ABSTRACT

Andrew K.A. Boxer, Pembroke College

Year of submission: 2013-14

Thesis title: *The USA and Southern Rhodesia, 1953-1969*

Existing studies of this topic have not made enough use of the British archives. Nor have they analysed the American domestic response to UDI in sufficient depth. The policies of successive American administrations as regards the Rhodesian problem can only be fully understood as part of Washington's attitude to Britain, to Africa in general, and to southern Africa in particular. And, because the issue of white minority rule in Africa raised powerful emotions both in the African American community and among white opponents of civil rights, the Rhodesian crisis became a part of the politics of racial equality within the USA, playing a key role in the developing ideologies of these two communities.

This thesis is based on research in both American and British archives and aims to show that the prevailing interpretation, especially of the policies of the Johnson Administration once Rhodesia had made its illegal declaration of independence in November 1965, is mistaken. Scholars have tended to take at face value the oft-repeated claim of US policy-makers that Rhodesia was a British problem, that they wished to be no more than helpful bystanders, supporting British efforts to see the downfall of the illegal regime and the creation of a government based on majority rule, and that when they did intervene, it was merely to urge the British to be firmer in their resolve to end the rebellion. The central contention of this thesis is that the officials shaping African policy in the Johnson Administration were intimately involved in the management of the crisis and that, far from resisting a solution that legitimised the white minority regime, they actively encouraged the British to settle with the illegal government.

HISTORY FACULTY ABSTRACT

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Existing studies of this topic have been written, for the most part, by American scholars who have insufficiently considered the British perspective and made not enough use of the British archives. Nor have they analysed the American domestic response to UDI in sufficient depth. The policies of successive American Administrations as regards the Rhodesian problem can only be fully understood as part of Washington's attitude to Britain, to Africa in general, and to southern Africa in particular. And, because the issue of white minority rule in Africa raised powerful emotions both in the African American community and among white opponents of civil rights, the Rhodesian crisis became a part of the politics of racial equality within the USA, playing a key role in the developing ideologies of these two communities.

This thesis is based on research in both American and British archives and aims to show that the prevailing interpretation of the Rhodesian issue, especially of the policies of the Johnson Administration once Rhodesia had made its illegal declaration of independence in November 1965, is mistaken. Scholars have tended to take at face value the oft-repeated claim of US policy-makers that Rhodesia was a British problem, that they wished to be no more than helpful bystanders, supporting British efforts to see the downfall of the illegal regime and the creation of a government based on majority rule and that, when they did intervene, it was merely to urge the British to be firmer in their resolve to end the rebellion. The central contention of this thesis is that the officials shaping African policy in the Johnson Administration were intimately involved in the management of the crisis and that, far from resisting a solution that legitimised the white minority regime, they actively encouraged the British to settle with the illegal government.

Successive American administrations from the end of the Second World War to 1969 were increasingly, and reluctantly, drawn into the politics of sub-Saharan Africa. For them, the priority was the Cold War, so they were preoccupied with ensuring that the strategic and economic resources of the area did not fall into the communist orbit – either Soviet or Chinese. Under both Truman and Eisenhower, most US officials thought this could best be achieved by the maintenance of European rule. But the rapid collapse of the colonial empires in the latter half of the 1950s presented the US Government with a dilemma it was unable to resolve and which opened a debilitating division within the State Department over its policy towards Africa in general and the white minority regimes in particular. Naked and pragmatic power politics (associated with the so-called "Europeanists" in Washington) suggested that America's Cold War interests would be best served by supporting – or doing little to oppose – the strongly anti-communist white regimes which were politically entrenched and wielded powerful security forces. The Europeanists also calculated that crusading on behalf of black liberation in Africa offered only marginal benefits; the political, economic and military muscle of the NATO powers of Europe, even those such as Portugal that retained colonial possessions in Africa, was much more significant. This approach was challenged by the African Bureau in the State Department and also, to some extent, by the US mission at the United Nations. Both believed that ideology and self-interest dictated that the USA should be on the side of the black African majorities. Pointing to the nation's traditional anti-colonial ideology, and to the eagerness with which Soviet propaganda exploited America's racial confrontations of the 1950s and early 1960s, they argued that supporting black African liberation made good sense politically. Not only was it, they maintained, the best way to undercut the appeal of communism in black Africa, but it would also win the support of the newly liberated nations of the Third World which were increasingly numerous and vocal in the United Nations.

The divisions within the State Department were sharpest over which the policies the USA should adopt towards South Africa, the Portuguese territories of Angola and Mozambique, and the Congolese civil war. Over Rhodesia, the two factions were agreed that America should be seen to oppose the establishment of another white minority regime. Since the USA had, at most, only a small economic

stake in Rhodesia, this policy enabled successive administrations to polish their anti-colonial credentials tarnished by the appeasement of South Africa and Portugal. But the Washington factions disagreed markedly over how far to press their opposition. For the African Bureau, especially when it was led by Governor Williams, thwarting the white rulers of Rhodesia was a matter of principle – America should place itself on the side of racial justice and, if necessary, push the British into taking a firmer line. But this worried the Europeanists. Not only were they reluctant to complicate relations with their foremost European ally, but they wanted to minimise their involvement in the problem lest it drag the USA into costly commitments or, worse still, lead to a rupture with Rhodesia's allies, South Africa and Portugal. Washington's professed stance was that the USA was loyally following the policy of the British Government – the legitimate authority in Rhodesia – but, in practice, both factions in the State Department wished to influence the direction of that policy. This bureaucratic turf war had been won by the Europeanists by 1966, a victory which meant that the US Government gave its tacit support to the efforts of British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, to reach a negotiated settlement with the rebel regime. Because such a solution would have outraged most of the Third World and the African Americans, a key constituency of the Democratic Party in the USA, the State Department would have denounced it in public. But there is enough evidence to suggest that they would, privately, have welcomed an agreement that legitimised white minority rule in Rhodesia, thereby sweeping a troublesome issue under the carpet and stabilising, at least in the short term, sub-Saharan Africa, which remained crucial to their Cold War strategy.

There is a discrete historiographical debate about US foreign policy and the African American community, and understanding its contours is essential to evaluating how the American opponents of Rhodesia – who were largely but not exclusively from the African American community – reacted to the crisis. This thesis analyses this debate in some detail. Some historians argue that moderate blacks supported US post-war Cold War policies in return for concessions on civil rights in the USA and thereby destroyed the possibility of a broadly-based progressive movement emerging that might have embraced both domestic racial reform and stronger American support for decolonisation. However, the potential of such a movement has been exaggerated. The attitude of black moderates and white

liberals to foreign policy in general, and Rhodesian policy in particular, was grounded in hard-headed calculations about what they could realistically achieve in difficult circumstances. As the liberal idealism of the late 1950s and early 1960s about the future of post-colonial Africa faded – reinforcing negative stereotypes about black inferiority – the African American attempts to pressure the US Government to strengthen America's identification with black liberation in Sub-Saharan Africa met increased resistance. Yet despite this hostile climate, the moderate African Americans (although for tactical reasons their primary focus was South Africa rather than Rhodesia after 1966) helped ensure that the US Government could not publicly endorse any settlement that did not grant immediate majority rule at a time when it was under increasing pressure from right-wingers to do just that.

Rhodesia was important to African Americans but it was not the main front in their battle against colonialism and racism. They, quite correctly, regarded South Africa, not Rhodesia, as the most important obstacle to majority rule in southern Africa. But they knew that the US Government would not undertake serious measures against the apartheid regime because of South Africa's economic importance and its geopolitical value to the USA in the Cold War. Moderate African Americans believed that their government was not doing enough against any of the white minority regimes, but they recognised that, in the struggle against Rhodesia, the UN sanctions, though inadequate, were as much as they could realistically hope for. They were fearful that their government might respond to conservative pressure to drop even these, so they maintained their criticism of US links with South Africa knowing that the Johnson Administration, to retain their electoral support, would have to offer them something – and this was the continuation of its professed hostility to minority rule in Rhodesia. For radical African Americans, the goal of black liberation in Africa was part of what they saw as a worldwide struggle by non-whites to throw off colonialism and capitalism. But, in the 1960s at least, their identification with black Africa was as much about their self-image and their ambitions for change within the United States as it was with specific African issues.

Conservative white supporters of Rhodesia, in contrast to African-Americans, felt more strongly about Rhodesia than they did about South Africa because their government, by aligning with the

British and the United Nations, was actively seeking to destroy the Smith regime which, they believed, was a bulwark of civilisation in a continent dominated by black barbarism. The Rhodesia of their imagination was a model for the USA – it was anti-communist, capitalist, and Christian. Most importantly, with the Rhodesian electoral franchise largely restricted to whites, they could convince themselves that the wise tutelage of the country's benevolent white elite was bringing education, modernisation and development to primitive blacks. These conservatives were articulate, and were well represented in Congress, in part because they were backed by some vociferous and well-funded propaganda organisations and public support, which Smith's US opponents lacked. Feeding off traditional conservative views about the US constitution and supranational organisations, the cause of defending Smith in the USA provided a useful proxy by which racist views about American civil rights could be expressed. Attitudes to Rhodesia helped to mould competing visions of radical conservatism into a substantial political movement that rejected the liberal New Deal consensus while maintaining its distance from the unelectable extremism of populist racism and crackpot conspiracy theorists. Vociferous support for Rhodesia and hostility to the United Nations played a key part in explaining the resurgence of conservatism in the USA from the mid-1960s onward.

Rhodesia deserves a more prominent place in the history of the USA than it has yet received because the future of white minority rule in Rhodesia concerned Americans across the political spectrum. At stake in Rhodesia, and mirroring developments within the United States, were most of the defining issues of the decade – black liberation, the nature of democracy, America's role in the world, confronting communism – and these all aroused powerful emotions. The Rhodesian crisis also exposed the dilemma of American African policy – arguably not finally resolved until the fall of apartheid in the 1990s – over how to reconcile a professed commitment to black liberty and decolonisation with the pragmatic realities of Cold War power politics.

The USA and Southern Rhodesia, 1953-1969

Page 7 Introduction

Page 22 Chapter One

A Slower and More Orderly Progress Towards Independence

Page 53 Chapter Two

We Can Only Try to Moderate and Influence

Page 86 Chapter Three

A Most Useful Offset

Page 125 Chapter Four

Closely Interested Observers on the Side Lines

Page 174 Chapter Five

We Can Only Respond and Cannot Take a Leading Role in the Struggle

Page 210 Chapter Six

Rhodesia's George Washington

Page 254 Conclusion

Page 256 Bibliography

Total number of words: 97,960

Introduction

By autumn 1965 it was evident that UDI, an illegal declaration of independence from Britain by the white minority government of Southern Rhodesia, was imminent. Accordingly, in response to a request from the British Government, the US Consul General in Salisbury, Roswell D. McClelland, was instructed to issue a warning from President Johnson to Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith. This stated: "A unilateral declaration of independence would be a tragic mistake which would serve the true interests of no one. The United States would have to make known its strong opposition to any such decision, and we do not intend to change our course of firm support for the position of the British Government after any such unilateral declaration." Existing accounts of the relationship between the USA and Rhodesia have tended to take this at face value and credit the Johnson Administration with consistent opposition to the Smith regime. They also accept Johnson's statement, "we fully recognise that the matter is centrally one between the British Government and the people and Government of Southern Rhodesia"[1] and maintain that, for the most part, the Americans were content to allow the British to determine policy, intervening occasionally to stiffen British resolve.

But US Government policy was neither as straightforward nor as principled Johnson's message suggested. President Kennedy had bequeathed him a State Department at odds over policy towards Rhodesia, even before UDI was declared. The African Bureau wanted the US to take American anti-colonialism seriously by supporting black liberation in Africa as the best way of staving off communist influence. They recommended taking a tough line with the government in Rhodesia (and, if necessary, with the British too) to prevent the entrenchment of another white minority regime in southern Africa. They would have welcomed the use of force against UDI. But their bosses – in particular Undersecretary George Ball and (on the occasions that African issues came to his attention) Secretary of State Dean Rusk – wanted a more pragmatic approach. They believed that America's Cold War interests would be best served by maintaining good relations with the strongly anti-communist white minority regimes in South Africa and the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique; crusading on behalf of black liberation in Africa offered, they believed, only marginal

[1] State to Salisbury, 29 Oct. 1965, NSF, Rhodesia, Box 97, LBJ

benefits. However, because the USA had few strategic and economic interests in Rhodesia, the two factions could agree to oppose UDI. Rhetorical hostility to Smith and support for British measures to unseat him were designed to appeal to both the black African nations and the African American constituency at home.

Because Britain – much to the relief of many senior figures in Washington – immediately ruled out the use of force to end Rhodesia's rebellion, the only available weapon was the imposition of economic sanctions. Despite US support, it soon became clear that these were too leaky to be effective because South Africa and Portuguese Mozambique refused to enforce them. And, besides, both Washington and London were anxious to avoid an economic, still less a military, confrontation with these two regimes. The involvement of the United Nations and the vulnerability of Zambia – a major supplier of copper – to reprisals from its powerful Rhodesian neighbour complicated the issue. The Americans did not want to alienate the increasingly numerous non-white, post-colonial nations in the UN who felt strongly about Rhodesia. But Washington was determined to resist their demand to have sanctions extended to South Africa and Portugal; for this, the Americans needed to co-ordinate their strategy with London. Britain's obligation to assist Zambia, its former colony, threatened to worsen the already weak position of sterling and increase British requests for American economic aid. US officials wanted to maintain Zambian copper supplies without having to bail out British rescue efforts. Once the UN imposed mandatory sanctions in December 1966, US compliance made Rhodesia an emotive issue in Congress and increased conservative opposition to the Administration. All these factors made US officials more actively involved than they cared to admit in influencing British policy.

Washington's policy-makers could see that sanctions were not working and so, however much they publicly stressed the desirability of majority rule in Rhodesia, the more pragmatic among them came privately to the conclusion that a settlement between Britain and Rhodesia that left Smith in power was unavoidable. This was why they encouraged British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, in his negotiations with Smith. Wilson's efforts failed. But, without saying so publicly, and despite the

reservations of the African Bureau, senior US officials would quietly have welcomed a deal legitimising minority rule in Rhodesia. Their repeated insistence that Rhodesia was a British problem would have allowed them to distance themselves in public from anything that looked like a "sell-out" to Smith.

Washington's attitude to the Rhodesian problem can only be understood as part of its attitude to Africa in general and southern Africa in particular. As the European colonial empires crumbled from the mid-1950s, American policy-makers became increasingly concerned about the importance of Africa and of balancing support for black liberation with their valuable Cold War assets in South Africa and Portugal. This dilemma was only sharpened by the troubled histories of many of the newly independent black nations of Africa, and especially of the Congo after it attained independence in 1960. Nor could Rhodesia be separated from the US domestic politics of racial equality. Washington's elites were as slow and reluctant to shed their racist assumptions about the capacity of black Africans for self-rule as they were to accommodate the demands of black Americans for full citizenship. And the issue of white minority rule in Africa raised powerful emotions in both the African American community and among white opponents of civil rights because they, too, regarded African racial issues as inseparable from America's domestic racial strife. The Rhodesian issue played a key part in the developing ideology of both of these communities.

The historiographical context

It is, perhaps, not surprising that the existing studies of this topic have been written, for the most part, by American scholars. What is striking, however, is how little they have considered the British perspective. This is especially perplexing given that Rhodesia was a British colony and US administrations made much of British responsibility for dealing with it. The Washington-centred approach of studies written before the British archives for the post-UDI period were opened in the mid-1990s is understandable, but books written since have made insufficient use of the British archives. They are a particularly rich source because Rhodesia mattered to British officials more than it did to their American counterparts and they were acutely sensitive to the views of their American

allies, knowing that their policies stood little or no chance of success without the active support of Washington. These officials were also well informed, and they committed to paper not only their own perceptions of US policies and personalities but also the opinions and views of US officials gleaned from conversations that were not always mentioned in the American records. Comparing British and American minutes of the same meetings also reveals subtle differences of emphasis that illuminate the tensions between policy-makers on either side of the Atlantic.

Another limitation of the existing scholarship is that it does not analyse the American domestic response to UDI in sufficient depth. Most authors have described conservative opposition to US participation in the sanctions programme and the attempts by African American leaders to pressure Washington into taking strong measures, but they have not placed these domestic responses within the wider context of the history and development of the ideologies and political tactics of these two communities.

The first detailed study of US policy towards Rhodesia, published in 1973, was by Anthony Lake who had served in the US Foreign Service and the State Department in the 1960s and was later a member of the Carter Administration. Lake was motivated to write by his opposition to the 1971 Byrd Amendment, which permitted the US to subvert the UN sanctions programme against Rhodesia. It is not surprising that Lake handed the Johnson Administration, to contrast it with the Nixon years, some praise (albeit lukewarm) for its handling of the problem.

> From the time of Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence… in 1965 until late 1969, American policy was cautious but generally correct. The aim was a low posture on the issue; Washington would follow London's lead and try to hide behind British skirts in the face of African pressures for more forceful action against the Smith regime. Sanctions were quite faithfully observed. The policy lacked courage; it did not allow concerned American officials formally to express to the British their prescient fears that London's policies of compromise and caution could not resolve the problem. But the American position in this period at least avoided undercutting in any major way the efforts actually made by the British and the United Nations. And if the policy did not completely satisfy the Africans, at least it did not include unilateral acts that seriously damaged American relations with them.[2]

[2] Lake, p. 5

Lake was writing before any of the relevant archives on either side of the Atlantic were open, but he did have the advantage of an insider's knowledge when writing about the state Department and based much of his material on interviews with some of those who had shaped US policies. He does not appear to have spoken to British officials. However, had he done so, he might have revised his view that American officials failed to "express to the British their prescient fears that London's policies of compromise and caution could not resolve the problem". The Kew archives make it abundantly clear that the Americans were regularly critical of British policies and that some of the more influential US policy-makers would have welcomed, rather than opposed, a British policy of compromise on the issue.

Thomas Noer, in 1985, was the first to make extensive use of archival material. His book made an important contribution by placing US policy towards Rhodesia in the context of Washington's approach to sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. He argued that the US adopted a consistent policy towards the minority white regimes – this was the pursuit of what he called a "'middle road' between non-involvement and direct challenges to white rule… The United States wanted neither continued white control nor immediate majority rule".[3] He is not the only historian or commentator to describe US policy as the pursuit of a "middle" course.[4] Even the National Security Council, in January 1960, maintained that it sought "a middle way between the extremes of black nationalism and the inequities and tensions generated by apartheid".[5] However, it would be more accurate to say that successive American administrations stayed on the right of the road. The white minority regimes faced nothing more serious than rhetorical and diplomatic pressure because Washington sought, above all, to preserve its economic and strategic interests in southern Africa, for which it needed stability, not rapid and disruptive change. Aware that black resentment was growing, the USA hoped that the white authorities would respond to American advice to institute reforms designed to appease black ambitions and prevent the outbreak of serious racial conflict, which would damage Western economic interests. Because most American policy-makers assumed that the majority of black Africans were

[3] Noer, *Black Liberation*, p. 254
[4] See Meriwether, 'Torrent', in Statler and Johns (eds.), p. 181; Cohen, *Rusk*, p. 118
[5] *FRUS, 1958-1960, Vol. XIV*, Doc. 22, p. 82

pliable primitives, they were ever on the lookout for "moderates" who could be co-opted to prevent fiery radicals with unwelcome links to communism from exploiting black resentment and establishing left-wing regimes. When the US authorities found the white authorities reluctant to change, they chose to accommodate them – the only exception being Southern Rhodesia because Washington realised that, while it was primarily a British responsibility, it provided an opportunity for some anti-colonial rhetoric. Even here, the tactics of advising the white leadership to enlist moderate blacks and reform the most egregious inequalities were retained.

Noer was writing a decade before the relevant British archives were open and, perhaps as a result, his analysis underestimated the problems that British Prime Minister Wilson faced in formulating an effective response to UDI and co-ordinating British policy with the Americans. Noer suggested that the US demand for a firmer policy was hampered by British indecision, pusillanimity and perfidy. It is certainly true that the Americans regularly complained, with some justice, about being kept in the dark by the British, but there is also plenty of evidence to suggest that American counsels, divided as they were between different factions in the State Department, were unhelpful to London policy-makers. US officials were understandably worried that what they saw as British *ad hoc* decision-making would (as one British official put it) "lead to some quite unexpected development which will catch them unprepared".[6] This made senior figures in Washington anxious to exercise some control while all the time stressing that Rhodesia was a British problem. Noer also maintained that George Ball, the Undersecretary of State principally responsible for US Rhodesian policy under Johnson, was "disgusted with Great Britain's inability to resolve the crisis or to inform Washington of its plans, [and] urged that America simply stay out of the entire affair."[7] But the reality is that Ball knew the US could not wash its hands of the Rhodesian problem. Instead, anxious to prevent hostility to UDI becoming a confrontation with South Africa and Portugal, Ball and his successor, Nicholas Katzenbach, actively sought to influence British policy towards an accommodation with the Smith regime.

[6] Killick, British Embassy in Washington to Rose, British Foreign Office, 10 June 1966, FO371/187980
[7] Noer, *Black Liberation*, pp. 193-5

Andrew DeRoche, in 2001, was able to take the story beyond Noer's terminal date because more archival material was available to him. He, like Lake, was not impressed with the Nixon Administration, accusing it of displaying "nothing but inertia and apathy" in its Rhodesian policy.[8] Its predecessor, by contrast, he assessed positively, suggesting that, in the immediate aftermath of Smith's declaration, the Johnson Administration "demonstrated its commitment to racial justice in Africa [and] publicly demonstrated [its] desire to take an aggressive stand against UDI."[9] DeRoche maintained that, under Johnson, the US Government was genuinely committed to working for majority rule in Rhodesia and was anxious to ensure that the British did not renege on this objective.

