: He will resign and take some with him.

Ford: After what you and I did for him.²⁸⁷

The following morning, the three met once again in the Oval Office to continue their planning toward covert action in Angola. This time, Ford made his decision clear:

Ford: I have decided on Angola. I think we should go.

²⁸⁶ Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 804-805.

²⁸⁷ Memorandum of Conversation, 17 July 1975, National Security Advisor Memoranda of Conversations, Box 13, *Gerald R. Ford Library*.

Kissinger: It may be too late because Luanda is lost. Unless we can seize it back, it is pretty hopeless. We'll have a resignation from Davis, then I'll clean out the AF bureau.

Ford: But if we do nothing, we will lose Southern Africa. I think we have an understandable position. I think we can defend it to the public. I won't let someone in Foggy Bottom deter me.²⁸⁸

That same day, the Forty Committee reached an agreement on Angola. President Ford approved the CIA's plan for the disbursement of \$6 million to be used against the MPLA. Over the course of the next two months, the amount would increase to \$8 million on July 27, and then \$10.7 million on August 20. The CIA's covert operation dubbed IAFEATURE was now underway.²⁸⁹

The CIA's plan was made, however, in direct opposition to the advice of Consul General Tom Killoran in Luanda—the U.S.' most consistent man on the ground in Angola. Robert Hullständer, CIA station chief in Luanda said, "The Agency considered much of Consul General Killoran's reporting on the MPLA to carry a leftist bias ... officers warned me to be very careful sharing information with Killoran, as he was 'sympathetic' to the MPLA."²⁹⁰ Hullständer continued to explain that Killoran "sacrificed his career in the State Department when he refused to bend his reporting to Kissinger's policy."²⁹¹ CIA officer John Stockwell's account echoes those statements, arguing that Kissinger "conspicuously" overruled his advisers and refused to seek diplomatic solutions.²⁹² He adds that an unnamed CIA officer, code-named SWISH, worked with all three movements in Angola and found the MPLA to be much better organized. SWISH

²⁸⁸ Memorandum of Conversation, 18 July 1975, National Security Advisor, Memoranda of Conversations, Box 13, *Gerald R. Ford Library*.

²⁸⁹ Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 290.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 353.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 357.

²⁹² Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies*, 43.

also believed the MPLA sincerely wanted peace with the U.S. and was the best-qualified movement to govern Angola. They were so firmly against capitalism because they strongly wanted to find an alternative to Portuguese oppression.²⁹³ Bob Temmons, who had been CIA chief of station in Luanda before Hullstander, also believed the MPLA was best qualified to run Angola and that they were not demonstrably hostile to the US.²⁹⁴ In the climate of Kissinger's State Department, however, any such views were suspicious at best, and were more than likely evidence of an anti-white, bleeding heart liberal.

In the minds of both the secretary and the president, the AF had it all wrong on Angola, and their opposition—no matter how fervent—was misguided and would ultimately necessitate their removal. Kissinger would later justify his decision, stating, “We cannot abandon national security in pursuit of virtue.”²⁹⁵ By mid-July, it was clear that the president and secretary held very different perspectives on national security and national interests in Africa than did their African “experts” in the AF. Davis, an Eastern Europe specialist, only took a matter of months on the ground to concur with the sympathies of Easum and Newsom, his two predecessors. Ford and Kissinger, however, were afraid of rapid liberation in the region, and they held outdated stereotypes that led them to believe their best bet was to protect, and ultimately ally, with the apartheid regime in South Africa. Davis, meanwhile, had argued that fighting the MPLA in Angola was a futile and incredibly damaging route to take. Not only were covert operations a horrible idea in 1975, but also, the U.S. would be fighting on the same side as most

²⁹³ Ibid., 64.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 205.

²⁹⁵ Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 1076.

Africans' number one enemy: South Africa, who entered the fray in August, 1975. It was a lose/lose situation that Davis felt did not promise nearly enough pay-off.

The *New York Times* reported that, at the time Davis left his position, “Opposition to the Angola policy was widespread throughout the Bureau of African Affairs and, after a review of the Angolan situation in late spring, the bureau recommended that the U.S. stay out of the conflict.”²⁹⁶ Kissinger proved unwilling to listen, and instead fired anyone who stood in his way. According to one State Department official, Kissinger “was given the best advice there was and it didn’t fit what he wanted to do. He wanted to face off the Russians right there in Angola.”²⁹⁷ *NYT* reporter Seymour Hersh wrote that an official who was “directly involved” stated, “First of all, Davis told them it won’t work. Neither Savimbi nor Roberto are good fighters—in fact, they couldn’t fight their way out of a paper bag. It’s the wrong game, and the players we got are losers.”²⁹⁸ Davis, in fact, correctly argued that the U.S. would end up with racist South Africa as their only ally in the conflict.