> The Lyndon B. Johnson Administration carried out an active policy towards Southern Rhodesia, hoping to encourage a non-violent settlement and transition to majority rule. The US Government participated in the sanctions against Southern Rhodesia, staying supportive as sanctions gradually got tougher. Administration officials battled with critics of the sanctions and Johnson… [emphasized] American support for a just solution in Southern Rhodesia… The United States at times acted more aggressively than Great Britain… it actually pushed the British into a tougher stand during the months following UDI.[10]

This verdict exaggerates the commitment of senior US officials to opposing the illegal regime. DeRoche's views that Johnson "displayed a personal interest in the Southern Rhodesian conflict", and that Rusk was "willing to confront the white regimes of southern Africa"[11] are generous indeed, and his book glosses over the important disagreement within the State Department about how the problem should be handled. DeRoche, perhaps because he did not use the British archives at Kew, did not analyse in any depth the dynamics of the relationship between Britain and the United States, and he underestimated the importance of the 1966 appointment of Joseph Palmer to replace Governor Williams as head of the African Bureau. Palmer, he suggested, "basically followed the precedent set by Williams."[12] But Palmer's approach lacked the idealism of his predecessor and was closer to the pragmatic mood of the senior echelons of State Department who were anxious for a settlement, even if that left Smith in power.

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[8] De Roche, *Black, White and Chrome*, p. 143
[9] *Ibid.,* pp. 98, 116
[10] *Ibid.,* pp. 143, 159
[11] *Ibid.,* pp. 8, 110
[12] *Ibid.,* p. 147

Gerald Horne, who also published in 2001, was critical of the US response to UDI, seeing it as part of a worldwide effort, of which the Cold War was part, to shore up white supremacy.[13] His principal focus was white mercenary support for the Rhodesian regime once the guerrilla war had developed in intensity in the mid-1970s, so he said comparatively little about the immediate response to UDI. He concluded that Johnson was pusillanimous and almost exclusively (and unsuccessfully) concerned about the electoral consequences of his African policies.[14] Patrick Dean, the British Ambassador in Washington would have agreed. He told the Foreign Office in August 1967 that "the Congressional and public opinion front… is the one which most directly affects the President".[15] Horne, though, has little to offer on policy-making about Rhodesia within the Johnson Administration, which was carried out with minimal presidential involvement. In 2012, Carl Watts published a major study of UDI, drawing on a wide range of archives, including those in Britain, Canada and New Zealand. This, and his series of articles on the subject, successfully placed the immediate crisis of the Rhodesian declaration of independence in its international context and detailed the bureaucratic turf wars and the politics of personality that played important roles in the shaping of US policy towards Britain and UDI.[16] However, Watts does not explore the issue beyond 1965, nor the State Department archives at College Park, Maryland, gaps which this thesis sets out to fill.

The structure of this thesis

This thesis uses presidential administrations as its first four chapter headings. This could be regarded as an unfashionably traditional approach to a topic on US history, especially as the presidents involved – Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson – themselves displayed little personal interest in the Rhodesian problem and there was considerable continuity in the way successive administrations dealt with the issue. However, it makes sense for three reasons. Firstly, each of these administrations faced problems in Africa that it would have preferred to have ignored, and there are some differences in the way they were handled; these crises, and Washington's response, provided the context in which

[13] Horne, *Barrel,* pp. 10-11
[14] *Ibid.,* p. 145
[15] Dean to the Foreign Office, 24 Aug. 1967; FCO36/193, Kew
[16] Watts, *Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence*

decisions about Rhodesia were made. Secondly, Kennedy distanced himself from his predecessor by improving America's relationship with black Africa, but Johnson's approach was a throwback to the indifference of Eisenhower. Thirdly, Kennedy's presidency coincided almost exactly with a new constitution for Southern Rhodesia and the problems created by the collapse of the Central Africa Federation, which led to the independence of Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and Nyasaland (now Malawi). Johnson inherited the issue of what to do about the remaining British colony of Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), a problem intensified by the election, five months into his Presidency, of Prime Minister Ian Smith. This thesis's chapters on the African Americans and on the conservatives make discrete topics because these groups had their own distinctive views about how America should respond; neither group succeeded in exerting a decisive influence on the Administration and each almost entirely ignored the views of the other.

Chapter One: A Slower and More Orderly Progress Towards Independence

The response of the US Government to UDI fits into a pattern that goes back at least as far as the Truman Administration. The attitude of successive administrations to European colonialism was ambivalent – they tempered their commitment to the American shibboleths of democratic equality and anti-colonialism with Cold War pragmatism and concern about the domestic electoral implications of overseas developments. Despite Wilson's 14 Points, Franklin Roosevelt's hostility to European imperialism and the high-flown phrases of documents such as the 1941 Atlantic Charter and the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, US administrations during the late 1940s and 1950s were much more obsessed with containing the spread of communism than with promoting racial equality in Africa. As a result, they cautioned against rapid decolonisation and maintained that, in the words of one State Department official, "premature independence for primitive, uneducated peoples can do them more harm than good" since colonial subjects lacked "the civil standards that come with widespread education",[17] making them vulnerable to exploitation by the communist powers. The African policy of the Eisenhower Administration bears out historian Michael Hunt's view about the

[17] George C. McGhee, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs, speaking in June 1951, *FRUS, 1951, Vol. V*, p. 1223-24

entrenched racism at the heart of the US establishment. "The Cold War concern with the Third World as a zone of conflict rested on a sturdy bedrock of American thinking on race... Black Africa occupied the lowest rung, just as black ghettos represented the lower reaches of American society."[18] The tepid response of the Eisenhower Administration to the decolonisation of Africa mirrored its attitude to the civil rights campaign in the USA and provides the context for Eisenhower's policy towards the Congolese civil war and the cautious attitude adopted by his Administration towards the Central African Federation. US officials, both in Washington and in the Rhodesian capital, Salisbury, accepted that Rhodesia was a British issue but recognised – albeit reluctantly – that black liberation could not be resisted and hoped that minimal concessions could be made to stave off violence and leave the essentials of white power in place.

Chapter Two: We can only try to moderate and influence

Although Kennedy improved relations with some of the leaders of the newly independent black nations and endeavoured to demonstrate his hostility to the Portuguese colonial empire, he was rapidly persuaded that America's Cold War NATO alliances were more important than black liberation and that the geo-political importance of South Africa meant that he could offer only gestures of hostility to apartheid. His management of the Congolese crisis demonstrated that he was unable to escape the prevalent Cold War mind-set of his time and, during his presidency, the US attitude towards the Central African Federation did not differ markedly from that of the Eisenhower Administration. The CAF was regarded as a British problem and the USA supported the efforts of the British Government to persuade the white rulers of Southern Rhodesia to moderate the most egregious of their racially privileged policies and to reform the political structure sufficiently to accommodate moderate black opinion.

Chapter Three: A most useful offset

After the break-up of the CAF in 1963, Southern Rhodesia presented Britain with a unique problem. On the one hand, the *de facto* independence of Southern Rhodesia had been recognised by Britain

[18] Hunt, p. 162

since 1923 – something that was stressed whenever the British wished to stave off UN interference. Neither the Conservative governments of the 1950s nor the Labour government which took office in October 1964 wanted to risk domestic unpopularity by taking overtly hostile measures against Rhodesian whites who were regarded in Britain as "kith and kin", a sentiment strengthened by the knowledge that some of the Rhodesian white elite, including Ian Smith, had fought for Britain in the Second World War. On the other hand, Harold Wilson, Britain's Labour leader, personally disliked racism and knew that concessions to Smith would incur intense criticism from within his own Cabinet and from the left wing of his party. Granting independence to a white minority regime also risked considerable opprobrium in the United Nations and would almost certainly break up Britain's multi-racial Commonwealth. From 1961 until 1965, there were protracted negotiations between the British and Rhodesian Governments in which each side accused the other of misrepresentation and bad faith. In November 1965 Smith unilaterally declared Rhodesia to be independent. Harold Wilson had already ruled out the use of force and hoped that economic sanctions would force Rhodesian surrender. However, the British needed the full co-operation of the United States both for these measures to have any chance of success and for diplomatic support in the United Nations. And relations between Britain and the USA over Rhodesia were complicated by other, more pressing issues. Britain's domestic economic weakness meant that sterling required American support, and the Johnson Administration wanted the British to retain their East of Suez military presence. The Americans would also have liked a British contribution to the war in Vietnam, something that Wilson, with a tiny parliamentary majority, felt he could not give without risking his own political survival. American officials realised that taking a principled stand over black liberation in Rhodesia – where there were few significant American interests – provided them with an opportunity, to enhance the image of the USA in black Africa and with African-American voters. It was, as the African Bureau put it in May 1965, "a most useful offset to our inability at this time to take effective action on South Africa and Portuguese Africa".[19]

[19] African Bureau memo to Ball, 24 May 1965, CFPF, Box 2611, NARA

Chapter Four: Closely Interested Observers on the Side Lines

Existing accounts of the US response to UDI suggest that the US Government was prepared to follow and support British policies for dealing with the crisis, though it occasionally felt the need to stiffen Britain's resolve into dealing more firmly with Smith. Scholars have taken at face value the American mantra that they were to be no more than helpful bystanders, and have also argued that this approach remained unchanged for the duration of the Johnson Administration. But, although the US Government was prepared to provide Britain with diplomatic backing, it was sceptical of British claims that sanctions could bring an early end to the rebellion, and officials in the Johnson Administration were exasperated by what they saw as British insouciance and *ad hoc* decision-making. All of this exacerbated their wariness of being dragged into an open-ended financial commitment in southern Africa, which support for Zambia (dependent on its economic links with Southern Rhodesia) would entail. They were also worried that UN measures against Rhodesia might involve sanctions against South Africa and Portugal, which would compromise US relations with these two Cold War allies. But they wished to maintain their credibility with black African nations and with African American voters by supporting the efforts of the British and the United Nations to end the rebellion. The way out of this dilemma was to endeavour to influence British policy without appearing to do so. The excuse that the US was merely following the lead of Great Britain was employed whenever the Administration felt that it had to support policies (or a lack of them) liable to provoke opposition. And US conservatives' noisy hostility to UN sanctions against Rhodesia often served as justification for the Administration to distance itself from any British policies it disliked.

In spring 1966 attitudes changed in both Washington and London. British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, with a secure parliamentary majority won in March, believed that he could use his negotiating skills to bring about a settlement which, while falling short of immediate majority rule in Rhodesia, would nevertheless, he hoped, keep the Commonwealth together and maintain Labour Party unity. Such an agreement would avoid the need for mandatory UN sanctions, which had the attendant risks of confrontation with South Africa and damage to Britain's fragile economy. The US Government also became more pragmatic in its attitude to Rhodesia in 1966. Without "Soapy" Williams (an

enthusiast for black African liberation) heading the African Bureau and with US forces fully mired in Vietnam, the "realists" in the Johnson Administration hoped (but did not say openly) that Wilson and Smith could reach an agreement that would end the Rhodesian impasse. The US Government would condemn the "sell-out" in public in order to retain its credibility with black Africa and its black electorate, but, in private, would be relieved that the problem had been solved. They, like the British, did not want to confront South Africa. Senior figures in the Administration were disappointed by the failure of Wilson's talks with Smith in December 1966, not least because they were followed by the imposition of mandatory UN sanctions, which considerably increased Congressional hostility to US policy over Rhodesia and increased the risk of a confrontation with South Africa and Portugal. Consequently, American officials gave their backing to Wilson's second attempt at direct negotiations with Smith in October 1968, which were no more successful.

Chapter Five: We Can Only Respond and Cannot Take a Leading Role in the Struggle

There is a discrete historiographical debate about US foreign policy and the African American community, and understanding its contours is essential to evaluating how the American opponents of Rhodesia – who were largely but not exclusively from the African American community – reacted to the crisis. This chapter analyses that debate in some detail. Some historians argue that moderate blacks supported US post-war Cold War policies in return for concessions on civil rights in the USA and thereby destroyed the possibility of a broadly based progressive movement emerging that might have embraced both domestic racial reform and stronger American support for decolonisation. However, the potential of such a movement has been exaggerated. The attitude of black moderates and white liberals to foreign policy in general, and Rhodesian policy in particular, was grounded in hard-headed calculations about what they could realistically achieve in difficult circumstances. As the liberal idealism of the late 1950s and early 1960s about the future of post-colonial Africa faded – reinforcing negative stereotypes about black inferiority – the African American attempts to pressure the US Government to strengthen America's identification with black liberation in sub-Saharan Africa faced increased difficulty. Yet despite this hostile climate, (and although for tactical reasons their primary focus was South Africa rather than Rhodesia after 1966), the moderate African Americans

helped ensure that the US Government could not publicly endorse any settlement that did not grant immediate majority rule at a time when it was under increasing pressure from right-wingers to do just that.

Rhodesia was important to African Americans but it was not the main front in their battle against colonialism and racism. They quite correctly regarded South Africa, not Rhodesia, as the most important obstacle to majority rule in southern Africa. But they knew that the US Government would not undertake serious measures against the apartheid regime because of South Africa's economic importance and its geopolitical value to the USA in the Cold War. Moderate African Americans believed that their government was not doing enough against any of the white minority regimes but recognised that, in the struggle against Rhodesia, the UN sanctions, though inadequate, were as much as they could realistically hope for. They were fearful that their government might respond to conservative pressure to drop even these, so they maintained their criticism of US links with South Africa, knowing that the Johnson Administration, to retain their electoral support, would have to offer them something – and this was the continuation of its professed hostility to minority rule in Rhodesia. For radical African Americans, the goal of black liberation in Africa was part of what they saw as a worldwide struggle by non-whites to throw off colonialism and capitalism. But, in the 1960s at least, their identification with black Africa was as much about their self-image and their ambitions for change within the United States as it was with specific African issues.

Chapter Six: Rhodesia's George Washington

Conservative white supporters of Rhodesia, in contrast to African-Americans, felt more strongly about Rhodesia than they did about South Africa because their government, by aligning with the British and the United Nations, was actively seeking to destroy the Smith regime which, they believed, was a bulwark of civilisation in a continent dominated by black barbarism. The Rhodesia of their imagination was a model for the USA – it was anti-communist, capitalist, and Christian. Most importantly, with the Rhodesian franchise largely restricted to whites, they could convince themselves that the wise tutelage of the country's benevolent white elite was bringing education, modernisation

and development to primitive blacks. These conservatives were articulate, and were well represented in Congress, in part because they were backed by some vociferous and well-funded propaganda organisations and public support, which Smith's US opponents lacked. The cause of defending Smith in the USA, feeding off traditional conservative views about the US constitution and supranational organisations, provided a useful proxy by which racist views about American civil rights could be expressed. Attitudes to Rhodesia helped to mould competing visions of radical conservatism into a substantial political movement that rejected the liberal New Deal consensus while maintaining its distance from the unelectable extremism of populist racism and crackpot conspiracy theorists. Vociferous support for Rhodesia and hostility to the United Nations played a key part in explaining the resurgence of conservatism in the USA from the mid-1960s onward.

Chapter One: A Slower and More Orderly Progress Towards Independence

1: US policies in Sub-Saharan African in the 1950s

US policy towards sub-Saharan Africa in the early 1950s was shaped by two linked convictions. The first was that the recovery and strength of America's NATO allies in Europe was of paramount importance. British imperial power had been so weakened by the Second World War that, as one Colonial Office official put it in November 1946, "Africa is now the core of our colonial position; the only continental space from which we can still hope to draw reserves of economic and military strength."[20] The USA recognised this and knew that, if their European allies were to contribute effectively to NATO, their colonial possessions in Africa would need to be fully exploited.[21] The second conviction was that the safety of Western economic and strategic interests in Africa could only be guaranteed if the colonial powers adopted a reform programme which would neither crush black African nationalist aspirations nor grant immediate independence. For Americans, it was axiomatic that what one US Consul General called "the British experiment in multi-racial government" offered "the best hope for stability".[22] This was because they perceived the European colonies in black Africa as backward, and believed that premature independence would cause chaos and instability, benefiting the communist powers. So long as US officials could convince themselves that the imperial powers were engaged on a benevolently paternal mission to prepare their colonies for self-rule, they could console themselves that their traditional anti-colonialism was not being violated.[23]

US officials recognised that Africa was crucially important in the Cold War. "It is imperative that the individual and collective efforts of the anti-Communist countries be so organised as to insure that Africa will remain firmly fixed in the political orbit of the Free World… [because]… Africa provides a sizeable proportion of the critical commodities now required by the Free World, including such

[20] Hyam, p. 117
[21] *FRUS, 1951, Vol. V*, p. 1201
[22] *FRUS, 1952-54, Vol. XI,* p. 377
[23] Speech by George McGhee, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs, 'Africa's Role in the Free World Today', *DSB,* 16 July 1951, p. 98

products as uranium, copper, chrome, cobalt, manganese, iron ore, tin, industrial diamonds, bauxite, asbestos, rubber, fats and oils, sisal, hides and hardwoods." The Cold War also determined the American attitude to decolonisation; the colonial powers should not grant independence hastily because the US goal was "to insure the unwavering loyalty of the African to the cause of Freedom *as we perceive it*".[24] In other words, the defence of US interests came before the principle of self-determination. Washington feared that, as Ridgeway Knight, the Acting Deputy Director of the Office of Western European Affairs, put it in April 1952, "Premature independence, even with non-Communist governments in control at the start will usually lead to mass dissatisfactions and disillusionments which can be skilfully exploited by the Communists and which can lead within a relatively short period of time to a Communist seizure of power."[25]

These attitudes and policies continued into the Eisenhower Administration. Shortly before his inauguration, the new president confided to his diary his belief that "nationalism is on the march" but that "Moscow leads many misguided people to believe that they can count on communist help to achieve and sustain nationalistic ambitions". He was, though, aware that change could not be resisted indefinitely. "The two strongest Western powers [the USA and Britain] must not appear before the world as a combination of forces to compel adherence to the status quo." However, "in some instances immediate independence would result in suffering for people and even anarchy". So "the free world's hope of defeating the communist aims" depended on "a slower and more orderly progress toward independence".[26] But the dramatic challenges to the racial order in the mid-1950s destroyed any hopes that the colonial world would take a leisurely, white-controlled, evolutionary path towards liberation. Eisenhower, in retirement, clearly regretted this: "The determination of the peoples for self-rule, their own flag, and their own vote in the United Nations resembled a torrent overrunning everything in its path, including, frequently, the best interests of those concerned."[27] The Algerian

[24] Elmer H. Bourgerie, Director of the Office of African Affairs at the State Department, to Randolph Roberts, American Consul in Salisbury, 745c.00/4-2351, CDF, Box 3577, NARA; emphasis added
[25] *FRUS, 1952-54, Vol. III*, Doc. 779, p. 1107
[26] *Eisenhower Diaries*, entry for 6 Jan. 1953, pp. 223-24
[27] Eisenhower, p. 572

revolt against French rule, the 1955 Bandung Conference, the 1956 Suez Crisis, the civil rights revolution in the USA and the independence of Ghana in 1957 fundamentally altered international relations. The relatively straightforward, bi-polar Cold War struggle between the Western and Communist worlds that dominated the decade immediately after the Second World War had become complicated by the non-white challenge to the existing racial order.

Some contemporaries were critical of how effectively the Eisenhower Administration responded. One of Eisenhower's own advisers confessed to a colleague in October 1955, "The US has definitely not sorted out its own thinking, torn between a) our instinctive anticolonial feelings and b) playing ball with our colonial allies… The combination has made our policy contradictory, confusing, and at times almost irresponsible."[28] For the most part, historians have not been any kinder than these contemporaries in their evaluation of the response of the Eisenhower Administration. For Steven Metz, "US policymakers began a frantic re-evaluation of the decolonization issue" but "the changes… in US policy were often frantic attempts to catch up with the tremendous pace of change, and this meant that the actual impact of US policy was often small".[29] Jason Parker also regards US policy as reactive rather than supportive: "Race risings threatened stability and were anathema to US policy. Yet coexisting with this aversion was resignation – a deeper sense that the era of racial-colonial liberation could be managed but not prevented. This is not to suggest an epiphanic conversion; the Eisenhower administration's subsequent conduct in the Third World, and its assessment of Communist specters everywhere abroad, show otherwise."[30]

In contrast, Stephen Ambrose regards Eisenhower as an anti-colonial crusader: "When Eisenhower took office… he had been eloquent in telling Churchill that old-style European colonialism, especially in Africa, could not and should not last… Repeatedly, [during his presidency] he had said that

[28] Quoted in Parker, p. 885
[29] Metz, pp. 524, 527

[30] Parker, *op. cit.,* pp. 890-91

because of the intense feelings of nationalism of the colonialized peoples, no vestige of European control or domination could be allowed to continue."[31] And Matthew Connelly has suggested that the late 1950s saw a genuine change in US attitudes to Africa because the administration feared "a still more disturbing prospect" than confrontation with the USSR: "an expanding and escalating conflict with 'the great mass of mankind which is non-white and non-European' – as Dulles put it – whether in league with the Soviets or independent of them." Connelly suggests that the US failed to back French colonial policy in North Africa because "their fears of North-south conflict… explain their willingness to jeopardise NATO in order to appease Third World sentiment about the Algerian War". He suggests that, by 1958, Dulles and Eisenhower "wanted to avoid being identified with colonialism at all costs".[32]

But Connelly's analysis is focused on North Africa. The reluctance to identify with the colonial powers he and Ambrose detected did not extend to sub-Saharan Africa. Instead, in the latter half of the decade, the Eisenhower Administration became *less* inclined to embrace black colonial liberation. In the words of Thomas Noer, "The Administration of Dwight D. Eisenhower became actively hostile to African independence."[33] John Kent believes that Dulles shared Eisenhower's negative views about black Africa: "Dulles allegedly told [British Foreign Secretary] Macmillan at the Geneva conference in the summer of 1955 that he had suddenly realised all the US views about colonialism had been wrong and that the period of British hegemony had been the happiest period Africa ever had."[34] In November 1957 State Department officials assured their Belgian counterparts that "the US had no

[31] Ambrose, *Eisenhower,* p. 587
[32] Connolly, pp. 741, 764, 763

[33] Noer, 'New Frontiers' in Paterson (ed.), p. 255
[34] Kent, 'Decolonization of Black Africa' in Ryan and Pungong (eds.), p. 173; Dulles was inconsistent in his attitude to British colonialism. He denounced the Suez invasion as "a policy of reasserting by force colonial control over the less developed nations". *FRUS, 1955-57, Vol. XVI*, Doc. 455, pp. 906-07. But five months later he assured British Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd that "The UK should not feel that the United States was exerting pressure on various areas of Africa which would result in premature independence." *FRUS, 1955-57, Vol. XVIII,* Doc. 18, p. 56

political or economic design upon any part of Africa nor does it desire [to] encourage independence movements against its European allies".[35]