Kissinger’s prediction that Davis would resign soon proved accurate. In August, Davis left his office and was replaced by William Schaufele Jr. It is unclear exactly how Davis resigned, but it was obvious he would do so once the decision to move in Angola was confirmed. Schaufele recalled, “He didn’t resign, exactly. I think he just stopped coming into the office.”²⁹⁹ The *NYT* reported in December that a “closely involved” official said, “Davis resigned because he believed the policy [in Angola] was utterly

²⁹⁶ Seymour Hersh, “Angola-Aid Issue Opening Rifts in the State Department,” *The New York Times*, 14 December 1975.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁹ Schaufele.

wrong. He was unable to carry out a policy he was inimically opposed to.”³⁰⁰ Davis did not turn out to be the yes-man that Kissinger had anticipated. The fact that Davis knew “nothing” about Africa shows the secretary’s true interest in the former ambassador to Chile; he had hoped for someone who would not oppose him and lacked the expertise and authority to challenge his rationale.³⁰¹

Schaufele, who had previously served in the State Department in Morocco, Zaire, and Upper Volta, was much more knowledgeable on African issues than Davis. More importantly, he had no philosophical qualms about covert operations for U.S. interests. After being informed of his promotion, Schaufele met with the secretary in Washington. He recalls, “I said that I could tell him from my experience that any support given to Holden Roberto was a waste of money, because he was so corrupt. He was under Mobutu’s control and didn’t give a damn about Angola.”³⁰² Even though this information must have been disquieting to Kissinger, Schaufele went on to affirm his support for U.S. action in the region, favoring support for Savimbi’s UNITA. At least Kissinger had finally found someone who was on board with U.S. covert action.

Schaufele had a much better working relationship with Kissinger than the two previous assistant secretaries, but he still echoed some of their same observations about the secretary. Schaufele recounted that in his first meeting with Kissinger, the secretary talked about the AF and said that it was full of “missionaries” who wanted to improve the world. Additionally, Schaufele alleged that Kissinger “never expressed any interest in

³⁰⁰ Seymour Hersh, “Angola-Aid Issue Opening Rifts in the State Department.”

³⁰¹ Schaufele.

³⁰² Ibid.

Africa before the Angolan affair came up.”³⁰³ It was only when the Cold War could be projected on the region, with the fate of South Africa threatened, that the secretary suddenly wished to become the U.S.’ leading expert in the region.

With a new assistant secretary in place, Kissinger was then able to carry out his covert operation in Angola. It was no matter to Kissinger that it was, admittedly, probably too late to change the outcome of the situation. Something had to be done to at least make it a difficult victory for Soviet and Cuban interests and discourage any future black nationalists from upsetting the balance of power in the region. By mid July, the fighting in the capital has intensified, and Luanda was controlled by the MPLA. Cuba’s military mission to Angola grew rapidly; they began sending nearly five times the 100 instructors Neto had requested, along with weapons, clothing, and food for MPLA recruits.³⁰⁴ Meanwhile, the U.S. began sending its covert aid, with the first C-141 leaving for Kinshasa on July 29. In addition to the money Ford had granted to the FNLA, in June 1975, Mobutu was also granted \$50 million in assistance.³⁰⁵ The war was quickly expanding and intensifying as foreign powers started sending millions in aid along with advisers, weapons, and eventually, troops.

By the end of the summer of 1975, the Angolan civil war had transitioned into its second phase. UNITA had not officially entered the civil war until August 4, 1975, and by that time, Cuban and Soviet support had helped the MPLA to firmly stake a hold on Luanda.³⁰⁶ The Alvor Accord had set November as the date for the official power

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 256.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 289.

³⁰⁶ “New War Front; UNITA Joins Fighting,” *Facts on File World News Digest*, 16 August 1975.

transfer; time was running out for the FNLA and UNITA to dislodge the MPLA from Angola's capital. On August 9, UNITA and the FNLA made a joint announcement that they were withdrawing from the provisional government in Angola.³⁰⁷ It was at this point that both of the desperate movements, the FNLA and UNITA, turned to that stigmatic, last ditch option: an alliance with South Africa.

By August, the South Africans had already entered into the Angolan conflict. That month, South African Defense Forces (SADF) had moved into the Cunene River area of southern Angola to protect the hydroelectric dam they had co-funded with Portugal.³⁰⁸ The South Africans were more than willing to enter the fray, and so, after receiving requests for support, they set up training camps for both FNLA and UNITA by the end of August. For the South Africans, the civil war in Angola was an issue of national security. A hostile regime in Luanda would forfeit the SADF's freedom along the Angolan-Namibian border, extend base facilities to SWAPO in Angola, and signify the end of their benefit from the Cunene Dam.³⁰⁹ For Vorster, as well as Kissinger, the outcome in Angola had ramifications for the very survival of the apartheid regime in South Africa. They feared the violent precedent that would be set by a Soviet-supported, radical black movement's installment in southern Africa. It is unclear to what degree those in Washington encouraged Vorster to push into Angola. Even though ambassador Botha states, "It would be a travesty of truth to say that there was duplicity," he also admits that Vorster was under the opposite impression.³¹⁰ Additionally, John Stockwell wrote that

³⁰⁷ MacQueen, *The Decolonization of Portuguese Africa*, 185.

³⁰⁸ Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 109.

³⁰⁹ MacQueen, *The Decolonization of Portuguese Africa*, 189.

³¹⁰ Pik Botha, as interviewed by *Cnn.com*, "Cold War: Good Guys, Bad Guys," Episode 17, 14 February 1999, *Cnn.com*.

CIA officers “sympathized” with the whites of South Africa, and, “Under the leadership of the CIA director we lied to Congress and to the Forty Committee, which supervised the CIA’s Angola program. We entered into joint activities with South Africa.”³¹¹

According to former Assistant Secretary of State Easum, there had been “a lot of suspicion all along the line that he [Kissinger] had friends and connections, and that he permitted certain information to flow independently of official State Department channels to [South African Prime Minister] Vorster.” Keep in mind, this is the same B.J. Vorster who was interned by the South African government during World War II after he openly supported Nazi ideology and advocated German victory.³¹² Easum continues, “I don’t know this for a fact, but when the South Africans invaded Angola [later in the year] ... there are many people who believe that he [Kissinger] let [Ambassador] Botha know through business contacts, or whatever, that Botha would be supported if he did that.”³¹³ William Schaufele echoed this suspicion; he said that in regard to Angola, “Probably, at least initially on the initiative of South Africa, we got involved, but not wholly on our own.”³¹⁴ In his own personal account, Ambassador Botha denies such claims, but does recall a conversation with Vorster that casts doubt onto what exactly was the case:

Vorster: Puck, are you not aware of this request [for South Africa to invade Angola]?

Botha: No, not at all. It was certainly not routed through me.

Vorster: No, I don’t believe you. Look, I think you’d better spend another day or two on Capitol Hill, and then report back to me.³¹⁵

³¹¹ Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies*, 10.

³¹² Noer, *Cold War and Black Liberation*, 13.

³¹³ Easum.

³¹⁴ Schaufele.

³¹⁵ Botha, *Cnn.com*.

CIA officer John Stockwell offers additional insight into the U.S. relationship with South Africa during the 1974 to 1976 period. He says that while he “saw no evidence that the U.S. formally encouraged them to join the conflict,” for the CIA, South Africa was “the ideal solution” and officers “clamored for permission to visit South African bases in Southwest Africa.”³¹⁶ Essentially, he says, “coordination was being effected at all CIA levels and the South Africans escalated their own involvement in step with our own.”³¹⁷ The outrage that might occur in black African nations over the U.S.’ intimate working relationship in southern Africa was attributed by CIA African Division Chief Jim Potts to the inherent “irrational” nature of blacks.³¹⁸ Regardless of the degree of duplicity, it was clear that South Africa would do everything within its power to ensure a friendly government was ultimately established in Luanda.

Despite the fact that the SADF entered Angola in August, the apartheid regime denied any official participation in the war during September and October. On October 14, the South Africans entered with an armored column code-named Zulu via Namibia.³¹⁹ The Zulu forces consisted of more than 1,000 black Angolans and a smaller number of white South African soldiers. SADF officers led the column, and they quickly smashed through southern Angola at a clip of forty to forty-five miles per day.³²⁰ By mid October, however, the MPLA still held the few towns, major villages, and roads in southern Angola, as well as the entire northern coast. The goal of the SADF was to reach Luanda before the November 11 transfer of power. The situation was growing increasingly dire

³¹⁶ Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies*, 186-187.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 188.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

³¹⁹ Guimaraes, *The Origins of the Angola Civil War*, 110.

³²⁰ Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 300.

for UNITA and the FNLA, and therefore, the South Africans pushed forward fiercely and quickly.

Once the CIA had begun sending weapons to the FNLA and UNITA, they had discovered, as Davis and some of their own officials had warned, that the two movements lacked the skill, leadership, and discipline to conduct successful military campaigns, which thereby forced the CIA to send their own paramilitary experts.³²¹ South African instructors, CIA paramilitary personnel and the first of the Cuban Military Mission in Angola (MMCA) began arriving in Angola at roughly the same time, late August 1975.³²² One of the key instruments of the CIA's operation IAFEATURE was the employment of "paramilitary personnel," otherwise known as mercenaries. Stockwell, who was appointed head of IAFEATURE, complained that his superiors "lacked enough experience in Africa to know that the word 'mercenary' stirs great disgust in the hearts of black Africans."³²³ This was largely because of the conduct of European and South African mercenaries in previous African civil wars, giving them "a murderous reputation." Using mercenaries at the crest of the era of black nationalism in Africa was a complete blunder and was bound to deal a great blow to the U.S.' credibility in the third world. Despite this danger, Kissinger and the Forty Committee, and also the CIA, proved more than willing to risk U.S. relations in Africa. As the situation in Angola grew more dire, "the CIA turned to its mercenary recruitment programs with renewed determination."³²⁴

³²¹ Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 296.

³²² *Ibid.*, 351.

³²³ Stockwell, *Conflicting Missions*, 183.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, 220.

The Cubans had long been involved in the Angolan conflict, but it was not until October that Washington realized how large a threat they posed in the region. On October 9, a telegram that Tom Killoran in Luanda sent to Washington warned that reliable sources spotted loads of Cuban troops and arms landing in Angola at Porto Ambuim.³²⁵ By October 20, Cuban instructors, recruits, and equipment were in place and four Centro de Instruccion Revolucionara (CIR) groups were ready, giving the MMCA about 500 men in Angola.³²⁶ The Cubans were stepping up their support for the MPLA during the final weeks before the November 11 transfer of power.