Washington tended to see black challenges to the racial order as awkward political embarrassments to be managed rather than as issues of justice and national self-determination. Dulles lamented that the 1957 Little Rock crisis was an international public relations disaster for the USA. It was, he claimed, "ruining our foreign policy. The effect of this in Asia and Africa will be worse for us than Hungary was for the Russians".[36] When Vice-President Nixon, following a tour of eight African countries in 1957, recommended greater American engagement with Africa, he did so principally because he believed that "Africa is a priority target for the international communist movement". And, like Dulles, he regarded it as important to tackle discrimination in the United States as much for presentational reasons as any other.[37]

The Eisenhower Administration's response to black African liberation was shaped as much by racism as by its obsession with the Cold War. For the most part, US officials and policy-makers in the 1950s shared the assumptions of the British that black Africans were not biologically inferior to whites, but akin to children who needed wise tutelage before they could be trusted with self-government. To Eisenhower they were "infant nations".[38] Even as late as January 1960 when the National Security Council discussed US policy towards South, Central and East Africa, CIA Director, Allen Dulles, thought "the chances of achieving orderly economic development and political progress towards self-determination by the countries of the area were just about nil".[39] Eisenhower agreed, but wanted an exception made for white-ruled South Africa. Vice-President Nixon, expecting "a South American pattern of dictatorship" to develop in the newly independent nations, wanted to ensure that "the strong

[35] *Ibid.*, Doc. 107, p. 320
[36] Quoted in Dudziak, p. 131
[37] 'The Emergence of Africa, Report to President Eisenhower by Vice-President Nixon', *DSB*, 22 Apr. 1957, pp. 636-37
[38] *Eisenhower Diaries*, entry for 6 Jan. 1953, p. 224
[39] *FRUS, 1958-1960, Vol. XIV*, Doc. 21, p. 74

men of Africa were on our side".[40] Nixon also suggested that "Some of the peoples of Africa have been out of the trees for only about fifty years." Maurice Stans, the Budget director, went further and claimed that, as a result of his visit to Africa, "he had formed the impression that many Africans still belonged in the trees".[41] Nixon was equally dismissive of black Africans' capacity to govern when, three months later, he told the NSC that "the newly-independent countries there do not know how to administer their affairs effectively".[42]

Nevertheless, Washington was reluctantly forced to come to terms with the reality that colonial rule, even in black Africa, had little future. A National Intelligence Estimate of August 1956, acknowledging "the accelerating trends in Tropical Africa toward self-government and hostility to European tutelage", predicted that "Within the next decade… the peoples of Africa will make increasing demands for self-government with little regard for wide differences in their degrees of development." The result would be "an increasingly rapid emergence of new native states". These developments, the NIE suggested, would present the Americans with a difficult dilemma. "During the conflict between the metropoles and their territories which are demanding self-rule, the US will be bombarded by both sides with demands for diplomatic and moral support." [43] Significantly, the report did not recommend which side the US should take but the Eisenhower Administration refused to change direction radically and embrace support for black aspirations as the best way to stave off Soviet and Chinese interest in Africa. In August 1958, the NSC concluded that "Premature independence would be as harmful to our interests in Africa as would be a continuation of nineteenth century colonialism, and we must tailor our policies to the capabilities and needs of each particular area as well as to our over-all relations with the metropolitan power concerned… The tribal and family traditions of the people in question are such that they remain, despite the many advances that are currently being made, extremely primitive in many of their social outlooks."[44] This conservative

[40] *FRUS, 1958-1960, Vol. XIV*, Doc. 21, p. 75; Nixon, of course, meant right-wing authoritarians
[41] *Ibid.,* Doc. 21, pp. 75, 77
[42] *Ibid.,* Doc. 28, p. 126
[43] *FRUS, 1955-57, Vol. XVIII,* Doc. 14, p. 46
[44] *Ibid.,* Doc. 8, pp. 28, 36

attitude was reinforced by many of the signals received from US diplomats in Africa. In December 1955, Edmund Dorsz, the US Consul General in Nairobi, lamented "certain speeches, statements and congressional resolutions from the United States [that] have given the impression to many local people that we… stand categorically against colonialism and for self-government without much regard to the local capacity for self-government which… is very limited".[45] Robert L. Ware, the US consul in Dar es Salaam, agreed with Dorsz that black Africa was not ready for independence.[46]

Because it helped to reconcile their anti-colonial ideology with support for continued European rule in Africa, American public figures, officials and sections of the press were prone to emphasise, and usually exaggerate, the benevolent aspects of colonial rule. In May 1955 *Time* magazine extolled Belgian rule in the Congo: "The Belgian way is working. The Congo, under hard-working capitalism, has become a tropical cornucopia in the heart of a poverty-stricken continent... Nowhere in Africa is the Bantu so well fed and housed, so productive and so content as he is in the Belgian Congo... The Belgians have injected twenty centuries of Western mechanical progress into a Stone Age wilderness... The sons of cannibals now mine the raw materials of the Atomic Age."[47] In May 1958 presidential adviser, Clarence Randall, told the NSC that the Belgians had "concentrated on providing some economic opportunity for the natives of the colony. Having done fairly well in this field, the Belgians are now beginning to move cautiously toward greater political freedom and development for the natives".[48] The British frequently received especial praise. A *Reader's Digest* contributor in August 1960 enthused about Kenya: "Justice and peace… this is what British colonialism has brought to a country that without it would still be a primitive wilderness."[49] Even a liberal such as Adlai Stevenson, accepting an honorary degree at Oxford in May 1957, chose to pay "tribute to the high

[45] *FRUS, 1955-57, Vol. XVIII,* Doc. 50, p. 190
[46] *Ibid.,* Doc. 51, p. 196
[47] Quoted in Staniland, p. 218

[48] *FRUS, 1958-60, Vol. XIV*, Doc. 4, p. 15; Eisenhower remarked that Randall's was "the best report that [he] could remember reading for a very long time"; *Ibid*., p. 14
[49] Quoted in Staniland, p. 219

achievements of British imperialism."[50] Hendrick Van Oss, US Consul General in Kampala between 1960 and 1962, recalled that "The British were doing a very good job in preparing the Ugandans for independence. There was no acrimony to speak of between the African population and the British."[51]

2. The Eisenhower Administration and the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya

American perceptions that black Africans were, as yet, unfit for self-government were heavily reinforced in the 1950s and early 1960s by two crises in particular – the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya (1952-56) and the Congolese civil war (1960-65). The uprising in Kenya was a response to the alienation of increasing numbers of young Africans. Since the 1930s the fertile land that the principal black racial group, the Kikuyu, regarded as their ancestral territory had been reserved for whites and, in a post-war drive to increase the economic productivity of their African colonies, the British authorities had encouraged more whites to settle and to intensify and modernise their farming techniques. This forced more Africans to become rural squatters or poor labourers in the rapidly expanding principal cities. The Mau Mau uprising, in the words of historian John Darwin, was "a civil war within Kikuyu society in which those who had adopted European ideas (including Christianity) or who had profited from co-operation with colonial rule, land shortage and inflation were violently assaulted by those who believed that collaboration with the colonial government and its policies was the source of all their grievances. In the four years from 1952 to the end of 1956, by which time Mau Mau resistance had been broken, 95 whites were killed but over 14,000 Kikuyu – 1,000 of them by execution".[52]

Although US officials were aware that colonial rule was at the root of the Kenyan troubles, they were quick to denounce what Dorsz called "the bestial practices"[53] of the Mau Mau. His deputy, Robert

[50] Stevenson's Oxford speech, 24 May 1957, Johnson (ed.) 1977, p. 13
[51] Hendrick Van Oss, *Country Reader, Uganda*, ADST
[52] Darwin, pp. 186-87
[53] *FRUS, 1952-54, Vol. XI,* p. 377

Stookey, felt that the Mau Mau troubles merely underlined "the state of savagery, ignorance, and barbarism in which the vast majority of indigenous East African tribes remain".[54] The violent activities of the Mau Mau, their secrecy, initiation rites and oaths, allowed commentators to sensationalise their impact, especially as most of the news coverage came from British colonial sources. As historian Brenda Gayle Plummer has written, "lurid British accounts of torture, mutilation, and the drinking of menstrual blood raised popular doubts about the capacity of any black people for democracy and self-government".[55] One of the most important influences in shaping American perceptions of the Mau Mau was popular novelist Robert Ruark, whose best-seller, *Something of Value*, was set in Kenya during the insurgency. According to historian Gerald Horne, "In many ways it was Ruark who defined Kenya – and by inference, the continent as a whole – for the US audience."[56] Ruark's foreword claimed that "to understand Africa you must understand a basic impulsive savagery that is greater than anything we 'civilised' people have encountered in two centuries".[57] The Mau Mau campaign between fellow Kikuyu enabled conservative Americans to rehearse two of their favourite stereotypes about black Africans – they were either manipulative atavistic savages under communist influence or docile simpletons in need of white protection. James Burnham concluded in *National Review* that the Mau Mau "directed the most part of their terror against not Europeans but their own fellows. They did so because they knew that the majority of Africans have been either indifferent or positively favourable to a continuing European predominance".[58]

3. The Eisenhower Administration and the Congo

If the Mau Mau were influential in reinforcing the negative perceptions of many white (and some black) Americans about post-colonial Africa, the civil war in the Congo was even more important in polarising opinion. The Congo, a country the size of Western Europe, its geography "epitomized the

[54] Quoted in Meriwether, *Proudly*, p. 132
[55] Plummer, *Rising Wind,* p. 240
[56] Horne, *Mau Mau*, p. 125
[57] Quoted in Meriwether, *Proudly*, p. 135
[58] James Burnham, 'The African Shambles', *National Review*, 28 Jan. 1961, p. 45

stereotypical view of Africa as a mysterious, intimidating concentration of untamed natural forces".[59] For those on the political right, the war vindicated their view that decolonisation was dangerously premature and that liberals were foolishly misguided in their faith that uneducated black people could use political power wisely. The Congolese conflict, to conservatives, typified black Africa, reinforced racist assumptions and fortified their determination to support what they saw as Ian Smith's brave stand to preserve civilisation and order in white-ruled Rhodesia. To them, the US government had erred in its Congo policy and they were angry and frustrated that it appeared to be repeating its folly by opposing Smith.

The Congo was also an emotive issue for the left because it strengthened their view that US policy was neo-colonial. The American government's obsession with keeping Soviet and Chinese influence out of the Congo and its reluctance to crush the secession of the right-wing province, Katanga, infuriated both black African opinion and the African American constituency in the USA. The covert actions of the CIA, especially its role in the murder of left-wing leader Patrice Lumumba, played an important part in widening the breach between moderate and radical African Americans that developed in the 1960s. This division weakened the leverage of African Americans as they tried to press their government into stronger measures against both Smith's regime and apartheid in South Africa. American policy in the Congo, and in particular the role of the CIA and the activities of white mercenaries, also planted deep suspicion in the minds of black African rulers about US ambitions and methods.

The reaction of the Eisenhower Administration to the civil war in the Congo – its last major African crisis – demonstrates that its racial assumptions and Cold War priorities remained unaltered. It occurred at a time when Eisenhower was facing a renewed surge of African American protest at home, the collapse of his hopes for détente with the USSR and an intensification of the Cold War,

[59] Staniland, p. 49

especially in the Third World. By 1960, Eisenhower feared that Khrushchev was no longer interested in co-existence but was instead "trying to create chaos and bewilderment in the world... and to pick what he can by fishing in troubled waters".[60] He believed the Russians were actively exploiting the self-assertion of non-white people to promote revolution and post-colonial instability. The Congo, a source of important minerals, seemed especially vulnerable. Throughout 1959, the US government had been receiving gloomy assessments about the future of the Congo as nationalist disturbances convinced the Belgians to end their formal colonial rule. The Congo comprised 200 ethnic groups, in six provinces, all at different stages of economic development; there was no adequate central governmental infrastructure, nor a trained cadre of officials; and by 1960 there were fewer than 20 Congolese university graduates.[61] The mining industry in Katanga – the country's richest province, which supplied almost half the nation's revenue – remained owned and operated by the Belgian company, Union Minière du Haut Katanga. The State Department was warned in March 1960 that Belgian settlers in Katanga were hoping their province could break away and join the white-dominated Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and that Katanga's secession was being discussed by Belgian corporations in Brussels.[62] Washington was sympathetic; the head of the African Bureau at the State Department thought that Katangan secession "might prevent the depreciation of mining investments in this region which might be a desirable objective from our point of view".[63]

It came as no surprise that, immediately after independence on 30 June 1960, the country descended into chaos. Katanga, encouraged by Union Minière, seceded under the leadership of Moïse Tshombe. The Congolese army rebelled against its white officers, attacked Europeans and looted property. The Belgian government sent in troops, ostensibly to protect its 85,000 nationals still living there, but also to assist Katanga. The Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba, whose party had won the largest number of

[60] Quoted in Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, p. 590
[61] John Kent argues that this was not because the Belgians had made only "belated attempts to meet the inevitable rise of African nationalism" but because they "aimed to exercise influence over the future independent state and sought to preserve the economic benefits, both individual and collective, to be gained from settler-dominated enterprises". Kent, *America, the UN and Decolonisation,* p. 188
[62] *Ibid.,* pp. 7-8
[63] Quoted in *Ibid.,* p. 16

parliamentary seats in the May elections (35 out of 137), asked the US to send 2,000 troops to "maintain law and order".[64] Eisenhower refused; he did not want to set a precedent for Soviet intervention. Lumumba appealed to the United Nations. On 14 July, UNSC Resolution 143, called for the withdrawal of Belgian forces and authorised the Secretary-General to "provide the Government with such military assistance as may be necessary".[65] The following day, the Congolese government told Moscow, in a reference to Belgian support for Katanga, that they might ask for Russian help if the "western camp does not stop its aggressive action against the sovereignty of the Republic of Congo".[66] Describing Lumumba's background as "harrowing", Allen Dulles of the CIA concluded that "It is safe to go on the assumption that Lumumba has been bought by the Communists."[67]

In August, Lumumba became impatient with the UN. Although UNSC Resolution 146 on 9 August called for the "speedy" withdrawal of Belgian troops, it also made it clear that, because UN troops would not "intervene in or be used to influence the outcome of any internal conflict", they were not going to assist him to reunify the country.[68] Eisenhower, fearful of Soviet intervention, declared that "We should keep the UN in the Congo even if we had to ask for European troops to do it. We should do so even if such action was used by the Soviets as the basis for starting a fight." However, for the US, the issue of paramount concern was the future of Katanga and keeping its wealth out of Soviet clutches.[69]

At the end of August, Dulles told the CIA station in the Congolese capital, Leopoldville (now Kinshasa), that Lumumba's "removal must be an urgent and prime objective",[70] and, in mid-September, a CIA agent known as "Joe from Paris" arrived with poison for the job.[71] By this time, an

[64] *FRUS, 1958-60, Vol. XIV,* Doc. 116, p. 294
[65] UN website
[66] Kent, *op, cit.*, p. 19
[67] *FRUS, 1958-60, Vol. XIV,* Doc. 140, pp. 338-39
[68] UN website
[69] *FRUS, 1958-60, Vol. XIV,* Doc. 180, p. 424
[70] Quoted in Westad, p. 139
[71] *Ibid.,* p. 139

army officer, Joseph Mobutu, had seized power and formed an unstable government in co-operation with President Kasavubu, while Lumumba remained in his official residence protected by the UN. Mobutu was just the kind of African strong man that Nixon had lauded in the April NSC meeting. Dulles called him "the only man in the Congo able to act with firmness"[72] and Timberlake was also impressed, calling him "completely honest [and] dedicated".[73] But the Mobutu-Kasavubu government was rickety. Its legitimacy was challenged by the black African nations and by Lumumba's supporters who, in November, established a rival government in their north-eastern stronghold around Stanleyville (now Kisangani). This was headed by Antoine Gizenga, regarded by the Americans "as bad or worse than Lumumba".[74] In late November Lumumba attempted to join his supporters in Stanleyville but was captured by Mobutu's troops. Mobutu arranged for him to be flown south to Katanga where he was tortured and murdered a few days before Kennedy's inauguration in January 1961.[75]

When Eisenhower left the White House, the Congo was close to all-out civil war. Belgian assistance was building up Tshombe's power base in Katanga, Mobutu was struggling unsuccessfully against Gizenga's forces and Lumumba (news of whose death was not made public until mid-February) still enjoyed considerable domestic popularity and the support of black African states. The survival of the UN peace-keeping operation was threatened as the governments of six pro-Lumumba nations announced their intention to withdraw their contingents, amounting to a third of the entire force.[76] Not

[72] *FRUS, 1958-60, Vol. XIV,* Doc. 223, p. 497, Editorial note
[73] *Ibid.*, Doc. 220, p. 494
[74] *Ibid.*, Doc. 180, p. 422
[75] There is no consensus on whether Eisenhower had ordered the murder of Lumumba, although he remarked in September that he wished that "Lumumba would fall into a river full of crocodiles". *FRUS*, *1958-60, Vol. XIV,* Doc 221, p. 495, Editorial Note; Thomas Noer claims that, at the NSC meeting on 18 August, "Eisenhower, Allen Dulles and others discussed the assassination of Lumumba." Noer, 'New Frontiers' in Paterson (ed.) p. 262. The findings of the 1975 congressional investigation concluded that he probably had sanctioned the killing, but this was immediately challenged by Eisenhower's aide, Andrew Goodpaster; see Ambrose, *Eisenhower,* pp. 588-89; Mahoney, pp. 69-71, 257-58, note 38. There is less doubt about CIA involvement in efforts to kill Lumumba; see Westad, pp. 139-40; Brendon, p. 396
[76] Mahoney, pp. 53-58

surprisingly, when the new president drew up a list of topics he wanted to discuss with Eisenhower four days before taking office, the Congo was second only to Laos in his order of importance.[77]

Eisenhower's handling of the Congo crisis demonstrated that little had changed during his term of office in his attitude to Africa. He had become more mellow in his attitude to black protest in the United States and in March 1960 defended sit-in protesters, telling journalists that he was "deeply sympathetic with the efforts of any group to enjoy the rights of equality that are guaranteed by the Constitution".[78] But he and his senior officials continued to believe that radical, non-white, populist leaders of Third World countries were dangerous tools of Moscow. Biographer Stephen Ambrose maintains that Eisenhower's response to the Congo crisis was out of character. Eisenhower, he suggests, having "consistently" denounced "old-style European colonialism" during his presidency, suddenly "sided with the European colonialists and was completely unable to see Lumumba's point of view".[79] Ambrose is correct about Eisenhower's myopic attitude to Lumumba, but wrong to suggest that his policy represented a change. The President, and most of those advising him, had consistently failed to accept that left-leaning colonial politicians attempting to throw off European rule, such as Nasser in Egypt or Lumumba in the Congo, were nationalists rather than communists. Furthermore, Washington's racist assumptions about black politicians persisted. Lumumba, in particular, was demonised even before he came to power. In May 1960, CIA director, Allen Dulles, had told the NSC that Lumumba "was irresponsible, had been charged with embezzlement, was now being offered bribes from various sources and was supported by the Belgian Communists".[80] Only drug-induced, messianic sorcery, they maintained, could explain his oratorical ability and widespread popularity.[81] This meant that those American officials who took a less hysterical view of both Lumumba and the threat he posed were ignored. On 25 July 1960 Herter was advised by the Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research that "The Communists do not have an efficient and well-established

[77] Dallek, *Kennedy,* p. 303
[78] Quoted in Nichols, p. 250
[79] Ambrose, *Eisenhower,* p. 587
[80] *FRUS, 1958-60, Vol. XIV,* Doc. 101, p. 274, Editorial Note

[81] Mahoney, pp. 38-40

apparatus in the Congo that would permit them to manipulate existing forces… Despite charges by the Belgians and his Congolese opponents that Lumumba is a Communist or Communist sympathiser, we have nothing to substantiate this allegation."[82] The following day an official in the US embassy in the Congo advised the State Department that "Lumumba is an opportunist and not a Communist".[83] Lodge, recognising Lumumba's abilities, called him "not a bad man to deal with… a little flighty and erratic in some respects; but he knows exactly what he is doing".[84]

However, the Eisenhower Administration never overcame its distrust of non-white nationalism and its fears about communist machinations in the Third World. This failure left a difficult legacy. The USA was not fully trusted by the newly independent countries of black Africa who regarded it as too close to the old colonial powers of Europe and too willing to support the maintenance of white rule in southern Africa. However, the white minority regimes were also wary, fearful that anti-colonial rhetoric and the growing importance of black opinion in the United States, Africa and the United Nations might influence American policies.