Meanwhile, the second South African force entered Angola. Code-named Foxbat, the column moved in to Silva Proto, Savimbi's military headquarters in central Angola. By the end of October, more than 1,000 South African soldiers were in Angola.³²⁷ Still, however, the South African government categorically denied any official participation in the conflict.³²⁸

In November, the conflict would reach its climax. The first day of the month, the MPLA, bolstered by its new Cuban support, descended on Cabinda, a city in the north, and seized the airport, radio, and main administrative buildings while Portuguese soldiers merely observed. Members of the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC), a group supported by Mobutu, fled to Congo.³²⁹ With the oil-rich enclave of Cabinda firmly under control, the MPLA was then free to focus on repelling the advancing South-African-supported columns to the south.

³²⁵ Telegram from Consulate in Luanda to Washington, D.C., State Department Telegrams, Angola, National Security Adviser – Presidential Country Files, Box 2, *Gerald R. Ford Library*.

³²⁶ Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 265.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 301.

³²⁸ Michael Kaufman, "South African Role in Angola Grows," *The New York Times*, 20 December 1975.

³²⁹ Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 262.

Meanwhile, things were not looking quite so dire from the view in Washington. That same day, Ford, Kissinger, and Scowcroft met in the Oval Office and briefly discussed operation IAFEATURE in Angola:

Kissinger: We need a 40 Committee meeting on Angola to assess the situation.

Ford: How is that going?

Kissinger: With a few arms and mercenaries, either side could win. We have done well with the weapons we sent. But it may turn with the new Soviet weapons going in.³³⁰

While Kissinger was stating his belief that either side could still win, there was a celebration in Luanda. At 6 p.m. on November 11, “one of the most unusual acts of decolonization ever witnessed in Africa” took place as the Portuguese high commissioner announced that Portugal was transferring power to the “Angolan people.”³³¹ Although Portugal claimed to have adhered to its policy of not turning power over to any of the three movements, just six hours later, Augustinho Neto presided over a celebration in which the birth of the People’s Republic of Angola (PRA) was announced.³³²

Prior to November 1975, U.S. operation IAFEATURE, as well as the South African operations, had remained successfully secretive, and had gained little interest from informed congressmen and uninformed press members. On November 22, however, Reuters’ special correspondent Fred Bridgland filed a story from Lobito noting that it was South African regulars, not mercenaries, leading the advance to Luanda.³³³ The story was plastered on the front page of the *Washington Post*, breaking the façade of Pretoria’s

³³⁰ Memoranda of Conversation, Washington D.C., 11 November 1975, National Security Advisor – Memoranda of Conversations, Box 16, *Gerald R. Ford Library*.

³³¹ 11 November 1975, *The New York Times*, p.1.

³³² Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 311.

³³³ *Ibid.*, 321.

claim that they were not involved and bringing widespread attention to the controversial operations in Angola.³³⁴

Additionally, until November, most senators and congressmen had exhibited little interest in the details of the operation; only Joseph Biden (D-Del.) voiced concerns over the CIA's actions in Angola.³³⁵ Senator Dick Clark, then chair of the Senate Subcommittee on Africa, recalled, "I knew nothing of Africa. I had not been there, had not studied it and wasn't particularly interested in it."³³⁶ This disinterest had long been a congressional tradition. The first chair of the sub-committee, John F. Kennedy, accepted the position in 1959 under the condition that he could hold no hearings.³³⁷ Africa had long been stereotyped as a land of jungles, cannibals, white hunters, and wild animals. Simply put, it was not a sexy issue for congressmen to deal with; instead, it was a thorny, racial issue that had little political capital to offer congressmen who knew little and cared little about it.

With the release of information about South Africans invading Angola in November, however, "the shit hit the fan."³³⁸ In late November and December, a flurry of news began to shed light on the true nature of U.S. and South African operations in Angola. Even worse, this information linked the U.S. directly to the apartheid regime's denied invasion of its northern neighbor. In December, the *New York Times* began a series of stories revealing operation IAFEATURE and the U.S.' cooperation with South Africa. On December 14, Ingeborg Lippman wrote,

³³⁴ Ibid., 323.

³³⁵ Hanhimaki, *The Flawed Architect*, 420.

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 382.

³³⁸ Ibid., 420.

Suddenly, and quite secretly, the U.S. is once again contesting communist military power in a remote place. The Ford Administration is doing so apparently to satisfy American national interest as it was defined when the U.S. entered and enlarged the war in Indochina.

In addition to comparing Angola operations to Vietnam, Ingeborg discussed how the U.S. was “directly abetting South African strategy. The U.S. is, in effect, fighting by proxy alongside soldiers of a nation almost universally considered as a symbol of racism.”³³⁹

That same day, George M. Houser (executive director of the American Committee on Africa) wrote an article that detailed South Africa’s actions and unpacked their interests and rationale in the invasion. He writes:

An immediate objective of South Africa is to use the Angolan fighting as a smokescreen behind which it can eliminate the forces of SWAPO ... from northern Namibia and southern Angola. South Africa sees the Angolan conflict as the real beginning of the war for its own survival as a white-dominated state in southern Africa. For years South Africa has been attempting to build itself into the Western alliance on the back of the anti-communist cause. Now South Africa is calling for the Western alliance to stop a “take-over” in Angola.³⁴⁰

In another article that was published in the *NYT* on December 15, the covert nature of IAFEATURE was revealed, and the rift it had created within the State Department was made public. In it, Anthony Lewis argued that officials had chosen covert operations because “it is more convenient. It allows policy to be made by a handful of men who know best. It avoids annoying questioning by Congress, the public, and experts within the executive branch.”³⁴¹ He continued to argue that the only governmental opposition to the policy was suppressed and that Kissinger made the

³³⁹ Ingeborg Lippman, “Another Tunnel?” *The New York Times*, 14 December 1975.