4. The Eisenhower Administration and South Africa

In December 1956, William Rountree, the State Department official with responsibility for Africa, summed up the dilemma facing the Americans over South Africa: "We shy from jeopardising the real friendliness of the South Africa Whites by impolitic approaches to the non-Whites, and yet we don't want to lose the good will which non-Whites have at present for America." He consoled himself with the observation that "It is deep in our national heritage that we believe that the South Africans are morally wrong in their present racial policies and we should be stepping out of character if we were to act otherwise." But he could suggest nothing more radical as a policy than "the persuasion of White

[82] *FRUS, 1958-60, Vol. XIV,* Doc. 149, pp. 355-56
[83] *Ibid.*, Doc. 150, p. 356
[84] *Ibid.*, Doc. 151, p. 359, Editor's footnote

South Africans to moderate their racial attitudes".[85] This was because concern about apartheid was much less important to Washington than South Africa's geopolitical strategic value as a Cold War ally. Its control of sea routes around the Cape, its port facilities, its strong armed forces and its fervent anti-communism made it invaluable to the Pentagon. The CIA enjoyed what one of its officers called a "long and cordial relationship" with the South African Intelligence agencies and in November 1950 the USA signed an agreement with South Africa for nuclear co-operation. Between 1952 and 1966 the USA bought over $1 billion worth of South African uranium.[86]

In 1952 the State Department estimated that South Africa supplied 25% of the West's chromite, a similar proportion of manganese, and "the entire Western supply of the strategic grades of amosite asbestos".[87] Major US companies invested heavily. In 1951 Socony-Vacuum (now Mobil) built a refinery at Durban and in the early post-war period several major US car firms and tyre manufacturers, including General Motors, Ford and Chrysler, Firestone and Goodyear, established assembly plants.[88] American firms could make bigger profits on their investments in South Africa than in the USA because apartheid considerably lowered labour costs: in 1963, black miners in South Africa earned $216 a year whereas white American miners earned $2.70 an hour.[89] In January 1960, an NSC report underlined the importance of the South African economy to the West by pointing out that "South Africa is the world's largest producer of gold, and ranks as a leading world producer of diamonds, uranium, platinum, chrome, manganese, iron ore, asbestos, antimony and monazite." That the USSR was the only other significant producer of gold and chrome emphasised the Cold War significance of the South African economy. The NSC also reported that "approximately one-half of United States private investment in the African continent is in the Union. There are approximately 160 American firms with direct investments in the Union, ranging in activities from processing and

[85] *FRUS, 1955-57, Vol. XVIII,* Doc. 311, pp. 802-05
[86] Schraeder, pp. 195, 196
[87] *FRUS, 1952-54, Vol. XI,* p. 954
[88] *Ibid.,* p. 933
[89] Arnold, p. 338

distribution to manufacturing and mining. As a result of expanded US economic activities in the Union, two American banks recently established branches there".[90]

The racial issue was not as seemingly straightforward as elsewhere in Africa. The Afrikaner whites, unlike the English-speaking settlers elsewhere in Africa, had lived on the continent since the 17th century and some even claimed that their people had been in South Africa longer than the black majority. Black liberation was, therefore, not simply a matter of ending European imperial rule. But US officials disliked South African racial policies mainly because they feared that black self-assertion could ignite a racial conflict which would jeopardise US Cold War objectives and economic interests.[91] Washington's attitude was never able to escape the dilemma that Rountree had expressed: while government officials regularly enunciated their support for the *principle* of majority rule, US *policy* invariably followed the pragmatic concern for national interest, in part because racist assumptions about black Africans persisted in Washington. This was starkly demonstrated by the Administration's response to the Sharpeville massacre. On 21 March 1960 South African police fired on a peaceful crowd of black Africans protesting about the pass laws; 68 demonstrators were killed and over 200 injured. The following day, Lincoln White, Director of the Office of News at the State Department, regretted "the tragic loss of life resulting from the measures taken against the demonstrators in South Africa".[92] Eisenhower was furious about White's remark, regarding it as "a breach of courtesy" towards an allied nation, and Secretary of State Herter called it "a real mistake" and felt that "we had clearly taken sides and might be accused of inciting a revolution".[93]

But, given the worldwide adverse publicity the massacre received, the US government realised that it could not simply line up behind the South African government, especially as the Afro-Asian bloc of nations wanted to debate the issue in the UN Security Council. A week after the massacre Eisenhower

[90] *FRUS, 1958-60, Vol. XIV,* Doc. 22, p. 87
[91] *FRUS, 1955-57, Vol. XVIII,* Doc. 313, p. 807
[92] *DSB*, 11 Apr. 1960, p. 551
[93] *FRUS, 1958-60, Vol. XIV,* Doc. 344, p. 742, Editorial Note

met British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan to co-ordinate their response. Macmillan hoped that "maybe with US help an innocuous resolution could be obtained". Eisenhower, in agreeing to this, demonstrated that his attitude to apartheid was influenced by his dislike of legislation to promote civil rights in the USA. He told Macmillan that "in our own country he had always opposed extreme laws on the colored question" and that "he had some sympathy even with his friends in Atlanta on some of their difficulties".[94] Eisenhower, Herter and Henry Cabot Lodge, the US Ambassador to the UN, ensured that the UNSC adopted a mild resolution which did no more than deplore "the policies and actions of the Government of the Union of South Africa" and call on it "to abandon its policies of apartheid and racial discrimination".[95] Britain abstained, but the USA voted in favour. This enabled Lodge to claim a victory because, not only had sanctions against South Africa been avoided, but US support for the resolution had prevented the USSR from posing as the sole champion of black Africa.[96] Herter, too, was delighted and called the resolution "surprisingly mild". Eisenhower disagreed; he thought it "mighty tough".[97]

5: The Eisenhower Administration and the Central African Federation

The US Administration regarded central Africa as less important than South Africa because it was principally a British responsibility and its economic significance was smaller. Nevertheless, it was too important to ignore. As John Hoover, the US Consul General in Salisbury, put it in May 1953, "the importance of Central Africa is based on the present and potentially greater production of minerals (copper, asbestos, chrome, cobalt among others) and the probability of important reserves of uranium".[98] Hoover indicated that the US was already considerably involved in the area. Private US investments totalled $250 million, mostly in mining minerals. US exports to the territories were worth $20 million annually and the free world imported goods to the value of $425 million. In addition, the

[94] *Ibid.*, Doc. 346, pp. 745-46
[95] UNSC Resolution 134, 1 Apr. 1960, UN website
[96] Meriwether, 'A Torrent' in Statler and Johns (eds.), p. 188
[97] *FRUS, 1958-60, Vol. XIV,* Doc. 348, p. 749, Editorial Note
[98] *FRUS, 1952-54, Vol. XI,* p. 318

US government provided loans (either directly or through the IBRD) of $72 million.[99] The most important imports to the US from the region were copper and chrome – both vital components of the US aircraft and car industries. It was important to the US not only to secure these supplies but also to ensure that they did not reach the USSR.

The Central African Federation (otherwise known as the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland), created in 1953, was Britain's unwieldy attempt to tie the mineral wealth of Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and the agricultural economy of Nyasaland (now Malawi) with the white-dominated Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in an effort to create a multi-racial state that would be not only be strong enough to resist the predations of South Africa but would also, like other African colonies, contribute to Britain's post-war economic recovery. Many Americans were more sceptical than the British as to whether the Federation could survive, given the extent of hostility to it among the majority black population. But they, no less than the British, wanted the Federation to succeed because they feared that racial strife would damage Western economic interests. They were willing to accept, initially at least, that the CAF represented, in Hoover's words, an attempt to build "a harmonious multi-racial society" which would "assure political, economic and social stability in Central Africa".[100]

The immediate trigger for the creation of the Federation was the victory of Daniel Malan's National Party in the May 1948 elections in South Africa, a development that worried Washington, London and the white political class in the two Rhodesian territories. South Africa's National Party was both committed to the introduction of a rigid apartheid regime and ill disposed towards Britain. Sir John Martin of the British Colonial Office, using arguments that anticipated the domino theory, explained his government's fears to his American counterparts in September 1952: "Unless Southern Rhodesia could be brought into a larger unit with its neighbours to the north, it seemed clear that South African

[99] *Ibid.*, p. 319
[100] *Ibid.,* pp. 318-19

influence would spread north, eventually overtaking each of the Central African territories and reaching into East Africa. Federation seemed to offer the last chance to stop this trend at the Limpopo."[101] These views had been influenced by the white elites of the two Rhodesian territories who had long wanted a federation that would enable them to use Southern Rhodesia's secondary and tertiary economic infrastructure to exploit Northern Rhodesia's mineral wealth and the cheap labour of Nyasaland. And because they identified more with Britain than South Africa, they were worried about increasing Afrikaner immigration. Attlee's Labour government in Britain, however, proceeded cautiously because it was aware of significant black opposition to the scheme even though the two Cabinet ministers responsible for imperial policy maintained that "Federation will be of the greatest advantage economically, and is likely to provide the only effective means of resisting Afrikaner pressure on these territories… This development ought to proceed on a Central African basis so that the resources of the whole region may best be devoted to economic advancement."[102] The election of Churchill's Conservative government in Britain in 1951 hastened the process and, in October 1953, the Central African Federation came into being.

But the status and character of each of the three territories differed markedly. The areas north and south of the Zambezi river, which became Northern and Southern Rhodesia, were colonised in the late 1880s by Cecil Rhodes's British South African Company. They continued to be administered by the company until the early 1920s when Northern Rhodesia became a Crown Colony. Southern Rhodesia, in deference to the sizable and articulate white settler community, became a self-governing colony, although the British government retained supervisory rights over legislation concerning "native" affairs. In practice, this supervision was not exercised; although Southern Rhodesia was not a dominion, it was treated as such. The Federation made sense economically. Northern Rhodesia's copper industry relied on Southern Rhodesian railways for transport, and on its coal mines and the Kariba Dam for power. Migrant labourers from impoverished rural Nyasaland might find work in these industries. Politically, however, the Federation was a disaster. It entrenched the political power

[101] *FRUS, 1952-54, Vol. XI,* pp. 82-83
[102] Porter and Stockwell (eds.), pp. 96, 98

of approximately 250,000 whites over more than 6,000,000 black Africans. The British government entertained pious hopes that the accretion of large black populations would act as a counterweight to white nationalism (especially strong in Southern Rhodesia), and that the Federation could be developed as a "multi-racial partnership". However, the black Africans, especially those of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland (where the legislative councils had some black representation and there were far fewer white settlers than in Southern Rhodesia), rejected it from the outset. They saw it as the first step towards their abandonment by Britain into a state, not unlike South Africa, in which their subjection to the untrammelled economic and political power and the discriminatory legislation of Southern Rhodesia's 165,000 white settlers would be permanent.

The US authorities had mixed views about the viability of the Federation. Successive heads of the US mission in Salisbury, who fraternised with the white community and whose opinions reflected the assumptions of their white hosts, were enthusiastic, especially about the prospects for racial harmony. In March 1952, Harold Sims, the outgoing Consul General, told a consular conference in Cape Town that "there is evidence of a genuine desire on the part of many responsible Rhodesians to establish a workable political alignment with the natives".[103] His successor, John Hoover, reported even more effusively to the State Department in May 1953: "British policy in Central Africa can, by its results, only be judged to be moderate and beneficient. In an atmosphere of relative racial harmony, the African population has been brought well along the road toward education, health, increased economic productivity and general well-being – in short, 'Civilisation'."[104] There were enthusiasts in Washington, too. A State Department official called the Federation, shortly before it came into existence, "one of the most favourable political developments yet to take place in Africa". He had high hopes for the future: "There is every indication that with proper guidance from the British, as well as encouragement from the United States, this new government will achieve far-reaching benefits

[103] *FRUS, 1952-54, Vol. XI,* p. 11; it is indicative of prevailing assumptions that by "responsible Rhodesians" Sims means whites, whereas the black population are merely "natives". In the same speech, he seemed to think that the USA had already achieved racial equality. "In this struggle, these people, both white and black, are looking to the United States for examples as to how we achieved harmonious relations with our own Negro race."
[104] Quoted in Volman, p. 123

in the white man's current struggle to better race relations, enhance economic conditions and stabilize the growing divergent political factors in Central Africa."[105]

American officials in central Africa were confident that black hostility, where it existed, was manufactured by communist radicals who had ambitions to rule an all-black state. This was their explanation when trouble erupted, as it did regularly in the mining areas of Northern Rhodesia.[106] In 1955, American Consul, Stephen McClintic, although he acknowledged that what he called "European callousness" contributed to "a layer of ill-feeling in the mining communities", nevertheless maintained that black Africans were influenced by "the presence of 'loafers'… parasites… more prone to promote disturbances". He failed to understand the depth of blacks' grievance against a system that was economically, politically and socially heavily weighted against them. He concluded his report by repeating the familiar American mantra about southern Africa. "There is a great danger that extremists on either side will make themselves heard."[107]

The State Department received rather more objective assessments from its embassy in London which, in January 1951, reported that a British Colonial Office official who, having paid an extended visit to the territories, had been shocked by the "bitterness of the African sentiment against any move which might lead to federation" and who realised that "the European settlers are intent on preserving white supremacy in Northern Rhodesia for the foreseeable future".[108] In July 1953 the embassy described federation as "a gamble" but expressed confidence in the good faith of the British to make it work.[109] A National Intelligence Estimate of December 1953 was sceptical of British claims that "a harmonious, self-governing, multi-racial society can be created" and warned: "We do not believe that the Europeans who dominate the federal government will take sufficient action to convince Africans

[105] *FRUS, 1952-54, Vol. XI,* p. 325
[106] 745c.00/11-1551, CDF, Box 3577, NARA
[107] 745c.00/10-755, CDF, Box 3233, NARA

[108] 745c.00/1-851, CDF, Box 3577, NARA
[109] *FRUS, 1952-54, Vol. XI,* pp. 327-331

of their good intentions."[110] Washington's official position was, though, neutral. In November 1952, David Bruce, Under Secretary of State, felt obliged to respond to press rumours in London and Salisbury that the Americans favoured federation as an opportunity to expand US business interests. He told the US Consul General to announce that "the US government is maintaining an impartial attitude on the question of federation".[111]

Initially, the Federation appeared to justify the British Government's faith in it. Washington endorsed this. In May 1954, Secretary of State Dulles – asked to respond to criticism of the Federation – authorised the Consulate in Salisbury to announce that "the Rhodesias already have tangible evidence of the confidence of the people and government of the United States in the future of the Federation". Dulles then listed the loans advanced to the Federation and added that "they reflect US confidence in the future of the Rhodesias".[112] US investment brought tangible results: the tonnage of chrome imported by the US increased from 218,601 in 1954 to 308,720 in 1959, and of cobalt from 5 to 327 and the volume of zinc imports over the same period rose from 2,240 centals to 54,876.[113] Between 1945 and 1965 the Economic Co-operation Administration provided loans and grants of $28.2 million, the Export-Import Bank of Washington lent $22.4 million and the loans from the IBRD increased to $146.6 million.[114] By the end of the decade, the US Consulate estimated that the Federation imported goods from the US worth $21.6 million and sold to the US exports worth $27.5 million.[115] However, as historian Daniel Volman has pointed out, the overall US stake in the Federation economy declined towards the end of the 1950s as the Federation diversified its markets and sold more to Europe and Japan.[116]

[110] *Ibid.,* p. 82
[111] *Ibid.,* p. 314
[112] 745c.00/4-2754, CDF, Box 3578, NARA
[113] Volman, pp. 170-71
[114] *Ibid.,* pp. 92-106
[115] 745c.00/11-659, CDF, Box 3236, NARA
[116] Volman, pp. 172-79

The US Consulate in Salisbury remained enthusiastic about the Federation throughout the 1950s. Loyd Steere, who became the US Consul General in September 1954, was as much influenced by the white elite as his predecessors had been. In May 1956, he described the Federation as "a land of law and order, stability and progress" and enthused that "The economy of the Federation has been expanding at a rate excelled in perhaps no other country during the past two years." Although he was aware that black African "opposition to Federation persists and has become more outspoken in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland" and that "the hard core of practical racial segregation and discrimination also remains, particularly in Southern Rhodesia", he claimed that "the principle of racial partnership… is undoubtedly accepted by a substantial majority of the people". He credited the Federal Government with working "assiduously, for months, in formulating basic legislation for citizenship and franchise to apply equally to all the population regardless of race or color". He was also willing to endorse the Federation's proposals for a revised electoral system which would create 24 new constituencies and grant six of them to blacks but, under a complicated cross-voting system, allow whites to vote even in some black constituencies, making the new system even more heavily weighted in favour of the white population than the old. Steere endorsed the white settlers' view that "government should be dominated by civilized people". [117]

This new Federal voting system, introduced in 1957, was the issue which, according to historian Brian Lapping, made "blacks' disillusionment with Federation… complete".[118] By October 1957 even Steere was more critical of the Federation, realising that the new voting law "deprives African voters of any decisive voice in the election of new African members to be added to the parliament". He also lamented "the failure of the Federal party and Government officials to approach or establish any contact with the African leaders – despite partnership – with the result that there is literally a gaping gulf between the Africans and the Government today", and observed that "Anything done for the Africans Federally is done grudgingly, on a minimum basis, and certainly not in any spirit of 'partnership'." He lauded the Southern Rhodesian government of Garfield Todd, a man of mildly

[117] 745c.00/5-2256, CDF, Box 3233, NARA
[118] Lapping, p. 551; the African Affairs Board, which had been given the power to refer potentially discriminatory legislation to London, did so over the 1957 Constitutional Amendment Act, but its objections were ignored, thereby confirming black suspicions that there were no effective safeguards of their interests

liberal views on race relations, for his "positive legislative program of enormous benefit to the African – truly in the spirit of partnership". He also enthused about Todd's "more liberal franchise legislation", which granted the vote in Southern Rhodesia to some 10,000 educated, professional blacks on the same basis as whites. However, Steere's prediction that Todd's "leadership would continue to be a force to be recognised" proved over-confident.[119] In February 1958 Todd was forced to resign by Cabinet colleagues unhappy with the direction of his policies.

In the summer of 1957, in response to London granting the Federal Government increased authority to appoint foreign missions, Steere had requested that his consulate be upgraded to an embassy. This would accord the Federation full diplomatic status and strengthen its case for independence from Britain. Dulles's response was both cautious and serpentine, reflecting his ambivalent attitude to British rule in Africa. He did not want to alienate Britain and so he acknowledged what he saw as the Federation's economic success. But he was no longer as convinced as he had been three years earlier about the political future of the CAF and anticipated the tactics that the Johnson Administration was later to use towards Rhodesia after UDI: because there were few significant American interests involved in the CAF, the US government could use its response as a way of promoting its anti-colonial credentials. Dulles (with no sense of irony) referred to "the known position of the United States on racial and colonial questions in Africa" but did not entirely rule out recognition. He told Steere, "It would be preferable that the United States not be the first country to establish diplomatic relations with the Federation [but]… if other countries plan… to establish diplomatic agencies in Salisbury, the problem of a United States initiative and precedent would no longer apply." By implying that, if other countries took the lead he would be ready to follow, Dulles was suggesting that only an American precedent, not recognition itself, would be seen "as a gratuitous endorsement of the racial status quo in the Federation".[120]

[119] 745c.00/10-757, CDF, Box 3233, NARA
[120] *FRUS, 1955-57, Vol. XVIII,* Doc. 55, pp. 213-14

The changes to the Federal Constitution which London had sanctioned in 1957 stimulated black opposition. In 1958 Dr Hastings Banda returned to lead the Nyasaland Congress Party (NCP), and in Northern Rhodesia Kenneth Kaunda, already active in fomenting strikes and boycotts, founded the Zambia African National Congress (ZANC). These two men were encouraged by support from Nkrumah in Ghana and by the knowledge that the Labour Party in Britain was hostile to the Federation. Developments in 1959 weakened the Federation still further. In March, the heavy-handed response of the colonial authorities to disturbances in Nyasaland resulted in the deaths of 51 Africans, coinciding with the news that Kenyan police had beaten to death 11 Mau Mau detainees at the Hola detention camp. In July, the Devlin Commission, reporting on the Nyasaland troubles, described the colony as "no doubt temporarily – a police state".[121] According to Macmillan's biographer, "Devlin seems to have sowed the first strong seeds of doubt in Macmillan's mind as to whether the Federation had any future at all."[122] In June 1959 the Colonial Office had advised that "the Federation may simply break up under the mounting pressure of internal conflict".[123] But Macmillan would have liked to see it survive because, as he told a former Cabinet colleague, "If we fail in Central Africa to devise something like a workable multi-racial state, then Kenya will go too and Africa may become no longer a source of pride or profit to the Europeans who have developed it, but a maelstrom of trouble into which all of us will be sucked." He realised that "Africans cannot be dominated permanently (as they are trying to do in South Africa) without any proper opportunity for their development and ultimate self-government." But he was also aware of the strength of the lobby within his own Party which identified with white Africans as Britain's "kith and kin". "Nor can the Europeans be abandoned. It would be wrong for us to do so, and fatal for the African interests."[124] Nevertheless, Macmillan recognised that, because independence in black Africa was inevitable, delay would only make matters worse. Following his election victory in October, Macmillan appointed Ian Macleod as Colonial Secretary, clearly indicating, as Macleod himself later wrote, "a deliberate speeding-up of

[121] Quoted in Lamb, p. 235
[122] Horne, *Macmillan,* p. 182
[123] Quoted in Louis and Robinson, p. 489

[124] Macmillan to Monckton, 22 Aug. 1959, Monckton Papers, File 52, Aug 1959-May 1960, Oxford

the movement towards independence… Any other policy would have led to terrible bloodshed in Africa".[125]

The new US Consul General in Salisbury, appointed in 1959, Joseph Palmer II, was more realistic about the future of the CAF than Steere had been. He warned Washington in September that "African aspirations in the territories comprising the Federation are rising at a faster rate than the European response (both metropolitan and local). The gap is not narrowing; it is widening. And unless means can be found of slowing down the rate of African aspirations and hastening the pace of European response, thereby closing the gap, the future prospects here must be regarded as dim."[126] However, the US Administration, still clinging to its hopes for a multi-racial solution, appeared to believe that the Federation might still have a future. The NSC in January 1960 recommended that US policy should be to "encourage maintenance of the federal system of government and acceptance of the ideal of a multi-racial democracy" while at the same time recognising that "the response of the European administering authorities and the settlers to African demands has so far been too little and too late".[127]

Macmillan's 1960 African tour reinforced his doubts about the CAF. He found, as he recalled in his memoirs, that "the cause of the Federation was almost desperate because of the strength of African opinion against it".[128] In Cape Town he reminded the South African Parliament that "the wind of change is blowing through this continent and, whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact."[129] US officials came to the same conclusion. A blunt US government memo of August 1960 concluded: "The Federation as presently constituted cannot work. The consent of the (African) governed is lacking; moreover, the ability of the European to impose government will be subject to increasingly serious challenges" and warned, presciently, that

[125] Porter and Stockwell, p. 570
[126] *The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, A Current Appraisal*, 21 Sept. 1959, p. 1, 745c.00/9-2159, CDF, Box 3236, NARA
[127] *FRUS, 1958-60, Vol. XIV,* Doc. 22, pp. 85, 91
[128] Macmillan, p. 148
[129] Porter and Stockwell, p. 525

"territorial self-government under Africans in the north will create strong pressure among Southern Rhodesian Europeans for secession" and that "Africans will eventually prevail everywhere in the Federal area, and in the north first." Unsurprisingly, the author also warned against "an unstable situation which communists can exploit".[130] In Britain, the Monckton Commission, appointed in 1959 to advise on the Federation's future, reported in October 1960, recommending that the right to secede should be acknowledged. It also proposed parity of black and white representation in the Federal Assembly, changes in the racial laws of Southern Rhodesia, and African majorities in the legislatures of Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia. To many observers the Monckton Commission signalled the end of the Federation.

Although by this time officials in Washington and London had recognised that the CAF was facing collapse, Palmer in Salisbury continued to maintain the traditional view that black Africans were not yet ready for self-government. In September 1959 he sent Washington a lengthy appraisal of the CAF and warned that "The emerging African… has become increasingly prone to listen to leaders who hold out to him visions which are clearly impractical in terms of the stage he has reached in his own advancement and of practical politics within the country… He fails to appreciate his own limitations or to realise the consequences of excess. He overrates his own capabilities and believes that he is equally as capable of running the complex machinery of a modern state as the government in power."[131] Palmer acknowledged that the failure of the CAF was principally caused by its social and economic inequalities but, significantly, he also placed some of the blame on the black Africans and, by explicitly comparing the Federation with "Kenya before Mau Mau", raised fears of a black uprising. Palmer listed the "elements of instability" as "maldistribution of land, inadequate provision for the urban Africans, *exaggerated African expectations*, regressive European tendencies, wide disparities in the benefits of the society, lack of communication between the races, prejudice, misunderstanding and drift". He suggested that "I do not mean to say there will be a Mau Mau here"

[130] Picard to Ferguson, 3 Aug. 1960, BAA, 1956-63, Box 1, NARA
[131] *Current Appraisal*, *op. cit.,* p. 7

but "the possibility of some form of violent conflict cannot be dismissed".[132] Palmer, in keeping with the patronising sense of *noblesse oblige* he shared with many American and British officials, believed that the USA should do what it could to promote the interests of black Africans. When the US sent a trade mission to Salisbury in March 1960 he reported to Washington that he had "made every possible effort to put the mission into effective contact with Africans", unlike other missions "who had confined their activities to the European business community". He also claimed that he "tried to assure [*sic*] that social gatherings would be multiracial".[133]

The State Department, however, was wary of pushing these initiatives very far. Its comment on Palmer's appraisal was that, were the US consulate to promote "a program which increasingly benefited Africans and was designed to have a 'major impact' on African advancement", it "would have to increase slowly and cautiously in order to avoid an unfavourable reaction by the Federal and/or Territorial authorities". Washington was aware of the white African belief that militant black protest was caused, at least in part, by American rhetoric and gestures of support for black rights. This made the State Department sensitive to white susceptibilities and anxious to prevent "the possibility of increased anti-American feeling should events beyond US control create growing tension and irritation, particularly among Europeans. If the US became a scapegoat, or if the creation of an American 'presence' became vulnerable simply by reason of its high visibility, the result might be a strongly negative official reaction, which in turn would militate against long-range US objectives".[134] Palmer, too, had white interests in mind and felt that the USA had a duty to protect them when black majority rule eventually arrived. "In the long run the logic of numbers will result in a preponderance of black power. If that day comes, it will not only be important to the West, but perhaps also a matter

[132] *Ibid.,* p. 19; emphasis added
[133] Palmer to State, 19 Apr. 1960, BAA, 1956-63, Box 1, NARA
[134] *State Department Commentary on the Consulate General's Current Appraisal of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland,* 8 Jan. 1960*,* BAA, 1956-63, Box 1, NARA

of survival to the four per cent of the population that is white, that some friendly source [i.e. the United States] have prepared a position of influence that will serve as a bulwark against excess."[135]

Palmer, whose African assignments included Kenya and Nigeria as well as Salisbury, was appointed the head of the African Bureau in the State Department in 1966 in succession to G. Mennen Williams and was to play a key role in shaping American policy towards Smith's illegal regime in Rhodesia. He brought with him to Washington some of the assumptions he had formulated as a result of his field service in Africa, assumptions which did not differ from Eisenhower's wish to see a "slower and more orderly progress towards independence". One of his final dispatches provides a revealing insight into the problems of Rhodesia as he saw them. In common with most American policy-makers, Palmer had a poor opinion of black African politicians. "Africans here not much if any better prepared accept responsibilities government than Congo." But he recognised that black majority rule in Africa was inevitable. "They will win responsibility or have it abandoned to them." Significantly, he stressed, "Do not wish give impression am completely in sympathy African case. Am not and fully recognize firmness often required and justified in order to temper unreasonable aspirations." But he did not have much respect for Africa's white elites either, and feared that their short-sightedness endangered Western interests, which were his principal concern. Palmer was gloomy about the immediate future. "Present course events here can only result eviction European in long run and perhaps short. This will be disastrous to economy and psychology of country." His solution was for the USA to push the United Kingdom into forcing concessions from the white elite. "If one major Western objective is keep European here, he must accommodate and it must be primarily UK which points way." He recognised that this would not be easy. "Immediate problem is making UK see this and urging it take required action."[136] Palmer's view that there was a danger of racial conflagration in southern Africa

[135] *Current Appraisal of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland*: *Implications for United States' Interests, Objective and Policies*, 6 Nov. 1959, p. 23, 745c.00/11-659, CDF, Box 3236, NARA

[136] 745c.00/7-2660, CDF, Box 1691, NARA; Palmer offered more positive views about some African leaders in his valedictory dispatches. He was "very favourably impressed by Kaunda as person and a leader" and called his deputy, Kapwepwe, "calm, restrained and moderate". 745c.00/9-2360, *Ibid.*; he also regretted the resignation from the leadership of the national Democratic Party of Michael Mawema, calling him "intelligent, moderate and, by now, experienced". 745c.00/9-2960, *Ibid.*

which would endanger Western economic interests and provide opportunities for communist gains was shared by many Washington policy-makers.

One episode at the conclusion of the Eisenhower Administration revealed that Washington was having difficulty in reconciling racial liberation with loyalty to its European Cold War allies. In December 1960, 43 African and Asian nations introduced General Assembly Resolution 1514, which proclaimed "the necessity of bringing to a speedy and unconditional end colonialism in all its forms and manifestations."[137] Both the State Department and the US delegation at the UN wanted to vote in favour, especially as the resolution was merely hortatory. Eisenhower was initially prepared to accept their advice but, in response to a plea from British Prime Minister Macmillan, changed his mind and ordered the US delegation to abstain. The resolution was passed by 89 votes to nil which prompted Zelma Watson George, a black member of the US delegation, to stand and join the applause. Eisenhower, however, told Herter that the USA had to respond positively to the request of its staunchest Cold War ally. Not surprisingly, the episode reinforced the suspicions of the Third World nations about the sincerity of US anti-colonialism.[138]

[137] UN website
[138] Hubbard, pp. 177-79; Massie, p. 116; Noer, *Black Liberation*, p. 59; Ostrower, p. 94

Chapter Two: We Can Only Try to Moderate and Influence

1: Kennedy's attitude to Africa

Kennedy's attitude to Africa appeared to contrast sharply with that of Eisenhower. One historian has even maintained that, "Once in office, Kennedy's top priority for his administration was changing the image of America in the Third World more broadly, and in Africa in particular."[139] This is an exaggerated claim, but there is no doubt that Kennedy, initially at least, believed he could improve America's relationship with the post-colonial world. In June 1956 he had publicly urged the US government to "speak out boldly for freedom for all people – whether they are denied that freedom by an iron curtain of tyranny, or a by a paper curtain of colonial ties", and invoked America's "traditional and deeply felt philosophy of freedom and independence for all peoples everywhere".[140] He had also achieved considerable notoriety in July 1957 by seeming to suggest, when he denounced the Algerian policy of France – a NATO ally – that colonial freedom mattered more than America's traditional identification with Europe.[141] He was instantly condemned at home and abroad but his views appeared to be vindicated a year later when the French Fourth Republic collapsed and de Gaulle began the process of extricating the French from Algeria. This helped to win Kennedy the chairmanship of the newly established sub-committee on Africa of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in May 1959.

During his presidential campaign in 1960, Kennedy used his credentials as a leading spokesman on foreign affairs to assail Eisenhower's apparent indifference to the pace and direction of change in Africa. He referred to Africa no fewer than 479 times during his campaign speeches,[142] and criticised the policy of regarding African neutrality as "a transitional stage to communism" because he realised most of the newly independent states were nationalist and did not want to align themselves too closely with the West and their former colonial masters.[143] Kennedy believed that the USA could win the

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[139] Muehlenbeck, p. 34
[140] Speech at Rockhurst College, Kansas City, 2 June 1956, printed in Congressional Record – Senate, 6 June 1956, p. 9615
[141] Congressional Record – Senate, 2 July 1957, p. 10780
[142] Schlesinger, p. 483; this was mainly a substitute for discussing civil rights in the USA – a tactic designed to woo African American voters without alienating the white Democrats of the South. See Mahoney, p. 30; Dudziak, p. 155; Kennedy also used his family wealth to make some dramatic gestures of support for black Africans during the 1960 election campaign by paying for African students to visit the USA and by flying Guinea's President Touré to Disneyland; see Noer, 'New Frontiers', p. 256
[143] Noer, *Soapy*, pp. 225, 227

Cold War in Africa simply by not driving black African states into the arms of the Communists. He was also aware that the United Nations had changed dramatically since its creation. It could no longer be regarded as an instrument of American foreign policy but would increasingly express the concerns of its Third World members.

When Kennedy announced that G. Mennen Williams, a well-known advocate of civil rights, would head the African Bureau at the State Department (a decision made before he had even chosen his Secretary of State) he signalled that Africa would be a high priority for his Administration. Williams was joined by Wayne Fredericks as his deputy at the African Bureau. Kennedy also appointed other prominent liberals to his Administration, including Chester Bowles and Adlai Stevenson, as well as selecting for ambassadorships in African countries men who were anxious to promote the influence of the United States, such as Edmund Gullion in the Congo, William Attwood in Guinea and William Mahoney in Ghana (three countries whose relationship with America Kennedy sought to improve). The creation of the Peace Corps further reinforced the impression that the new administration took its relations with black Africa seriously. Kennedy's charm and his readiness to welcome black African leaders to the White House (28 visited during his presidency) left a lastingly positive legacy in Africa.[144] But the influence of these liberals was limited, in part because racist attitudes remained strong. One State Department official was overheard to say that "the trouble with Bowles and Williams was that when they saw a band of black baboons beating tom-toms they saw George Washingtons".[145] Former Secretary of State Dean Acheson (still a highly influential figure in the Democratic Party) maintained that black Africans were "people wholly incompetent to manage their own affairs".[146] And many of field officers in the white-minority regimes of southern Africa reflected the views of their white hosts about African readiness for self-government.

[144] According to Wayne Fredericks, Kennedy gave back African leaders "the feeling that they were just as important as any other chief of state who came into his office". *Fredericks, Interview*, 18 Apr. 1966, p. 4, JFK
[145] Noer, *Black Liberation*, p. 82
[146] Quoted in Brinkley, p. 306

Furthermore, Kennedy's emphasis on the Third World was not as sharp a break with the past as it seemed. Kennedy did not regard the Third World as *more* important than the Cold War, but as a major battlefield *in* the Cold War that he believed America had mismanaged to its cost. He made this clear in a speech to a joint session of Congress in May 1961 when he warned that the Third World was threatened by "the adversaries of freedom … [who] … "send arms, agitators, aid, technicians and propaganda to every troubled area".[147] His solution was an increase in America's foreign aid programme and a strengthening of US armed forces and Cold War alliances. Similarly, in 1957, he had criticised US support for French policy in Algeria because he believed it undermined "our moral leadership in the fight against Soviet imperialism in the countries behind the Iron Curtain" and because it weakened the French, "a nation whose strength is absolutely vital to the Free World".[148] One of Kennedy's biographers, Robert Dallek, has argued that the president's concern for the Third World was driven by his Cold War mind-set and fear of Soviet ambitions:

> Kennedy had seen the Khrushchev speech in January [1961] promising to support 'wars of liberation or popular uprisings' of 'colonial peoples against their oppressors' as a direct challenge to Western influence in developing areas. Kennedy, who took the speech 'as an authoritative exposition of Soviet intentions,' read it 'time and again – in his office, at Cabinet meetings, at dinners with friends, alone. At times he read it aloud and urged his colleagues to comment.'[149]

Because Kennedy believed that the Soviet Union posed an increased threat in the Third World, he concluded that he had to retain old allies and established alliances as well as win friends among the newly independent nations of Africa. But this, together with his appointments, institutionalised a fault line within the State Department and in the Washington establishment over how best to win the Cold War in Africa, which became especially important when the Administration had to decide how to deal with the sub-Saharan white minority regimes. "Africanists", led by Williams and Stevenson, maintained that the future lay with black African nationalism and that, by supporting independent black African nations and opposing apartheid and Portuguese rule in Angola and Mozambique, the USA could guarantee the political backing and economic resources of Africa for the West. But

[147] *New York Times*, 26 May 1961, p. 12
[148] Congressional Record – Senate, 2 July 1957, p. 10781
[149] Dallek, *Kennedy*, p. 350

Kennedy also gave senior positions to so-called "Europeanists" who believed that the ex-imperial powers had the main responsibility for the development of their former colonies. They also argued that Europe remained a principal focus of the Cold War and that both America's NATO allies and South Africa retained greater economic, political and military strength than the Third World. These "Europeanists" included Secretary of Defence, Robert McNamara, the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, McGeorge Bundy and George Ball, who replaced Chester Bowles as Under-Secretary of State in November 1961. As Ball himself later put it, he believed that "coming to grips with Soviet bloody-mindedness on a day-to-day basis" was more important than "schemes to elevate what we then called the underdeveloped countries".[150] Kennedy also retained some key figures from the Eisenhower era including J. Edgar Hoover at the FBI and Allen Dulles at the CIA. Although Dulles was sacked in the wake of the disaster at the Bay of Pigs, Kennedy continued to accept uncritically the CIA's view that communist-inspired racial war would engulf southern Africa if the white regimes collapsed.

Kennedy also displayed a tendency to appoint conservatives to posts and missions concerning Africa. His Ambassador to South Africa was Joseph Satterthwaite who had been the first head of the African Bureau under Eisenhower and whom the apartheid regime regarded as a "friend at court".[151] Despite his professed dislike of Portuguese rule in Angola, Kennedy gave two outspoken supporters of Portugal sensitive assignments. He asked Acheson in April 1962 to conduct negotiations over the renewal of the lease for the Azores military base and in August 1963 made Admiral George Anderson the US Ambassador in Lisbon.[152]

Most historians place Secretary of State Dean Rusk among the "Europeanists".[153] Rusk's three recent biographers are agreed that, whatever his personal convictions, he believed his role was to carry out

[150] Ball, *Pattern*, p. 170
[151] Quoted in De Vos, p. 106
[152] Anderson wanted to supply Portugal with arms to suppress the Angolan nationalist rebels. According to one White House insider, "the president just wanted him out of here so badly and sort of figured they deserved each other". Mahoney, p. 221
[153] Lefebvre, p. 67; Rusk himself said much the same in his memoirs: "I always looked upon the United States as the junior partner in Africa." Rusk, p. 273

the policy determined by the elected chief executive.[154] This suggests that Rusk's willingness to allow the ex-colonial powers to assume the primary role in shaping Western policy in Africa was a reflection of the President's approach. Kennedy invariably put Cold War considerations higher than colonial liberation when he felt they were in conflict. Even an historian anxious to demonstrate that JFK was "a passionate supporter of African nationalism" nevertheless concludes that "Kennedy's policy became one of rhetorical support for the idea of African self-determination".[155] Although genuinely anxious to re-set America's relationship with black Africa and clearly at ease with black African leaders, Kennedy was also, in the words of George Ball, "the pragmatist *par excellence*"[156] whose policy decisions were governed as much by his perception of geopolitical and strategic considerations as by any ideological commitment to black liberation. It is possible that Kennedy, shortly before he died, revealed his thinking about black Africa to Sir Roy Welensky, the white [Northern] Rhodesian politician and Prime Minister of the Federation. If so, his attitude differed little from Eisenhower's. "The President pointed out that the tide of African nationalism is so strong that as a practical matter we can only try to moderate and influence, not stop it. He suggested that many of the problems are pragmatic rather than moral."[157]

2: The US and the Congo under Kennedy

The crisis in the Congo was among the first major overseas issues Kennedy had to deal with. Between his election and his inauguration he told himself that, above all, he wanted "to avoid direct involvement in action taken by the outgoing Administration".[158] This is why, unaware that Lumumba had been killed, his Congo Task Force proposed a new policy. Under what became known as the Kennedy Plan, the UN would have the authority to use force to subdue the Congolese factions. The plan also recommended the release of political prisoners and the recall of parliament. But Kennedy could not entirely escape Eisenhower's legacy. He and his advisers were no less fearful of Soviet

[154] Cohen, *Rusk,* pp. 27, 96, 108; Schoenbaum, p. 14; Zeiler, p. 209
[155] Muehlenbeck, p. 235, 120; See also Noer, *Black Liberation,* pp. 61-67; Borstelmann, *Color Line*, pp. 137-38
[156] Ball, *Pattern*, p. 167
[157] *FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XXI*, Doc. 344, p. 537
[158] Quoted in Dallek, *Kennedy,* p. 302

influence in the Congo than their predecessors.[159] Kennedy and his team were also keen to keep Lumumba out of power. Rusk instructed his ambassador in India to tell Nehru that, "in view of Lumumba's past record of irresponsibility as Prime Minister we would view with grave concern his return to the position. Even in a lesser position of authority we consider that he has a high potential for divisive, unconstructive action."[160]

The announcement of Lumumba's death on 13 February caused an international outcry and raised tensions over the Congo still further. There were protest demonstrations in cities all over the world. In New York, African Americans, convinced that the USA had facilitated the murder, staged an angry demonstration outside the United Nations building. Many African states and the Communist powers blamed the USA, regarding Lumumba as a victim of Western neo-colonial interference; Nkrumah even denounced Kennedy as a murderer.[161] These states also gave diplomatic recognition to Gizenga in Stanleyville while Kennedy further enraged Nkrumah by announcing in a press conference on 15 February that Kasavubu's government was "the only legal authority entitled to speak for the Congo as a whole". In clear reference to Gizenga and Tshombe, Kennedy rejected "the purported recognition of Congolese factions as so-called governments in other parts of that divided country".[162] Fearful of Soviet intervention in support of Gizenga, Kennedy also warned that unilateral intervention by any country ran the risk of war.

Historians Richard Mahoney and John Kent both maintain that Kennedy, like Eisenhower, exaggerated the threat posed by the USSR in the Congo.[163] Hugh Brogan, however, has argued that Kennedy was trapped as much by the prevailing consensus by as his own Cold War mind-set: "For more than forty years Americans allowed themselves only the simplest dichotomy for interpreting world affairs… Whatever Kennedy's private views were, he had no alternative to accepting and using Cold War categories when seeking support for his foreign policy. At best he could only educate

[159] *FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XX*, Doc. 17
[160] *Ibid.,* Doc. 19; Rusk instructed that this message be given only orally
[161] Noer, 'New Frontiers' in Paterson (ed.), p. 263
[162] *New York Times*, 16 Feb. 1961, p. 16
[163] Mahoney, p. 73; Kent, *op. cit.,* p. 49

Americans in the ambiguities and nuances of diplomacy, which, to his honour, he increasingly attempted."[164] The Congo crisis did not make it easy for him to escape the Cold War paradigm nor did it provide much opportunity for educating Americans about alternative ways of interpreting it.

On 21 February 1961 the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 161, which empowered UN forces to "take immediately all appropriate measures to prevent the occurrence of civil war in the Congo including… the use of force, if necessary, in the last resort". It also demanded "the immediate withdrawal and evacuation from the Congo of all Belgian and other foreign military and paramilitary personnel and political advisors" and for "the restoration of parliamentary institutions".[165] This gave Kennedy much of what he wanted – the resolution ensured there would be no Soviet intervention, nor did it require the commitment of US forces to keep the peace. But he was worried that the recall of parliament might bring Gizenga to power. The American candidate for the premiership was Cyrille Adoula, a trade union leader whom Rusk described as "the strongest and most attractive of the moderate Congolese leaders".[166] But it required a massive campaign of bribery organised by the CIA to ensure that he was elected and to persuade Gizenga to become one of his three deputy Prime Ministers.[167] News of Adoula's election lifted the mood in Washington, coming as it did after the disaster of the Bay of Pigs in April and the bruising June summit with Khrushchev in Vienna. Rostow told the President that "there is optimism all over town that the Congo situation is on the way towards solution… we could be witnessing the most encouraging development since you became President".[168]

However, the new government needed the economic resources of its richest province, Katanga, to be viable. Accordingly, Adoula requested the UN forces to reunify the country. Tshombe, however, had spent the year since independence hiring white mercenaries and stockpiling weapons. These included some fighter aircraft from the neighbouring white-ruled Central African Federation where the Prime Minister, Roy Welensky, hoped that Katanga – ruled by a compliant black African – could become a

[164] Brogan, p. 59
[165] UN website
[166] *FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XX*, Doc. 93
[167] Mahoney, p. 86-87; a note from McBundy to Kennedy of 10 June hints at the scale of the bribery effort; See *FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XX*, Doc. 71, Editorial note
[168] Quoted in Mahoney, p. 88

prosperous, anti-communist regime on his northern border. This he believed would help shore up the Federation, which was itself in danger of crumbling in the face of insistent opposition from its black majority population. In Britain, right-wing conservatives and business interests put pressure on Prime Minister Harold Macmillan (who also wished to see the CAF survive) to recognise Katanga's independence.[169]

The fighting in Katanga, which broke out in September, was intense and there were reports of atrocities carried out by UN troops from India and Ethiopia. The UN assault on Katanga threatened to become a domestic problem for the US Administration. The breakaway province enjoyed the vocal support of American conservatives, much of it racist in character. When Rusk faced the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in December 1961, Senator Bourke B. Hickenlooper (R-Iowa) asked him whether it was wise "to force the Katangans to subject themselves to the control of individuals who had hardly jumped out of the trees yet".[170] Conservatives used Katanga in the same way as they were later to use Rhodesia – as a proxy for their hostility to the civil rights movement – and they employed the same arguments as Smith's American supporters were to do. Conservatives also maintained that the UN was exceeding its mandate by interfering in the domestic affairs of the Congo, especially as Katanga appeared to be a model of stability in contrast to the rest of the country. On 14 December 1961 the *New York Times* and 17 other major newspapers carried a full page advert with the headline "Katanga is the Hungary of 1961!" demanding a change in US policy. The advert strongly criticised US support for the actions of the UN, reiterated Tshombe's anti-communist credentials and contrasted his preservation of "law, order and decency" in Katanga with the "centralized regime which has proved its incapacity to govern, and has failed to resist Communist

[169] Macmillan wanted a unified Congo strong enough to resist Communism but believed that Katanga should be given considerable autonomy within a federal system; see Horne, *Macmillan 1957-1986*, pp. 401-404; Turner, pp. 191-98. In April, British Foreign Secretary Lord Home told Rusk, "The United Kingdom had been reluctant to support the last United Nations resolution for fear the United Nations might use it to impose its will on Katanga. If the United Nations did so, Tshombe would declare his independence. He possesses three-quarters of the wealth of the Congo and could get away with it." *FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XX*, Doc. 55

[170] Quoted in Mahoney, p. 118

penetration".[171] Kennedy knew he could ill afford to alienate conservative voters in the Democratic heartland of the South who had helped secure his victory in 1960.