³⁴⁰ George M. Houser, “Communism and the War in Angola,” *The New York Times*, 14 December 1975.

³⁴¹ Anthony Lewis, “No Questions, Please,” *The New York Times*, 15 December 1975.

decision to move forward against the advice of his own assistant secretary of state, Davis. Quickly, the secret nature of Kissinger's pet project was destroyed, but the situation would have to get more and more disastrous before the plug would be pulled.

Just one day after Lewis' article, another even bigger bombshell hit the news: four prisoners said to be regulars of the SADF were displayed in Luanda by the MPLA.³⁴² The four POWs were captured near a battlefield between Cela and Quibala, 400 miles from Angola's border with South West Africa.³⁴³ That SADF troops were caught this deep into Angola shattered Pretoria's false claims that South Africa was playing no official role in the war. Additionally, the display of SADF prisoners dealt incredible political damage to Jonas Savimbi, because he had vehemently denied cooperation with South African forces and continually challenged the MPLA to produce a South African prisoner.

These public revelations of South Africa's participation dealt immediate political damage to the anti-MPLA cause throughout the majority of African nations. Kenyan Ambassador to the U.S., Muniya Waiyaki, informed Washington that at least eleven African nations were now heading the pro-MPLA faction in the Organization of African Unity (OAU). According to Waiyaki, Nigeria, Mozambique, Tanzania, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, San Tome and Principe, Cape Verde, Algeria, Benin, Liberia, and Madagascar were all among those that vehemently opposed any movement that the apartheid regime backed.³⁴⁴ Waiyaki stressed that many African leaders considered South Africa to be an invading force, whereas, in their views, the Soviets and Cubans had been "invited" to

³⁴² "Angolans in Luanda Exhibit Four as South African Soldiers," *The New York Times*, 17 December 1975.

³⁴³ Michael Kaufman, "South African Role in Angola Grows," *The New York Times*, 20 December 1975.

³⁴⁴ State Department Telegram to the Secretary of State, NODIS, January 1976, *Gerald R. Ford Library*.

Angola. Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere also sent a message to Washington. In a letter he sent to President Ford on January 22, 1976, Nyerere gave his perspective on the conflict:

War in Angola is ... part of the whole struggle for national freedom and human equality and dignity in southern Africa. The Angolan conflict has not been an ideological struggle between communists and non-communists. Since 1961 it has been a struggle between colonialists and racialists on the one side, and the anti-colonialists and anti-racialists on the other.³⁴⁵

Even Pik Botha, the South African ambassador to the US, acknowledged that to Africans, the Angolan conflict was about a North/South conflict of black nationalism and racial conflict in southern Africa, and was not based in a communist versus non-communist, East/West competition. Speaking about black African guerilla movements, Botha stated:

I would, you know, to what extent the African guerilla movements had no choice, because the United States, and very often Europe, refused to sell weapons and arms, more or less out of fear that if you have great instability in Africa, they would have to pay the price eventually. Unfortunately, your movements in Africa then had to turn to the only source for supplying them with weapons...the Soviet Union ... and then came about this perception in general that black African movements were also communist, which is certainly...not true.³⁴⁶

Issues of racial tensions and liberation struggles were not, according to Kissinger, legitimate or something to be concerned about. Despite the political damage dealt to IAFEATURE, he was determined to simply close ranks and press forward. South African troops, routed in Ebo and now in retreat, might have forced some to decide it was time

³⁴⁵ Presidential Correspondence with Foreign Leaders, Tanzania, President Julius Nyerere, 22 January 1976, *Gerald R. Ford Library*.

³⁴⁶ Botha, *Cnn.com*.

for the U.S. to also pull out. Kissinger, however, believed it was time to rely more heavily on another politically toxic approach to southern Africa: mercenaries.

The use of mercenaries in Africa was not unusual for the U.S. They had been “successfully” employed by President Johnson in Congo during the previous decade. If the U.S. could not send troops, and if the SADF was going to scale back, Kissinger believed a proper solution was to use CIA money to finance additional mercenary-led forces to fight against the MPLA. A major fear, however, was that new publicity of IAFEATURE might lead to a public and congressional backlash:

Kissinger: At the very moment when the Soviets begin to blink, the Congress is going to cut our legs off. I am purging the African bureau, after the NY Times article.

Kissinger [moments later]: We are living in a nihilistic nightmare. It proves that Vietnam is not an aberration but a normal attitude ... No one will ever believe us again if we can't do this. How can they believe we will back them?³⁴⁷

The week's news stories had not only revealed the covert nature of IAFEATURE, but reporters were now linking the U.S. to the interests and operations of the apartheid regime. Worse yet, South African forces were pulling back from Luanda, and the situation on the ground looked extremely dire. On December 18, 1975, President Ford met with his secretary of state, Henry Kissinger, and the assistant for National Security affairs, Lieutenant General Brent Scowcroft in the Oval Office. Most prominent on the agenda was the deteriorating situations in Angola and in the press. Kissinger and Ford

³⁴⁷ Memorandum of Conversation, Oval Office, 18 December 1975, Box 17, National Security Advisor – Memoranda of Conversations, *Gerald R. Ford Library*.

feared that new information being leaked about IAFEATURE might lead Congress to cut off funding for the CIA's Angolan operation.