On the other hand, Kennedy was under strong pressure from his African Bureau, supported on this occasion by George Ball, to ensure that the Congo remained united and achieved stability. As Ball, whom Kennedy had put in charge of US policy in the Congo, put it in his memoirs, "Were we to offer even the most qualified support to an independent Katanga, we would, in the eyes of the Third World, identify ourselves with Belgian colonialists; that would give the Soviet Union a golden opportunity to exploit the resulting disaffection of those areas of the Congo that had, in losing Katanga, lost also their major source of revenue."[172] Ball gave Kennedy a stark warning in September. "If the UN fails to end the Katanga secession, it will mean the failure of Adoula's policy of moderation. In order to survive, he will be forced to precipitate a civil war."[173] Rusk told Kennedy that if the USA accepted the independence of Katanga, "Communist penetration of the country would be a near certainty."[174] The President, though, was reluctant to commit US forces to the conflict and desperately wanted a diplomatic solution. In September he agreed to send US fighter aircraft to the Congo but limited their role to defending US and UN transports.[175] He pressured Adoula to meet Tshombe by threatening the withdrawal of American aid, and US diplomats were able to broker a deal at Kitona between the two principal Congolese factions. On 21 December 1961 Tshombe agreed to place his forces under the authority of President Kasavubu and to rejoin the Congolese parliament. The Congo crisis appeared to be over.

Kennedy was delighted with the Kitona Accord – he appeared to have achieved his goal of a unified anti-communist Congo without having to deploy US forces. But the Accord broke down almost immediately. Tshombe was not interested in a genuine reconciliation with Adoula and realised that the Europeans were reluctant to sanction another military campaign against him. Tshombe thought

[171] *New York Times*, 14 Dec. 1961, p. 49. According to George Ball, "That appeal brought more than three thousand contributions from commercial and industrial companies." Ball, *Pattern*, p. 234
[172] *Ibid.,* p. 232
[173] *FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XX*, Doc. 122
[174] *Ibid.,* Doc. 140
[175] *Ibid.,* Doc. 120

that he only needed to maintain the semblance of negotiations with Adoula to fend off the UN while he re-equipped his forces with the help of Union Minière and the Central African Federation.[176] He was also encouraged by the difficulties Adoula was experiencing from his left. The arrest of Gizenga and the dismissal of his supporters from their government posts weakened popular and parliamentary support for Adoula.

Kennedy come under further domestic pressure to withdraw US support for the UN in the Congo. Congress was balking at the cost of underwriting UN debts, in part because conservative members were vocal in their support of Tshombe. In April 1962 John Tower (R-Tex.), using arguments that were to be repeated by Congressional supporters of UDI, criticised US support for UN policy in Africa: "Tshombe is friendly to the West. He seeks preservation of a capitalist economy. His area was the richest and most politically stable in the Belgian Congo. It seemed a strange paradox that he should feel our wrath. As a result, many bewildered people at home and abroad have asked what the UN has become."[177] Nor did British Prime Minister Macmillan want to see Tshombe defeated. He thought that the Adoula government was not strong enough to resist Soviet influence and admired Tshombe. He told Kennedy in May 1962, "We agree that [the Congo] ought to be a united country, but feel that it should have a federal constitution, leaving the provinces in general, and Tshombe in particular, a considerable degree of local autonomy. We think this is right, because the country is so large and the tribes so different, and because Tshombe is the best hope of keeping Katanga prosperous and therefore supplying some money for the rest of the country."[178]

The Congolese crisis also exposed the divided counsels of the State Department. The African Bureau wanted the US to support the UN drive, with military force if necessary, to defeat Tshombe and unite the Congo. But George Ball recommended what Richard Mahoney has called "disengagement by the United States... a constitutional solution that would create a loose Congolese confederation in which

[176] Welensky denied helping Katanga with military supplies
[177] Congressional Record – Senate, 4 Apr. 1962, p. 5907
[178] *FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XX*, Doc. 241

Adoula would be preserved and Tshombe would be allowed to play a national role".[179] Ball told Bundy, "We have to have someone tough-minded in the AF bureau," and he called the African Bureau's proposals "a lot of mush".[180] The dispute became public as Williams openly criticised the Administration's policy and came close to resigning.[181] Kennedy's familiar and unpalatable choice was made worse when the Indians, who were worried about a Chinese threat on their border, contemplated withdrawing their contingent of 5,700 troops from the UN force.[182] So if Kennedy failed to send US forces to reinforce the UN and Tshombe survived, Adoula would turn to the USSR for help. American prestige, along with that of the UN, would be damaged, to say nothing of US relations with black Africa. If he intervened, Kennedy knew that he risked the wrath of the domestic Katanga lobby who, in the mid-term elections, would accuse him of destroying a bastion of anti-communist, capitalist stability in war-torn Africa.

Kennedy temporised, but was relieved of the need to decide what to do by the unexpected success of the UN assault, codenamed Grandslam, which was launched on Christmas Eve. By the end of January 1963, Katanga's secession had been defeated.[183] But with the UN mandate in the Congo due to expire on 30 June and the Secretary-General unwilling to extend it, the Americans were faced with the problem of what to do next. They decided to build up the power of the army strong man, Joseph Mobutu. He was brought to the US to tour military installations and meet the President at the White House. He assured Kennedy that, with immediate US aid, he could maintain order after the departure of the UN. Kennedy was fulsome in his praise: "General, if it hadn't been for you, the whole thing would have collapsed and the Communists would have taken over."[184] Boosted by US dollars, Mobutu consolidated his position in Leopoldville and Kennedy's diplomacy succeeded in extending

[179] Mahoney, p. 144
[180] *FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XX*, Doc. 277, Editorial note
[181] Noer, *Soapy*, pp. 253-54
[182] In the event, the Indian troops were not withdrawn and the UN force was supplemented by the arrival of Indonesian troops. By 21 December the US Joint Chiefs estimated the size of the UN force to be more than 17,000; *FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XX*, Doc. 382; Tshombe's forces were estimated to number 16,000
[183] Chester Bowles had predicted that Tshombe's mercenaries would not fight more than 300 yards away from the nearest bar; Mahoney, p. 152
[184] *FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XX*, Doc. 423. According to historians Duigan and Gann the Congo had already received "a total of over $100 million" between 1960 and 1962, "more American aid than any other state in Africa". Between 1945 and 1979 it was second only to Morocco in the amount of US aid received. Duigan and Gann, pp. 319, 417, note 9

the UN mandate for a further year. But, by the time of the President's death, further trouble was brewing.

3: Kennedy and Angola

Kennedy's policies towards the white minority regimes of South Africa and the Portuguese colony of Angola demonstrate that, despite his sympathy for black liberation, he was no more able to escape his Cold War mentality than he had been in dealing with the Congo.[185] Early in his presidency, however, it looked as though Kennedy did intend to implement a new African policy. "Soapy" Williams, during his first trip to Africa as head of the African Bureau, when asked about US policy by a reporter in Nairobi, replied: "What we want for the African is what the Africans want for themselves." This was immediately truncated in the media to "Africa for the Africans" and interpreted as an American declaration of support for black liberation.[186] Williams also made clear his hostility to apartheid, as did the US delegation at the UN, one of whom declared in April that "the United States is squarely, utterly, and irrevocably opposed to the policy of racial discrimination epitomised in the term apartheid".[187] White African opinion was outraged and Williams, on his second goodwill trip in August, was punched in the face at Lusaka airport by an angry white settler, an attack which a South African official interpreted as symbolic of white "public feeling towards the United States and its Africa policy". [188]

But the most dramatic evidence that the Administration was making what the *New York Times* called "a major shift in American foreign policy… [and] a new declaration of American independence"[189] came in March after an outbreak of serious violence between Angolan nationalist rebels and the Portuguese authorities. The US delegation at the UN voted in favour of an unsuccessful Security

[185] Noer, *Black Liberation*, p. 66
[186] Noer, *Soapy,* p. 239
[187] Francis Plimpton, speaking at the Special Political Committee of the UN, 5 Apr. 1961, *DSB* 44, 24 Apr. 1961, p. 602
[188] Quoted in Irwin, p. 75
[189] *New York Times*, 18 Mar. 1961, p. 22

Council resolution urging Portugal to allow self-determination in Angola.[190] This provoked an angry response from Dean Acheson. He maintained that the US should be supporting Portugal, its NATO ally, that the vote would "accomplish nothing in Angola" and that his policy was "not the way to run an alliance".[191] Others on the right joined in. Republican congressional leaders called it "hardly a proud moment for Uncle Sam".[192] The Portuguese government mounted a substantial public relations campaign in the United States to try to influence public opinion which prefigured the tactics and propaganda of the Friends of Rhodesia later in the decade in both winning the support of prominent congressmen and mobilising a variety of right-wing organisations. These included the American Friends of Katanga, Bill James Hargis's Christian Crusade and the John Birch Society and they aimed to exploit Southern disquiet over civil rights. As one of their organisers put it: "The entire South could be persuaded to side with Portugal."[193] Their publicity material portrayed the Angolan nationalist rebels as communist, stressed Portugal's alignment with the West and recruited conservative black Americans to emphasise the educational benefits and racial harmony of life in the Portuguese colonies.

Kennedy was also under pressure from Britain and France not to antagonise Portugal at a time when the Western powers needed unity over the Soviet threat to Berlin. During his visit to Europe in early June de Gaulle warned him that pressure on Portugal over its African colonies could destabilise the Salazar regime in Lisbon and provoke a communist revolution there.[194] The bad-tempered meeting with Khrushchev in Vienna only added to his difficulty. The Soviet leader, by making it clear that he regarded colonial wars of liberation as "sacred", was hoping to depict the USA as an ally of Portuguese colonialism.[195] Kennedy's dilemma reflected deep divisions within his Administration. As historian Thomas Borstelmann has observed, "no other issue divided the Kennedy administration as

[190] Wayne Fredericks maintained that this vote was as much a repudiation of the decision of the outgoing Eisenhower Administration in December 1960 to abstain on UNGA Resolution 1514 (which had demanded an end of colonialism) as it was with the specifics of the Angolan crisis. *Fredericks Interview*, p. 2, JFK
[191] Quoted in Brinkley, p. 309
[192] Quoted in Muehlenbeck, p. 102
[193] Quoted in Noer, *Black Liberation*, p. 75
[194] Schlesinger, p. 319
[195] Mahoney, p. 193

clearly between Africanists and Europeanists as Angola".[196] On the one hand, the Pentagon was adamant that the military bases on the Azores, established during World War Two and leased by the Portuguese government to the United States until the end of 1962, were essential to NATO.[197] At the same time, Kennedy was being pressed by the Africanists in the State Department to continue his new policy, even if it risked the future of NATO.[198]

Kennedy's handling of the Angolan problem demonstrates that, rather than pursuing a "middle" course between supporting African decolonisation and the interests of European NATO partners, he was genuinely committed to black freedom and majority rule unless and until it clashed with the demands of Cold War strategy. Kennedy had the same aim for Angola as for the Congo: he wanted to see an independent, black-ruled nationalist regime strong enough to prevent any communist gains in the area. In an effort to undermine Portuguese intransigence, the Administration maintained diplomatic pressure during 1961 by supporting UNGA Resolution 1603 on 20 April urging Portugal to "consider urgently… reforms in Angola", and UNSC Resolution 163 on 9 June, which called on her to "desist forthwith from repressive measures".[199] Later in the year the Administration began covert funding of the nationalist movement led by Holden Roberto. And in March 1962 Kennedy tried bribery by offering Portugal substantial US economic aid in return for independence for its African colonies. But Salazar was unmoved. He responded by publicly denouncing the US for supporting the nationalists whom he denounced as communists.

Cold War priorities gradually softened the US approach on Angola. The 1961 crisis over Berlin reinforced the Pentagon case that the Azores base was vital for both US aircraft and troop deployment against potential conflict in Europe.[200] And, in June 1961, Kennedy decided to move Bowles, one of his government's foremost advocates of support for African liberation, from his position as Under-Secretary of State and replace him with the pragmatic George Ball. By 1962 it was also apparent that

[196] Borstelmann, *Color Line,* p. 150
[197] Muehlenbeck, p. 103
[198] *FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XXI*, Doc. 351, pp. 545-46
[199] UN website
[200] The Azores base was used to move US troops and equipment to Berlin in 1961 and UN troops to the Congo in 1960 and 1961; Mahoney, p. 209

the Administration had gained very little credit among black African nations. Instead, it was facing international criticism because the Portuguese were using American-made weapons, supplied through NATO, against the nationalist rebels. The Missile Crisis in October and the expiration of the Azores lease at the end of the year reinforced the primacy of the Cold War. As a result, in December 1962, the US flatly contradicted its March 1961 vote in the UNSC and its support for UNSC Resolution 163 by joining Portugal and a minority of others in unsuccessfully voting against two strongly worded UNGA resolutions on Angola. Kennedy, by shifting his policy, had succeeded in gaining the worst of both worlds. His initial support for Angolan independence had upset his European allies and risked the loss of the Azores base. But his policy reversal reinforced suspicions in black Africa about the sincerity of the US commitment to decolonisation.

4. Kennedy and South Africa

South Africa presented a much more difficult dilemma than Angola because of its greater economic and strategic importance. This explains Rusk's anxiety to distance himself from "Soapy" Williams's alleged remark about Africa for the Africans: "US regrets that press reports of statements by Assistant Secretary Williams have given impression in some circles in South Africa that we regard white population as being expendable and that we urge immediate and unqualified granting of political power to vast non-white majority of South African population. This certainly has never been and is not now intention or desire of US. It is because US is thoroughly aware of great complexity of problem and tremendous importance of white population to future well-being of South Africa that it believes in a planned, purposeful and progressive evolution of institutions that would safeguard basic rights of all elements of South Africa's population."[201]

Washington's pragmatists and Europeanists also agreed with the assessment of one British official that criticism of apartheid would only make the South African government more resistant to change: "The Afrikaners were tough, stubborn, in-bred people and pressure from outside would simply drive

[201] *FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XXI*, Doc. 384, p. 600

them further into the 'laager'."[202] The events in the Congo, and the radicalism of some civil rights activists at home, made many in the US establishment alarmed about militant black nationalism, and it became an article of faith that the African National Congress was a tool of Moscow, especially after it adopted an armed struggle in 1961 and was branded a terrorist organisation by Pretoria.[203] In May 1963, the CIA concluded that the members of the ANC's armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe were either communists or communist sympathisers.[204] Not surprisingly, white South Africa was regarded in Washington as "a last white stronghold against black invasion from the north and racialist-inspired upheavals from within".[205]

US Administration attitudes were contradictory. On the one hand, Intelligence documents regularly warned of the prospect of racial war in sub-Saharan Africa but, on the other, officials did not dissent from the British view that within South Africa, "internal pressure was ineffective and if the African people tried to overthrow the government by force they would be massacred".[206] Washington's publicly stated views about economic sanctions also contradicted their real assumptions. The official US position was that UN sanctions were pointless and would be ineffective.[207] One official told the Special Political Committee of the UN in October 1962, "We see little value in a resolution which would be primarily a means for a discharge of our own emotions, which would be unlikely to be fully implemented, and which calls for measures which could be easily evaded by the country to which they are addressed."[208] But Rusk had told his officials in May 1961 that economic sanctions constituted "excessive pressure" on the South African government and that they were likely to

[202] *Ibid.,* Doc. 393, p. 614
[203] That the CIA colluded with the South African police over the arrest of Nelson Mandela in August 1962 is widely accepted by historians. See Schraeder, p. 202; Borstelmann, *Color Line,* p. 156-57; De Vos, p. 117; Rabe, p. 176; Mandela himself though, in his autobiography, with characteristic diplomacy, absolved the CIA of responsibility; *Long Walk to Freedom*, London, 2005, paperback edition, p. 379
[204] Rabe, p. 176
[205] Quoted in Irwin, pp. 82-83
[205] *New York Times*, 18 Mar. 1961, p. 22
[206] *FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XXI*, *Africa,* Doc. 393, p. 614
[207] Ball, in 1968, dismissed sanctions as "a romantic delusion" and the goal of a "multi-racial South African society" as "pie in the sky"; *Discipline*, pp. 245, 256
[208] Francis Plimpton, US representative to the General Assembly speaking at the Special Political Committee of the UN, 19 Oct. 1962, *DSB* 47, 19 Nov. 1962, p. 793; Plimpton went on to remark that the League of Nations had failed largely because of its "inability to make good on a resolve to apply sanctions". Schlesinger claims he worked on the speech with Plimpton and that the quoted passage was "a simple paraphrase of words spoken to me by the President", p. 506

encourage racial war and possible "communist infiltration."[209] In August 1963 Rusk was reminded by his Intelligence and Research Department of the principal objection to sanctions: "If the United States were to get into any economic reprisal situation with South Africa, the South Africans would have much the best of it." This was because "US assets in South Africa are probably at least five times greater than South African assets in the US. The international standing of the US dollar and, by extension, the stability of the integrated Western monetary system, is to a degree dependent on the orderly marketing of gold. South Africa accounts for about 65% of Free World gold production, and it could encourage upward pressure on free market gold by withholding sales. This might induce sudden heavy demands on US gold reserves."[210] This meant that, although the Administration was prepared to vote in favour of UN measures which slapped South African wrists – such as UNGA Resolution 1663 of 28 November 1961, which deplored the country's failure to "comply with the repeated request and demands… to reconsider or revise its racial policies"[211] – it consistently opposed Afro-Asian attempts to impose sanctions.

American reluctance to confront South Africa was reinforced by the demands of the Pentagon, which emphasised the importance of South African facilities to the US military.[212] In June 1962, the Pentagon concluded an agreement by which the United States would supply weapons, vehicles and spare parts in return for the establishment of a missile-tracking station although, at the insistence of the State Department, the South Africans agreed that the weapons would not be used for internal policing.[213] Rusk outlined the Kennedy Administration's policy towards South Africa in August 1961. He instructed Ambassador Satterthwaite to remind the South Africans about American dislike of apartheid. But he also demonstrated the extent to which the American establishment was guilty of wishful thinking about South African domestic policies: "US would agree that there is much misunderstanding and misrepresentation in world concerning South Africa's racial problem, and an unwillingness to give credit for what is being done for benefit of Republic's non-white population."

[209] Noer, 'New Frontiers' in Paterson (ed.), p. 276
[210] *FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XXI*, Doc. 413, pp. 646-47
[211] UN website
[212] *FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XXI*, Doc. 378, p. 592; Doc. 382, pp. 596-97
[213] Massie, p. 133

Rusk wanted it stressed that "there are numerous fields in which our two countries can continue to collaborate closely and fruitfully to our mutual benefit and for good of Free World".[214] This emphasis on co-operation meant that the Kennedy Administration did little to satisfy the demand of its African Bureau for a tougher stance beyond ordering Satterthwaite in 1963 to integrate the traditional Independence Day celebrations in Pretoria, even if that violated South African law.

The paucity of American moves against apartheid led UN Ambassador Adlai Stevenson to warn Kennedy in November 1962 that US policy towards South Africa risked alienating the black nations.[215] The pressure on Kennedy to take a tougher line grew during 1963. The violent confrontation between black demonstrators and white police in Birmingham, Alabama, in April and May, although it strengthened the President's resolve to seize the initiative on civil rights in the USA, also highlighted his lack of substantial action against South Africa. The Soviet media took full advantage; the State Department counted more than 1,400 Soviet radio commentaries broadcast worldwide between 14 and 26 May about Birmingham.[216] And the formation of the Organisation of African Unity in May threatened to unite black Africa in linking the racism of Portugal, South Africa and the United States. Energetic diplomacy succeeded in persuading the OAU to issue a declaration the US could live with, as a relieved Rusk told his African ambassadors: "Condemned racial discrimination everywhere, particularly in US, but coupled this with appreciation for efforts US Gov't end discriminatory practices which otherwise likely cause serious deterioration in relations between US and Africa. This probably as good a resolution as could be expected."[217]

Rusk responded in June 1963 to a plea for tougher measures from the African Bureau. "I believe it is worth reminding ourselves that there are other states where obnoxious practices of one sort or another exist – and in some of them in the most exaggerated form… I will admit that apartheid presents a case of unusual difficulty but I would not put it ahead of the violations of human rights within the

[214] *FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XXI*, *Africa,* Doc. 384, pp. 599-600
[215] Massie, p. 134
[216] Massie, p. 140; Dudziak, pp. 169-70
[217] *FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XXI*, Doc. 219, p. 333

communist bloc or in certain countries governed on an authoritarian basis with which we have correct and sometimes even friendly relations." He also betrayed the Administration's fear of black nationalist radicalism by stressing that change could come only gradually and that, on apartheid, the USA could do no more than "use our influence wherever possible to modify their position". Because South Africa was regarded as an important Cold War ally, Rusk maintained that "we must then also try to sustain good relations in other respects… [and] assist them in playing the kind of role which they have already played in two World Wars and which now is a part of a total confrontation affecting the life and death of our own nation".[218]

However, the Administration knew that it would have to take action to head off some of the criticism of its policy. In August, the US imposed a unilateral ban on arms sales to South Africa. Rusk warned the South African Ambassador that the ban was imminent but told him it was principally designed to prevent UN sanctions.[219] As Philip Muehlenbeck has put it, the purpose of the ban "was more to appear credible in the eyes of African nationalists than to inflict real pain on Pretoria".[220] It was also designed to deflect attention from the Administration's capitulation over Angola.[221] Washington officials were well aware that the ban would make little difference. As Bundy admitted to Rusk, "our own suspension of arms shipments will not be of critical importance to South Africa since we are not a prime source for South Africa in this field at present".[222] Furthermore, the US agreed to honour existing contracts and excluded from the ban any weaponry (such as submarines) it deemed necessary for international security but impossible to use for the suppression of internal dissent.

As an indication of just how far the US was prepared to accommodate South Africa, Rusk even gave the impression of tacitly endorsing the Bantustan policy which was designed to solidify apartheid by granting a degree of autonomy to puppet black "homelands".[223] When the ambassador reported on this to Pretoria, he suggested that "Mr. Rusk is now prepared to look at our situation from the point of

[218] *Ibid.*, Doc. 406, pp. 634-35
[219] *Ibid.,* Doc. 409, p. 639
[220] Muehlenbeck, p. 192
[221] Laïdi, p. 19; Schraeder, p. 203
[222] *FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XXI*, Doc. 410, p. 643
[223] *Ibid.,* Doc. 409, pp. 642-43

view of our policy and not through the coloured view of integration."[224] By November, Washington officials were even working on "a scheme for a set of modest reforms by the South African Government in return for which the US and UK would give categorical support to the South African Government politically".[225] The extent to which the Kennedy Administration endeavoured to accommodate the South African regime makes it hard to disagree with Robert Massie's verdict: "Kennedy tried… to construct a policy toward South Africa that was commendable in form but empty in substance… [It] combined overt condemnation with covert cooperation, symbolic opposition with substantive support."[226]

5. The Kennedy Administration and the Central African Federation

As with Angola and South Africa, the US response to the CAF was subordinated to the Administration's wider priorities. Recognising that the area was principally a British responsibility, Kennedy did not want American policy to complicate Macmillan's difficulties in central Africa. He valued British support over Berlin and the Test Ban Treaty and enjoyed a close personal bond with Macmillan.[227] Despite the anti-colonial rhetoric of the "Africanists" in the Administration, the goal of US policy was strikingly similar to that of both the Eisenhower Administration and the British. It aimed to achieve "multi-racial" polities run by "moderate" leaders friendly, or at least not hostile, to the West. The "Europeanists" and "Africanists" at the State Department did not disagree over this, merely over how far, and how fast, pressure should be applied to the dominant white minority to make concessions to black demands.

This was a critical issue because the British government experienced continued difficulties in trying to hold the Federation together during the early 1960s as the pressure from black nationalists intensified, especially in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Macmillan did not emerge with credit – his policy during the period 1961 to 1963 as the Federation collapsed has been described by his official (and

[224] Quoted in De Vos, p. 112
[225] *FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XXI*, Doc. 420, p. 655
[226] Massie, p. 158
[227] Schlesinger, p. 340; Sorensen, p. 558; Horne, *Macmillan,* p. 281

sympathetic) biographer as "patching and fudging".[228] Macmillan was trying to achieve two difficult objectives. The first was to prevent the death of the Federation by finding constitutional formulae for each Rhodesian territory which would advance the interests of the black majorities without alarming the whites. He was also trying to maintain the unity of his government and party by reining in the enthusiasm of his Colonial Office for rapid decolonisation but without capitulating to the entrenched imperialism espoused by Lord Salisbury, one of the party's influential grandees.

There was little difficulty about granting independence to Nyasaland – its impoverished economy and tiny white population meant that the Europeans who dominated the Federation were willing to sacrifice it. But the Rhodesian whites were determined to hang onto the valuable mineral wealth of Northern Rhodesia if they could, and this provoked bitter rows over its proposed new constitution. A draft produced by London in June 1961, which was acceptable to the whites, provoked outrage and renewed violence in Northern Rhodesia, where the blacks, led by Kenneth Kaunda, wanted nothing less than majority rule and independence. Macmillan, with memories fresh in his mind of the unsuccessful attempt to crush nationalist rebels in Cyprus and the outcry over the Hola massacre in Kenya, quailed at the prospect of having to suppress widespread black protest. In February 1962, his government announced a new franchise for Northern Rhodesia which would make African majority rule a certainty. Elections in October duly produced a black government demanding secession and independence, and the Federation was formally dissolved on 31 December 1963. In July 1964 Nyasaland became independent as Malawi, followed in October by Northern Rhodesia as independent Zambia.

US officials were pleased with these two new nations as they seemed to represent the fulfilment of US aims for black Africa. In the words of historian Daniel Volman, "In Northern Rhodesia, at least, British and American policy appeared to have succeeded in bringing about a transition to black majority rule under a government which was free from communist influences and which inspired

[228] Horne, *Macmillan,* p. 391

confidence among foreign investors."[229] Washington already knew that Malawi's president, Hastings Banda, was a conservative and well disposed towards the USA. A graduate of Howard University, Banda had been particularly delighted to be warmly received by Kennedy at the White House in 1961.[230] American officials also approved of Kenneth Kaunda now that he was the president of Zambia rather than a nationalist agitator. Williams, reporting on his February 1963 visit to the area, told Rusk, "Prospects of NR quite bright and optimistic… Kaunda excellent character and intelligence." Williams endorsed the verdict of a British businessman who regarded Kaunda as "one of the best African leaders and essentially moderate".[231]

The situation in Southern Rhodesia, where the white minority was more firmly entrenched, was considerably more problematic. The collapse of the Federation angered most whites there, who maintained that independence was being granted to the two backward colonies but denied to the most advanced of the three. The Congolese civil war, accompanied by lurid media tales of the pillage, murder and rape of whites and the arrival of refugees, alarmed them further about what majority rule would mean in practice. Furthermore, they believed that their case for independence had been strengthened by the new constitution for Southern Rhodesia drawn up in 1961. By this, Britain surrendered its right of surveillance over legislation concerning the welfare of blacks, though it retained the right to ratify any further constitutional amendments and the British parliament retained sovereignty. The new constitution also abolished Todd's unified franchise based on property and education and replaced it with a complex arrangement which, theoretically, could lead to eventual majority rule. Two electoral rolls were established, each based on property, income and educational qualifications. Roll A (dominated by whites) elected 50 seats and Roll B a mere 15 seats. In addition, each Roll A voter had a quarter vote in a Roll B electoral district, and vice versa. This was designed to deflect criticism that the constitution was entrenching racial divisions. The Rhodesian Prime Minister, Edgar Whitehead, who had replaced Garfield Todd in February 1958, sold the 1961 constitutional changes to his white electorate by claiming that "We shall have reached a position so near to complete

[229] Volman, p. 344
[230] Duignan and Gann, p. 338; Muehlenbeck, pp. 52-53
[231] Quoted in Volman, p. 343

independence that, in practice, it would be impossible for any future United Kingdom Government to put the clock back."[232]

But the new constitution pleased few. Many whites disliked the new franchise because it meant that blacks would be elected to parliament; even the theoretical possibility of majority rule alarmed many of them. The nationalists rejected it because it entrenched the white majority. The black population also feared that Whitehead was correct about independence and felt betrayed by the British Government's willingness to surrender its so-called reserve powers over racial legislation. However, not even the Tories, despite their sympathy for white "kith and kin" in Rhodesia, were prepared to grant independence to Southern Rhodesia without cast-iron guarantees against subsequent retrogressive amendments to the constitution to establish permanent minority white rule. But this did not stop the Rhodesian whites from believing that British ministers had promised independence on the basis of the 1961 constitution. They maintained that such promises had been made, not only during the 1961 negotiations, but again in June 1963 at the conference on the winding up of the CAF. These claims were stoutly denied by the British but were later to be important in convincing Rhodesia's influential friends in the USA that the British were being perfidious and that, because the government in Salisbury had achieved de facto independence, the UN had no business in attempting to interfere in Rhodesia's domestic affairs and the US should not support sanctions.[233]

Although the African Bureau was concerned that the Macmillan Government might be willing to concede too much to the whites, the Kennedy Administration nevertheless shared the British view that Rhodesia should be encouraged to move towards "multi-racial partnership" – continuing the Eisenhower policy of seeking only slow, orderly moves towards majority rule. As Rusk told his Consul in Salisbury in March 1962, "Department favors orderly, peaceful political evolution toward representative government in all territories of the Federation."[234] Both Britain and the USA believed that Whitehead was moving in this direction. Historian J.R.T. Wood has claimed of Whitehead that,

[232] Quoted in Wood, p. 75
[233] Smith, p. 53; Butler, *Memoirs* p. 226; Young, *Rhodesia*, pp. 89-90; Blake, p. 350-51; Windrich, p. 15; Wood, p. 167
[234] *FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XXI*, Doc. 325, p. 514

"to his credit, he understood the need for reform… and aspired to turn Southern Rhodesia into a fully multi-racial democracy".[235] This is a generous assessment because, as historian Elaine Windrich has pointed out, his government was actually pursuing incompatible objectives. Whitehead clamped down on African dissent and banned the principal nationalist organisations in order to shore up his support among white Rhodesians, while at the same time assuring the British and Americans that he was implementing "a policy of 'partnership' with the Africans as a basis for an independent Southern Rhodesia".[236] In practice, Whitehead's reform programme promised more than it delivered.[237] One of his MPs boasted in August 1962 to US Consul General Paul Geren that, "Over the next five years, the Government of Southern Rhodesia will succeed in creating a completely non-racial society which will undercut the appeal of the nationalists."[238] But his achievements comprised no more than the repeal of an Immorality Act, passage of an Education Act which promised elementary education for every African child, and the removal of racial discrimination in wage negotiations and in certain public facilities.[239] Perhaps influenced by the reports from the Salisbury consulate, American endorsement of Whitehead became State Department orthodoxy during 1962. Rusk told his UN mission in January 1962: "Present Southern Rhodesian Government making earnest effort [to] promote multi-racial society, outlaw discrimination and substantially increase African participation in government and public affairs."[240]

These positive assessments of Whitehead were coloured, in part, by US perceptions of the black Africans they came into contact with, which tended to reinforce their preconception that Africans did not always think and behave as Americans thought they should. In particular, black Africans did not share the American preoccupation with the threat of communism. The response of US Consul-General John Emmerson was typical when he reported in April 1961 that "African nationalist leaders are very

[235] Wood, p. 14
[236] Windrich, p. 13
[237] Washington had been warned about this by its Salisbury Consulate in 1960; Palmer told the State Department that Whitehead's party, the United Federal Party, "tries to create an impression of liberality without conceding any real substance." 745c.00/7-2860, CDF, Box 1691, NARA
[238] 745c.3/8-2962, CDF, Box 1691, NARA
[239] Blake, p. 338
[240] *FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XXI*, Doc. 324, p. 513; Doc. 328, p. 517; Doc. 331, p. 520

naïve about Communism."[241] This was hardly surprising, given that these Africans wanted to be rid of white colonial rule and that the USA was allied to the European colonial powers. Black Africans regarded the US obsession with communism as an attempt to distract them from their real goal. Emmerson also believed that even the Africans thought that white rule was essential. After meeting a group of African leaders which included Ndabaningi Sithole in August 1961, Emmerson reported that they "accept the fact that they must utilize white leadership for the indefinite future. They tacitly admit that they are not prepared to assume full administrative responsibilities at this time".[242] US officials were also patronisingly dismissive of Joshua Nkomo, leader of the principal nationalist organisation, the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU). After visiting Southern Rhodesia in February 1963, Williams concluded that Nkomo's leadership was "quite inadequate".[243] Americans wanted black leaders to be willing to compromise with the white elites in the pursuit of racial partnership and failed to appreciate Nkomo's difficult balancing act. As Brian Lapping has put it, Nkomo was riding "two horses that were all but impossible to keep together: he had inspired and responded to the nationalist demands of his supporters, while recognising that power lay with the whites, with whom it was therefore necessary to do deals".[244] The hostile American view was influenced, in part, by Nkomo's penchant for foreign fund-raising trips, but he undoubtedly enjoyed widespread support among black Rhodesians, and his ability to influence events was severely circumscribed by the repressive police measures of the white government.

Suspicious of what they regarded as the radicalism of the black nationalists, the American Administration also shared the British view that excessive pressure on the white regime would be counter-productive. Rusk told the US delegation at the UN in February 1962 that "badgering of SR by UN could easily lead to declaration independence by SR resulting in closer association with South Africa and consequent deterioration race relations".[245] In 1961, in response to UNGA Resolution 1514, the UN had established the Committee on the Implementation of the Declaration on the

[241] Quoted in Volman, p. 377
[242] 745c.5-MSP/8-761, CDF, Box 1697, NARA. At that time Sithole was a colleague of Joshua Nkomo but, in August 1963, he broke away and formed the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU)
[243] Quoted in Volman, p. 345
[244] Lapping, p. 593
[245] Quoted in Volman, p. 273

Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which become known as the Committee of 17. Early in 1962 a draft resultion for the General Assembly was drawn up, proposing to refer Southern Rhodesia to this Committee. Anxious to avoid the condemnation of the Southern Rhodesian regime which was likely to come from the Committee of 17, the British, in order to prevent UN interference in Rhodesian domestic affairs, argued that the territory was self-governing.[246] Rusk supported Britain over this and rebuked the US delegation to the UN for their suggestion that Rhodesia and Angola were comparable: "Dept believes there are essential differences between Southern Rhodesia case and case of Portuguese territories. In latter, Administering Authority unwilling [to] recognize its responsibilities under Chapter XI, while UK on contrary, clearly striving carry out its responsibilities."[247]

Rusk's reasons for supporting the British interpretation of Southern Rhodesia's status emphasised the conservatism and caution of the US government's policy. "If US Government denies or ignores fact of full internal self-government, position of Southern Rhodesian Government would be undermined, tendency toward disorder in Central Africa would be increased, and US relations with UK and Southern Rhodesian authorities would be complicated."[248] As a result of Rusk's intervention, the US delegation lined up with Britain in voting unsuccessfully against UNGA Resolution 1745 of 23 February 1962 which requested the Committee of 17 "to consider whether the territory of Southern Rhodesia has attained a full measure of self-government" and to report back to the General Assembly.[249] Washington continued to support the British view that more time was needed. George Ball expressed the Administration's exasperation with the Afro-Asians at the UN for "pressing their extreme views" by asserting that "US policy consistently aimed at exerting moderating influence in direction reasonable solution problems… whether or not white settlers and Africans in territories

[246] Article 2, paragraph 7 of the UN Charter stated that "Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state." UN website
[247] *FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XXI*, Doc. 324, p. 512; Chapter XI, The Declaration Regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories, Article 73 requires "Members of the United Nations which have or assume responsibilities for the administration of territories whose peoples have not yet attained a full measure of self-government…to develop self-government." UN website
[248] *FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XXI*, Doc. 324, p. 513
[249] UN website; the votes were 57-21-24

concerned fully realize or appreciate what US trying to do."[250] And Stevenson, articulating Washington's view, told the UN General Assembly in June: "What the United Kingdom needs now is not goading… but time – time for reflection, for reconciliation of diverse and opposing elements."[251] Privately, however, Washington believed that the British were not moving fast enough. As the Executive Secretary at the Department of State put it in a memo to Bundy in May, "The United States supports British objectives while encouraging greater speed in transferring responsibility to the Africans."[252] Officials also concluded that there was no point in the US receiving the opprobrium of the Afro-Asian bloc by unsuccessfully resisting efforts to bring the issue of the 1961 constitution to the floor of the General Assembly.

Accordingly, the Americans began to distance themselves a little from the British at the UN. In June Rusk agreed that the US should abstain, not oppose, UNGA Resolution 1747, leaving Britain to cast the only negative vote. This resolution declared that "the Territory of Southern Rhodesia is a Non-Self-Governing Territory", and called for a new constitutional conference to implement "one man, one vote", and for the release of "all political prisoners".[253] Rusk thought that, "UK possesses more political and legal authority re SR, with considerable room for maneuver, than British have been willing to admit to us or UN."[254] In September, Ball told Kennedy that "he saw a situation developing where it would be increasingly difficult to support the United Kingdom effectively during the UN debates [on Southern Rhodesia]".[255] So, when the Afro-Asian bloc continued its pressure with two further UNGA resolutions in October, the USA continued to abstain rather than oppose them.[256] Resolution 1755 called for the lifting of the ban on ZAPU and for the release of Joshua Nkomo. It also declared that the situation in Southern Rhodesia, "endangers peace and security in Africa and in the world at large". Resolution 1760 reaffirmed 1747 and regretted that "the administering Power has

[250] *FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XXI*, Doc. 326, p. 515
[251] Quoted in Volman, p. 283
[252] *FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XXI*, Doc. 328, p. 516
[253] UN website; the votes were 73-1-27
[254] *FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XXI*, Doc. 330, p. 519
[255] *Ibid.,* Doc. 331, Editorial note, p. 520
[256] Rusk, however, did promise the Earl of Home, the British Foreign Secretary, that the USA would vote against any resolution demanding sanctions; *Ibid.,* Doc. 332, p. 522

not yet taken steps" to implement it.[257] UNGA Resolution 1755, by asserting that the situation in Southern Rhodesia threatened international peace, threatened to widen the scope of the dispute. Neither Britain nor the USA wanted the UN to invoke Chapter VII, Article 39, of the Charter by which it was the responsibility of the Security Council in the event of "any threat to the peace" to "decide what measures shall be taken".[258] Such measures included the use of sanctions and, if necessary, armed force.

The Anglo-American hopes for liberal reform invested in Whitehead were shattered by the December 1962 election in Southern Rhodesia at which he was comprehensively defeated. He had worried his white constituency by telling the UN Trusteeship Committee in October that, under the 1961 constitution, "I have no doubt that Africans will have a majority within fifteen years."[259] But it was his promise to amend the controversial Land Apportionment Act entrenching white control of the most fertile and productive land that made him unacceptable. Rhodesians voted instead for the newly formed right-wing Rhodesia Front, led by Winston Field, which won 35 out of the 50 the Roll A seats. Williams was particularly gloomy about the outcome of the election and told Rusk in February 1963 that "Field election has polarised blacks and whites with intensification of bitterness and extremism."[260] Paul Geren, the US Consul General, in keeping with the American field officers' tendency to underestimate the difficulties that the Africans faced, blamed Nkomo's refusal to participate for Whitehead's defeat. Historian Robert Blake also thought that ZAPU had handed the election to Field: "It was later estimated that if 5,000 more 'B' roll voters had turned out for the UFP, Whitehead would have won. The boycott was decisive. In that sense Joshua Nkomo was the true architect of the victory of the Rhodesian Front."[261] But both Geren and Blake were writing from a conservative perspective and underestimated Nkomo's difficulties; he could hardly maintain his credibility with his supporters and participate in an electoral system designed to perpetuate white rule. The principal reason for Field's victory was that, in the context of racial violence in the Congo,

[257] UN website; the votes were 83-2-10 for Res. 1755, and 81-2-18 for Res. 1760
[258] UN website
[259] Wood, p. 119
[260] Quoted in Volman, p. 345
[261] Blake, p. 344

Rhodesia's white electorate were frightened by Whitehead's policies and the prospect, however remote, of black majority rule.

American doubts about the African nationalists were increased by the major spilt in their ranks which occurred in August 1963 when Ndabaningi Sithole and others, including Robert Mugabe, tried to unseat Nkomo as leader of ZAPU. They disliked his habit of travelling abroad to raise funds and garner international support, especially when others were in detention. But Nkomo, having been involved in political activism since the 1940s, was too popular with the rank-and-file to be removed so the dissidents broke away to form a new party – the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). Nkomo responded by holding a ZAPU party conference which reaffirmed his leadership by electing him life president. The American mission in Salisbury made an unsuccessful effort to reconcile the factions. When Sidney Yates, the US representative on the UN Committee of 24 (which the Committee of 17 had become in December 1962), visited Salisbury in September, Geren reported to Williams that "we had three sessions for him with the Africans; one with Nkomo and his fellows, one with Sithole and his fellows, and one with a group of Africans and Europeans who are trying to make peace between the two factions".[262] For their part, the African nationalists believed that the USA had not done enough to support their cause. In particular, they felt that the Americans should be applying more pressure on the British not to make concessions to the white regime, a point underlined by Sithole when he met State Department officials from the African Bureau in Washington in April 1963. They had some justification because, although unwilling to endorse white minority rule in Rhodesia, both Britain and the United States continued to show a tender regard for the interests and future of the white community. This was true even of the African Bureau at the State Department which, in March 1963, suggested ways in which the US could assist the British. These included "providing some of the economic or financial support needed by the whites to ensure that they can survive the transitional crisis of confidence involved in the African political process", co-operation at the UN to prevent its intervention "in the internal affairs of the UK and/or Southern Rhodesia" and

[262] Geren to Williams, 6 Sept. 1963, Series IV, Reel 14, Williams Papers, Bentley; significantly, perhaps, Geren added that the "high point for me in this visit" was the "four hours we had with Prime Minister Field".