The following day, December 19, Kissinger's fears became reality. Even though, as Senator Biden said, "Most members [of the Senate] could not distinguish between Angola and Mongolia," Congress passed the Tunney Amendment to the Defense Appropriations Bill by a vote of 54 to 22, thereby cutting any further funds to anti-MPLA forces in Angola unless specifically appropriated in the budget.³⁴⁸ Members of Congress were outraged at the covert nature of the operation, particularly in light of the just-ended war in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. The operation in Angola would then not only proceed against the advice of the AF and many regional experts within the CIA, but also against the vehement opposition of the U.S. Congress.

A final blow to Kissinger's covert operation IAFEATURE in Angola occurred when information in the press revealed the U.S. role in funding mercenary forces in the war. On December 22, *Newsweek* reporter Kim Wellenson reported that \$50 million of arms was being funneled by the CIA through Zaire, as well as reports that U.S. flying artillery spotter planes had been sighted over the battlefield. Worse yet, Wellenson uncovered newspaper ads in California that offered jobs to mercenaries at \$1,200 per month to fight alongside anti-MPLA forces.³⁴⁹

As the story of mercenary troops in Angola unfolded, the truth about the U.S. role in Angola became an even more sordid tale. Men such as the infamous "Colonel Callahan" were employed and associated with the so-called "leader of the free world."

³⁴⁸ Hanhimaki, *The Flawed Architect*, 420.

³⁴⁹ Kim Wellenson, "Angola: the American Role," *Newsweek*, 22 December 1975.

Callahan, whose real name was Costas Georgiou, was a “ruthless Greek Cypriot” who had served as a paratrooper for Britain in Northern Ireland.³⁵⁰ Callahan was discharged from the British forces for armed robbery and later characterized by a psychiatrist as “a mad dog on a leash.”³⁵¹ In Angola, Callahan was in charge of a platoon of mercenary troops. The platoon saw little action in Angola, aside from some of the men mistaking their own Land Rover for an enemy tank and subsequently destroying it. Following this event, the mad dog came off of his leash, and, along with his sergeant major, Callahan drove the fourteen men responsible to a deserted field where he gunned them down.³⁵²

The story of Colonel Callahan was just one of many that emerged over the winter of 1976. Raymond Carroll of *Newsweek* also reported on a group called the “Wild Geese.” Carroll wrote, “In the bistros of Paris, Brussels, and Lisbon, in the bars of Johannesburg and in hotel rooms along the Thames, the word was out: professional fighting men were needed to help the beleaguered pro-Western forces in Angola.”³⁵³ Carroll reported that the Wild Geese were just 100 of a vanguard mercenary force of 600 men on their way to stiffen the crumbling forces of Roberto’s FNLA in northern Angola. Accordingly, a Roberto aide named Terence Haig revealed he was sent to London with \$48,000 in fresh \$100 bills. He stated, “It is an open secret that we are spending U.S. money for our recruitment of military advisers.”³⁵⁴

Dave Tompkins was one of the hundreds of soldiers paid to fight against the MPLA in Angola. His story corroborates with the reporting of Carroll and Wellenson, as

³⁵⁰ Raymond Carroll, “Collapse in Angola,” *Newsweek*, 23 February 1976.

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Raymond Carroll, “The Mercenary Life,” *Newsweek*, 9 February 1976.

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

well as numerous accounts like that of Terence Haig. Tomkins, a former burglar or “professional thief” worked under Costas Georgiou, or Colonel Callahan, in a group of mostly Portuguese and Cypriot mercenaries.

Much like the officials in Washington who approved operation IAFEATURE, Tomkins admittedly knew little about Africa and even less about Angola. He claimed that before he knew nothing “apart from the fact that [Angola] was having a civil war.”³⁵⁵ For Tomkins, as well as many other mercenaries, it was all about the money. “I was broke,” he stated. “The offer was put to me, and I took it.”³⁵⁶

Tomkins’ account of his arrival and initial encounter with FNLA forces sounds incredibly similar to that of John Stockwell. Tomkins said he was “quite horrified” upon his arrival in Kinshasa. “We exited the aircraft onto a very battered old bus, through some very battered streets, to a very battered old colonial mansion, and given some very tattered old clothing and a very tatty weapon and away we went.” Tomkins and the other new recruits were then taken to the home of Roberto, where they were given clothes from “an old bunker at the end of the garden ... bales of camouflage clothes, boots without laces, no belts ... a very motley collection of clothing to equip us with.”³⁵⁷

From there, Tomkins and the other mercenaries left Kinshasa and headed toward a remnant of FNLA troops. He recounted,

We were joining what was the FNLA and we assumed it had an army. That wasn’t the case we found ... it may very well have been an army at some time, but we were linking up with remnants of that, and our army

³⁵⁵ Dave Tomkins, interview by *Cnn.com*, “Cold War: Good Guys, Bad Guys,” Episode 17, *Cnn.com*.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

consisted of perhaps no more than 50 or 60 guys. Right from the beginning we realized we were in a bit of shambles. The morale deteriorated very quickly—Food, which is a basic necessity for life, was very Spartan; we'd have rice and some rancid meat to eat for most of the day.³⁵⁸

Instead of being deployed for battles with MPLA and Cuban troops, the majority of action Tomkins' unit experienced was against Angolan civilians. "There wasn't any battles to describe in the context that you're talking about a battle," he stated. Instead, he explained, "We raided many of our towns to get equipment for our own purposes. We lacked any normal military standard routines of the day, like a briefing."³⁵⁹

The absence of military discipline extended to the leadership. Tomkins claimed that those Angolans questioned or tortured by Callahan's troops "were taken to Kiendi Bridge and shot in the head and dumped—if, of course, Callahan hadn't, or one of those others hadn't beaten them to death at a particular moment in time."³⁶⁰

While Tomkins and other mercenaries were committing war crimes in Angola, the U.S. press began to take the Ford administration to task for continuing operations in Angola. One article in the *NYT* argued that Ford and Kissinger lacked sufficient awareness of the "gravest long-run danger of all for U.S.-Africa relations and with the entire nonwhite world: an alliance for intervention in Angola with the perpetrators of apartheid."³⁶¹ The article continued, "So long as even a thousand white South African soldiers are deployed in Angola, black African governments will tolerate five times that many Cuban soldiers." Another article, by John Grimond, noted that after South Africa sent troops to Angola, 12 African nations "threw neutrality to the winds" and recognized

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ "Rethinking America," *The New York Times*, 26 December 1975.

the MPLA.³⁶² It was later reported that even Nigeria, a capitalist, normally pro-Western nation decided to recognize the MPLA.

Despite this public relations nightmare, it was not until mid February 1976 that U.S. operations in Angola finally ended. On February 10, 1976, President Ford signed into law a bill that forbade covert aid to the Angolan factions. The president, in the midst of a reelection campaign, took the opportunity to shift blame for the failure in Angola to Congress, stating that “the Soviet Union and their Cuban mercenaries” won because Congress had “lost their guts.”³⁶³ The president also said, “Congress has stated to the world that it will ignore a clear act of Soviet-Cuban expansion by brute military force into areas thousands of miles from either country.”³⁶⁴ This would be the line towed by Kissinger and Ford in the aftermath of IAFEATURE’s failure. The failure had nothing to do with the fact that it was a futile operation to begin with, as so many advisers and experts had warned. The reason for failure, according to this logic, was that Congress had cut off aid just when the Soviets were about to “blink.”

By February, the Ford administration not only had to deal with the political damage of losing the covert battle in Angola, but also had nearly irreparably damaged their relationship with every other African nation in the region by allying with South Africa and employing white mercenaries. Even Mobutu, the corrupt and power-hungry leader of Zaire, had decided to cut his losses and end Zaire’s involvement before the U.S. did likewise. On February 3, Mobutu announced he would no longer allow mercenary

³⁶² John Grimond, “South Africa’s Friends Don’t Like to Admit It,” *The New York Times*, 11 January 1976.

³⁶³ Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 362.

³⁶⁴ Angola, Vernon C. Loen and Charles Leppert Files, Box 1, *Gerald R. Ford Library*.

transit thought Kinshasa.³⁶⁵ Even though Kissinger, always prescient of falling dominoes, considered what impact an MPLA victory would have in southern Africa, he had failed to listen to anyone who suggested that allying with the FNLA, UNITA, South Africa, and white mercenaries, might have an even more adverse effect on U.S. national interests.

³⁶⁵ Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 339.

CONCLUSION

In his book, *Years of Renewal*, Henry Kissinger laments the U.S.' failed operation in Angola, writing, "Had we moved more rapidly, a decisive victory would have been within reach."³⁶⁶ He goes on to blame myriad others for this failure. He argues that the arrival of Cuban troops could have been overcome "had Congress not stopped us."³⁶⁷ He blames the AF and the media, writing, "Davis' opposition and the doubts of his friends were documented in the media and received massive editorial support."³⁶⁸ Vasili Mitrokhin adds that Kissinger even blamed Ford. In *The World Was Going Our Way*, he writes, "In an angry off-the-record briefing, Henry Kissinger condemned Ford for allowing Congress to ride roughshod over his foreign policy."³⁶⁹

For Kissinger, the issue came back to the career-long battle he had fought with the unrealistic, bleeding heart liberals who comprised troublesome institutions such as the AF. In his memoirs, Kissinger writes, "The opponents [of IAFEATURE] were seeking to vindicate a theory of international politics abjuring geopolitics and equilibrium, a watered-down version of Wilsonianism in which the forces of good will prevail by dint of their intrinsic virtue, not by strategy and especially not by power."³⁷⁰ Kissinger insisted that it was about the agenda of some idealistic stooges who bought into abstract principles such as morality to guide international policy. This, as he describes it, was "a

³⁶⁶ Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 816.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 827.

³⁶⁹ Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The World Was Going Our Way*, 453.

³⁷⁰ Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 829.

quest for absolutes,” which could not be translated as “a kind of mechanical blueprint for day to day foreign policy.”³⁷¹

Kissinger argues that his opponents were blinded by an unyielding and inflexible ideology that caused them to ignore the pragmatic issues at hand. Accordingly, he was able to see the more rational view of the U.S./Soviet balance of power at risk, the tangible effect Angola would have on U.S. prestige, and the sphere of influence that could be lost if the dominos in southern Africa began to fall. Going back to Michael Hunt’s description of ideology, however, it becomes evident that Kissinger was perhaps the obstinate idealist who refused to read the writing that had been clearly written on the wall by a number of advisers and Africa experts. If ideology is defined as “an interrelated set of convictions or assumptions that reduces the complexities of a particular slice of reality to easily comprehensible terms and suggests appropriate ways of dealing with that reality,” as Hunt described it, Kissinger’s ideology, and that of the Nixon and Ford administrations, can be elucidated.³⁷²

Long before the eruption of the Angolan civil war, perhaps before he even served as a U.S. official, Kissinger, with the help of President Nixon and some of his closest officials, developed his own set of convictions and assumptions that pertained to sub-Saharan Africa, the AF, Africans, and race, in general. According to these assumptions and convictions, there existed a hierarchy in both foreign policy issues and race relations. Sub-Saharan Africa was of no consequence. It had little or no bearing on the U.S. national interest. As ordered in one of Nixon’s memoranda, issues of the region were to

³⁷¹ Ibid., 97, 98.

³⁷² Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, xi.

be relegated to inferior officials, as they were only important if the region became a stage of the greater struggle against the Soviets. Additionally, black Africans were sometimes “nice little guys,” but more often than not, they were “a murdering bunch of characters,” and largely uneducated. Simply put, “They don’t add anything.” Therefore, it became an ideological conviction that the interests of Africans, in and of themselves, were meaningless and insignificant to the national interests of the U.S. Moreover, anything they had to say was to be taken with a giant grain of salt, because they were emotional, irrational, uncivilized, and uneducated savages that smelled bad and played jungle beats whenever they were not eating 100,000 people.

The AF, by palling around with black Africans and advocating majority rule when a perfectly suitable and paternal Portuguese government was already in place, was therefore always going to be full of missionary zealots with bleeding hearts that did not understand foreign policy and concepts of national interest. For Kissinger, it was clear that national interest meant balance of power and equilibrium, something that would never be attainable if there was a wave of chaotic and uncertain majority rule brought about in southern Africa. White minorities were much more reliable, regardless of any qualms people had about human rights abuses and repression. Those were abstract terms that only missionaries worried about; the foreign policy machinery did not speak such language.

It is in the examination of these convictions and assumptions that Kissinger’s collision path with the AF becomes comprehensible. They did not speak the same language. Kissinger had his own ideology that allowed him to reduce the complexities of Angola into easily comprehensible terms. Jussi Hanhimaki echoes this notion, writing

that Kissinger “was unable to break with some of the persistent paradigms of the Cold War. He operated, essentially, in the same bilateral framework as his predecessors had, taking it as a given that containing Soviet power ... should be the central goal of American foreign policy.”³⁷³

Additionally, by understanding Kissinger’s racial convictions and assumptions (or ideology), it becomes clear why the doctor of diplomacy recklessly embarked on and stubbornly held on to such a bankrupt strategy in Angola. He did not respect the organizational strength and popular support for the MPLA. He was insensitive to the effects of allying with South Africa and employing white mercenaries. Kissinger learned the hard way that black nationalism was a powerful force in southern Africa—one that had to be reckoned with in developing foreign policy for the region.

Many historians, however, have either missed or ignored the powerful influence racial ideology had on Kissinger’s logic. Although they show how Kissinger lacked an understanding of local causes in third world conflicts, they fail to go beyond attributing this to his Cold War approach. Yes, it is true that Kissinger failed to accept that “regional players ... had their own interests and carried their own leverage.”³⁷⁴ But this understanding remains shallow without investigating *why* Kissinger failed to accept this.

To fully understand why Kissinger was a “flawed architect” when he created foreign policy in the third world, one has to interrogate the impact of race relations. It is the piece that makes sense out of the puzzle. From the very beginning of his education, Kissinger lived in a world of white elite academicians and politicians. He sought to emulate the careers of old-school white European statesmen of the 19th Century who held

³⁷³ Hanhimaki, *The Flawed Architect*, xvii.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 49.

little regard for the virtues of democracy, human rights, and liberation. Metternich, Bismarck, and Castlereagh spoke the language of cold, calculating, balance of power amongst the “powerful” players of the global chess game. This philosophy, combined with the “casual racism” of the 1960s and 1970s led Kissinger to a working relationship with Nixon that discounted, discredited, and disdained the interests and aspirations of those on the lower rungs of humanity’s racial hierarchy, especially those “smelly,” “uneducated”, and “ape-like” blacks in both the U.S. and Africa.

In Angola, Kissinger presented his most tangible example of the impact of racial ideology upon foreign policy. It was only when he hit the very bottom, after the MPLA emerged victorious and the press lambasted Kissinger and Ford for these reckless policies, that Henry Kissinger begin to act like a leader of the Free World, touting “Africa for Africans” in his 1976 tour of the continent. It was only after the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Angolans, and the displacement of millions of Angolan refugees, that the doctor of diplomacy finally acknowledged the legitimate interests and aspirations of a continent he had long maligned.

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