"consulting other African nations about the need to allow time for the fruitition of the negotiating process".[263] In Salisbury, Geren continued to believe what he was told by the Rhodesian Front government – that it was about to make "a supreme effort… to reach understanding on a formula which would bring the African nationalist into the political process".[264]

The US delegation to the UN continued to put rhetorical pressure on both Britain and Southern Rhodesia. In March 1963, Sidney Yates told the Committee of 24 that, because of the recent election result, "we cannot avoid the fear that violence may follow". He sympathised with the nationalists for their "vehement objection to a system which apparently froze political control in a privileged few" and called their boycott of the election as "regrettable" but "understandable". And he called on the UK "to apply its special influence, regardless of what its legal authority may be, towards the rapid broadening of the franchise and the rapid elimination or racial discrimination".[265] Pressure on Britain from the Afro-Asian bloc also increased in intensity during 1963, especially after the decision to grant to Southern Rhodesia the Federal defence forces of the defunct CAF. These included bombers, fighters and helicopters, the latter useful for counter-insurgency. As a result, Washington began to have doubts about the wisdom of supporting Britain's efforts to prevent discussion of Southern Rhodesia by the Security Council. At a time when American domestic race relations were making international headlines and African nations were unhappy with the US stance on Angola and South Africa, the Administration had no wish to increase Afro-Asian suspicions about the sincerity of its commitment to racial equality. Williams recommended to Rusk that the US abstain on a vote in the Committee of 24 to censure Britain: "A negative vote would be understood in Africa to indicate the US was less than sympathetic to African aspirations for majority rule. Our friendly vote on Angola in 1961 still redounds to our credit and our last negative vote on Rhodesia still haunts."[266] And in September, the US abstained rather than oppose a joint draft resolution proposed to the Security

[263] Quoted in Volman, p. 227
[264] Quoted in Volman, p. 355
[265] Press release No. 4169, US Mission to the UN, 25 Mar. 1963, Box 10-N, Williams Papers, Bentley
[266] *FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XXI*, Doc. 340, p. 533

Council by Ghana, Morocco and the Philippines.[267] This described the situation in Southern Rhodesia as "explosive" and called on the UK "not to transfer to its colony of Southern Rhodesia the armed forces and aircraft" of the CAF.[268] Britain used its veto for the first time since Suez. The USA also abstained in the votes on two subsequent UNGA resolutions which kept the pressure on Britain. Resolution 1883 of 14 October repeated the wording of the failed Security Council resolution of the previous month and Resolution 1889 of 6 November regretted Britain's failure to implement previous resolutions, repeated the call for a new constitutional conference and the introduction of universal suffrage and, in a clear reference to the USA, urged "all member states, in particular those having the closest relations with the Government of the United Kingdom, to use their influence to the utmost with a view to ensuring the realisation of the legitimate aspirations of the people of Southern Rhodesia".[269]

A month before Kennedy's death, Macmillan was replaced as British Prime Minister by Alec Douglas-Home who, as Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations from 1955 to 1960, had shown himself anxious to protect the interests of whites. This raised hopes in Salisbury that the white regime would be granted independence. But Home and Duncan Sandys (the minister responsible for both Commonwealth Relations and the Colonies) were no more prepared to allow this than their predecessors had been. By the time that Johnson became US President, the situation had, as Sandys told Rusk in December 1963, "reached a point of deadlock". Sandys, however, thought that "The Southern Rhodesians may continue their clamor for independence, but probably won't go through with it."[270] This confidence led both British and American politicians to conclude that further pressure on the white regime was unnecessary because they believed it would be forced to compromise with the black nationalists. But on 13 April 1964, Winston Field, having failed to deliver independence, was replaced as Rhodesian Prime Minister by Ian Smith who was to demonstrate that such Anglo-American confidence was entirely misplaced.

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[267] Rusk did support Britain to the extent of authorising the US ambassadors to Venezuela, Norway and Brazil to urge those countries to join the US in abstention to ensure the defeat of the resolution; *FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XXI*, Doc. 342, p. 535
[268] UN website; the voting was 8-1-2
[269] UN website; the votes were 90-2-13 for Res. 1883, and 73-2-19 for Res. 1889
[270] *FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XXI*, Doc. 346, pp. 539-40

6: Kennedy's legacy in Africa

Kennedy's assassination was widely mourned in black Africa, and not just by the political elites.[271] Despite his equivocation over the white regimes of southern Africa, Kennedy had been widely admired in black Africa for tackling the issue of civil rights in the USA and, more significantly, for resetting America's relationship with the newly independent nations. Kennedy's most important innovation, apart from his willingness to welcome black leaders to the White House, was his acceptance of black African neutrality in the Cold War. He recognised that, in the words of Chester Bowles, "the new African nations… have no desire to be Russianized, Sinocized [*sic*] or even Americanized… they are anxiously and often belligerently determined to maintain their own identity".[272] This explains why he was prepared to overlook occasional criticism of American policy by some black leaders and made overtures to those whom Eisenhower had regarded as pariahs. Kennedy successfully wooed Sékou Touré of Guinea, and authorised a loan to Ghana to fund the building of the Volta River dam, despite his irritation with Nkrumah who had been outspoken in his criticism of US policy in the Congo and Angola and annoyed the Americans by his flirtation with the Communist powers.[273] Kennedy also tried to achieve a rapprochement with Nasser, whom he regarded as a progressive reformer in contrast to the conservative rulers of America's traditional Middle Eastern ally, Saudi Arabia.[274] He hoped as well that better relations with Egypt might open the way for an Arab-Israeli peace accord. But geopolitics prevented the two men from achieving more than mutual personal respect. Nasser joined the black African nations in criticising US policy in the Congo, and Egypt and America backed opposing sides in the civil war in Yemen. In 1963, Kennedy felt obliged to respond to Israeli fears of Nasserite Arab radicalism by reaffirming America's support for Israel's right to exist and supplying them with Hawk ground-to-air missiles.[275] But Kennedy's efforts in black Africa were rewarded during the Cuban Missile crisis when Guinea, Senegal and Ghana

[271] Muehlenbeck, p. 226
[272] Chester Bowles, speech in New York, 14 Dec. 1962; *DSB*, 47, 31 Dec. 1962, p. 1006
[273] Kennedy faced criticism for his refusal to cancel the Volta project from conservatives in Congress, the press and from within his own family. His father telephoned in September 1961 to ask: "What in hell are you up to with that communist Nkrumah?" Schlesinger, p. 499
[274] Muehlenbeck, p. 133
[275] Giglio, p. 247-48

refused to allow Soviet planes to refuel in their countries, leading one historian to conclude that "perhaps Africa's leaders were the unsung heroes" of the crisis.[276]

However, the policies of the Kennedy Administration towards the white redoubts of southern Africa displayed a remarkable continuity with those of Eisenhower. This was because the Administration's primary concern, however much it might have wanted to see the cause of black Africans advanced, was for the stability and security of US economic and strategic interests. American officials believed that such stability could only be guaranteed if the white regimes reformed their most obvious inequalities – much as the United States was itself doing – to accommodate moderate black opinion. But, faced with white recalcitrance, Washington concluded that it would have to live with minority rule, particularly in South Africa, where the regime seemed too strongly entrenched to be overthrown by radical nationalists. Fears of major communist advances in Africa – prevalent in the thinking of officials in the 1950s – had receded as officials realised that black Africans were nationalists rather than communists, but they had not entirely disappeared. As the CAF collapsed, Southern Rhodesia acquired a hostile independent black state to her north – Zambia – and lurched to the right with the victory of the Rhodesia Front in December 1962, increasing the danger of radicalised black nationalists challenging, perhaps violently, the power of its reactionary government. Washington's power to influence developments was circumscribed by the need to co-ordinate US policies with the British, something that became increasingly urgent as the white Rhodesian government moved closer to its illegal declaration of independence.

[276] Muehlenbeck, p. 222

Chapter Three: A Most Useful Offset

1: Johnson and Africa

Johnson came to the presidency with little experience of international relations and was much less assured in his handling of foreign affairs than Kennedy, who had always regarded it as his major political interest. Johnson's lack of self-confidence is evident from his remark, "I don't think I will ever get credit for anything I do in foreign policy because I didn't go to Harvard."[277] And his assessment of foreigners was more crudely calibrated than Kennedy's. According to one contemporary account, Johnson was not at ease with people who were "not like folks you were reared with",[278] but nevertheless assumed that everyone, the world over, aspired to the culture, values and material prosperity of the United States. So, although he shared Kennedy's lack of racial prejudice, he responded best to foreign statesmen and politicians who were unashamedly pro-American, especially if they were also fulsome in their praise of him. This is why he liked and respected Africans such as Tshombe and Mobutu, but was much less tolerant than Kennedy of those, such as Nkrumah, who publicly criticised US policy.[279]

Johnson was also more hard-nosed than Kennedy in his assessment of the value of other nations to the USA. Black African nations lacked the resources to offer much assistance to US foreign-policy goals and, by the time he became president, US Intelligence agencies were getting more sanguine about the extent of communist influence in Africa than they had been. In May 1964 the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research reported: "The Soviet Union cannot now rely on a communist apparatus in any African country. Everywhere the communists face the problem of having to deal with large mass parties, generally led by charismatic leaders and intensely African nationalist in orientation." The report dismissed the chances of a communist take-over of the continent. "Africa is too immense and diverse to be 'taken over' by anyone. To state the danger in these terms is also to miss the political dynamics which would be set in motion elsewhere in Africa if a communist regime

[277] Quoted in Fry, p. 265
[278] Quoted in Lyons, p. 247
[279] Johnson Administration officials, like those of the Eisenhower days, demonised black Africans they disliked, including Nkrumah and Nyerere, as mad

were to take over an African state. Many neighbouring states would be propelled toward the West, and the polarization of the continent would be underway."[280] This meant that black African states mattered to Johnson principally because they wielded votes in the United Nations. He indicated his feelings about Africa in unguarded remark made in June 1965. Raging against a State Department official who had inadvertently revealed secret information to the press, Johnson declared that "his ass was going to be briefing people in Africa very goddamn soon".[281] And although Johnson retained most of Kennedy's senior officials, the African Bureau – which continued to differ from the so-called "Europeanists" within the State Department about US relations with black Africa – exercised even less influence on decision-making than it had done in the latter part of Kennedy's presidency. Johnson had not forgotten that Williams had opposed his nomination as Vice-President, nor that his appointment to head the African Bureau had been made, in part, to assuage northern liberals in the Democratic Party unhappy about Kennedy's choice of a Texan as his running mate.

Most historians concur with Terrence Lyons's judgement that "Johnson's preoccupation with Vietnam resulted in the almost complete neglect of Africa".[282] Thomas Borstelmann has summed up the new President's attitude to Africa: "Johnson's relentless political calculations ensured that he would avoid any new American engagement in an area of political turmoil and limited strategic significance to the United States… Africa remained – as it had been for all his predecessors – the lowest priority in, literally, the world."[283] Rusk, in his memoirs, was candid about his lack of interest. "Africa was not high on my list of priorities."[284] Neither he nor the president visited Africa while in office.

Johnson was, however, interested in how Africa perceived America. He and his aides hoped that passage of the major civil rights legislation of 1964 and 1965 would enable him to capitalise on

[280] Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research, 15 May 1964, Africa, Box 76 (1), LBJ
[281] Halberstam, p. 587; Schoenbaum, p. 440; Borstelmann, *Color Line,* p. 176
[282] Lyons, p. 272; See also Thomas, p. 327; Mitch Lerner has challenged the consensus that Johnson was not interested in Africa and suggested that he "displayed more interest in African policy than is often alleged". During Johnson's presidency, Lerner argues, the Americans extended aid, improved educational and cultural links and enlarged the scope of the US Information Service more than previous administrations had done. But this, as Lerner acknowledges in his title, was more about Johnson's use of "soft power" than departing radically from the policies of his predecessors. Lerner, p. 598
[283] Borstelmann, *Color Line*, p. 175
[284] Dean Rusk, p. 274; Rusk confessed to Wilson in February 1968 that he didn't even know that the Rhodesians had a propaganda office in Washington, Memo of a conversation, 12 Feb. 1968, FCO36/194, Kew

Kennedy's favourable legacy in black Africa, and in March 1966 the United States Information Agency reported that, among foreigners, there was "a general belief that things [for black Americans] have changed, will continue to change, and that the change is for the better".[285] However, these positive impressions were tarnished by America's urban violence and by adverse comparisons with Kennedy – White House aide Ed Hamilton bluntly pointed out to LBJ in August 1967: "No matter how one cuts the numbers on visits by African heads of government, the totals for the last four years aren't as impressive as those for 1961-63… President Kennedy had 28 visitors compared with 20 since you took office."[286] Johnson's obsession with how he was perceived, especially in comparison with Kennedy, provided the African Bureau with a small measure of leverage which it did its best to exploit.

2: The Johnson Administration and the Congo

Despite the President's lack of interest in Africa, the Johnson Administration could not ignore the continued instability in the Congo. In June 1964, Mobutu's decision to appoint Tshombe, "the most hated black political figure in Africa",[287] as Prime Minister pleased Johnson who had been "a not-so-secret admirer of Tshombe" and Katangan secession while Vice-President.[288] But the Administration was warned by the CIA in August 1964 that, were the Mobutu/Tshombe forces to be defeated by left-wing rebels, "Extremists would be likely to gain increased influence in Leopoldville."[289] Fearful of the Congo becoming another Cuba, the White House worked with the Belgians to bring in 3,000 of Tshombe's men and their mercenary officers from Katanga.[290] These were supplemented by white mercenaries from South Africa and Rhodesia. However, in October 1964, the rebels captured Stanleyville and seized 2,000 white hostages, some of them missionaries. On 24 November US military transport planes dropped 600 Belgian paratroopers into Stanleyville to rescue them.

[285] Quoted in Dudziak, p. 241
[286] Hamilton, Memo to LBJ, 22 Aug. 1967, Africa, Box 77, LBJ
[287] Borstelmann, *op. cit.,* p. 182. The failure of the Americans to understand black African loathing of Tshombe was demonstrated by the US Consul in Salisbury when he told the Rhodesian Prime Minister in March 1964 that "US opposition was not to the person of Tshombe but to his championship of secession of Katanga, [and] that if we convinced he favored strong, unified Congo this would constitute a new factor in situation." Salisbury to State, 21 Mar. 1964, CFPF, Box 2616, NARA
[288] Halberstam, p. 292; see also Geyelin, p. 38; Cohen, *Rusk,* p. 230
[289] Quoted in Borstelmann, *op. cit.,* p. 183
[290] Lyons, p. 257

Johnson's explanation for his action was: "We couldn't just let the cannibals kill a lot of people."[291] Radio Stanleyville responded to the airlift with a war cry, "Take your machetes and kill the white people. Kill the white people!"[292] Twenty Belgians and two Americans, including a missionary doctor, were killed, but most of the hostages were rescued. The operation also allowed the Congolese army and the mercenaries to recapture Stanleyville and carry out appalling atrocities of their own and brutally suppress the uprising.[293] By mid-January 1965 the revolt had been defeated.

This, however, did not bring stability to the Congo. In August the CIA was warning that, "unless the political leaders turn their attention from infighting to solving the problems which caused the rebellion in the first place, the now relatively dormant insurrection may eventually reawaken".[294] As a result, US officials encouraged Mobutu to seize power, and on 25 November 1965 he carried out a bloodless coup. By June 1967, the CIA was purring: "Although the Congo still faces hard times, its future looks brighter at present than at any time since independence. Opposition elements have been effectively subdued, bringing the country a degree of political stability." Their report praised Mobutu for his "careful and skilful exercise of power" which, they claimed had "brought the Congo to its present pacified position".[295] Historian David Schmitz has summed up Mobutu's importance to the USA: "Given American policymakers' belief in the African nations' incapacity for self-government, he was seen in Washington as the right type of authoritarian military leader, a figure who was necessary for the Congo to protect the nation from communism while it went through the process of modernization in the wake of colonial rule. In addition, Mobutu was seen as a model for leadership and stability in other African countries."[296] Rusk, in his memoirs, rationalised US support for Mobutu, without actually naming him. "Later some people criticised the Kennedy and Johnson administrations for getting involved with the wrong people in the Congo, but frankly I am not one who thinks that political leftists are automatically good guys and rightists the bad guys… The ones we supported via

[291] Quoted in Westad, p. 142
[292] Quoted in Lyons, p. 258
[293] Westad, p. 142
[294] Quoted in Schmitz, p. 30
[295] Quoted in Schmitz, p. 31
[296] Schmitz, p. 34

the UN appeared to us to have the best opportunity to bring about an independent and unified Congo."[297]

The brutality, corruption, venality and grandiose self-glorification of Mobutu's rule, which lasted until his overthrow in 1997, mattered less to the USA than his anti-communism and his willingness to protect Western economic interests. Mobutu was exactly the kind of strong man of Africa that Nixon, in January 1960, had suggested the Americans needed. That Johnson agreed with Eisenhower's Vice-President demonstrates that there were important continuities in official American thinking about post-colonial Africa in general and the Congo in particular. All three administrations that dealt with the Congo crisis wanted to preserve the unity of the state because they believed that its Balkanisation would leave it vulnerable to communist infiltration. This explains their reluctance openly to back the secession of Katanga. But they were also determined to avoid a left-wing regime taking control, even if that meant interfering in Congolese politics, supporting an undemocratic, authoritarian regime and ignoring the wishes of the black African regimes. The Eisenhower and Johnson Administrations regarded the radicalism of the latter with considerable suspicion and, even if Kennedy was ready to be more tolerant of them and did not himself accept the assumptions about black inferiority that pervaded the Washington establishment, racist attitudes clearly survived his presidency. Kennedy himself was unable to escape the obsessive fear that instability in Africa would be exploited by the communist powers. This was why, when pressed by his African Bureau to support the UN in military action against Katanga, he remarked that "it was the better part of valour to go slow with any bold 'New Africa' policy".[298] The domestic bitterness engendered by the Congo crisis prefigured the disputes that were later to characterise the response in America to UDI in Rhodesia.

Section 3: The Johnson Administration and South Africa

Although the US Intelligence agencies did not believe that there was any immediate likelihood of a communist take-over of Africa, fears about racial war and its implications for Western interests

[297] Rusk, p. 281
[298] Quoted in Noer, *Soapy,* p. 253

persisted into the Johnson presidency. In May 1964, the State Department Research Department was telling Rusk that "One of the gravest dangers inherent in the southern African situation is the possibility of large-scale, protracted racial hostility." The State Department believed that any racial conflict "could lead to a sharp diminution of the Western presence, a rise in anti-Western attitudes and actions, and a growth in the influence of indigenous radicals, pro-communists, and crypto-communists".[299] The CIA was pessimistic about the future. "We are convinced that Africa will become increasingly an arena of grave political disorder and turbulence during the next decade."[300]

These fears influenced Washington's belief that the stability of the South African economy was paramount. As Ambassador Satterthwaite put it in April 1964, "Radical change of SA society in a few years to African majority control, as called for by Afro-Asians and SA nationalist African organisations, would disrupt highly-developed SA economy and maintenance of internal security, both of which are necessary preconditions for real progress on race problems."[301] However, the US government was sufficiently aware of the domestic and international pressure against South Africa and the other minority white regimes to indulge in gesture politics. Its embassy in Pretoria held multiracial functions, and in June 1965 the US aircraft carrier *Independence* cancelled a visit to Cape Town because its black crewmen would face apartheid restrictions when ashore. In February 1967 another incident led the US government to stop all operational visits to South African ports. When, in June 1965, the South African government demanded to have sections on civil rights in a USIA film about Kennedy removed, Washington demurred. The South African government responded by banning the film. Historian Thomas Noer concludes, "Such diplomatic fencing was designed to show continued US opposition to apartheid and particularly attempts to apply apartheid to American citizens, but there was no attempt to transform this hostility into stronger official action."[302]

[299] Bureau of Intelligence and Research, 15 May 1964, Africa, Box 76 (1), LBJ
[300] CIA Office of National Estimates, *Communist Potentialities in Tropical Africa*, 1 Dec. 1964, *Ibid.*
[301] Capetown to State, 15 Apr. 1964, Africa, Box 76 (1), LBJ
[302] Noer, *Black Liberation,* p. 171

4: The Johnson Administration and UDI

During the Johnson Presidency politics in Southern Rhodesia became more polarised and this sharpened the divisions within the State Department about how the US should respond. The African Bureau wanted to spur the British Government to be more active in preventing UDI and ensure that it did not agree to Rhodesian independence under white rule. Although Southern Rhodesia was considerably less important to the USA economically and strategically than either South Africa or the Portuguese alliance, the African Bureau was aware that the Administration could burnish its anti-colonial credentials among black African states by criticising the white minority regime and by occasionally distancing itself from the British in the UN when they were perceived to be unwilling to put pressure on the Rhodesian leadership.

But the Bureau had to contend with the pragmatic approach of the "Europeans" who did not wish to add to American commitments by identifying too closely with British efforts to prevent UDI. As Norman M. Pearson of the Consulate in Salisbury put it in a cable to the State Department in January 1964, "To offer real help to the UK involves inevitably the assumption of a degree of responsibility which we do not now have. Many would argue against it as borrowing unnecessary additional trouble."[303] Washington's reluctance to get involved was reinforced by its Salisbury consulate which (until McClelland took over in October 1964) identified with the white Rhodesian regime and made some misleading evaluations of Rhodesian politics. In February 1964, Paul Geren, Pearson's boss, told the State Department that "The peril of a unilateral declaration of independence, if there ever was one, has receded... The Prime Minister is enough of a solid citizen to know that unilateral independence does not pay. He is converting more and more of the Rhodesian Front to this view... Prime Minister Field is still in the saddle of the Rhodesian Front."[304] Yet two months later Field was overthrown by his own party and replaced by Ian Smith, mainly because Field had failed to achieve independence and Smith was known to be ready to seize it illegally if he thought it necessary.

[303] Salisbury to State, 2 Jan. 1964, CFPF, Box 2615, NARA
[304] Salisbury to State, 7 Feb. 1964, CFPF, Box 2616, NARA. In March, Geren reported that "Unilateral declaration will continue [to] be threatened... [but] unlikely to materialize." 10 Mar. 1964, CFPF, Box 2617, NARA

Worried about the danger of UDI, the African Bureau throughout 1964 endeavoured to keep the pressure on both Britain and the pragmatists in the State Department by recommending a more assertive American policy. Williams, in a memo to Averell Harriman of February 1964 lamented that "The US has no 'active' policy vis-à-vis Southern Rhodesia. We have tended to consider it 'a British problem' and to rely upon the British to come up with a solution." Williams thought that the US, by "continuing to place its blind confidence in British sagacity", ran the risk of undermining "our position in the rest of Africa", and he expressed his exasperation with what he saw as British indolence.[305] He wanted the US to use its support for Britain in the UN as a means of applying pressure and suggested that the State Department "inform the British at a high level that the United States will require a satisfactory statement of UK policy to be made public at an early date if the US is to continue to help keep the pressure off the UK during UN treatment of the Southern Rhodesian question this year".[306]

The distance between the African Bureau and British Commonwealth Office was evident at a Washington meeting on 18 April 1964, five days after Smith had replaced Field as Rhodesian Prime Minister. Despite the careful diplomatic language of the minutes, it is possible to detect how frustrated the Americans were with British insouciance. Fredericks, aiming to press the British into action, suggested constituting "a group of sympathetic nations to devise a plan or formula for the resolution of the Southern Rhodesian problem", but Sir Saville Garner, the head of the CRO, brushed this aside because he "saw little hope that the present SRG would be at all receptive toward anything coming from the outside". Garner preferred to place his faith in "the large percentage of Europeans in Southern Rhodesia who are utterly opposed to a unilateral declaration of independence and who want to resume the campaign for real multi-racial partnership". He claimed that a senior Rhodesian minister had "urged the UK to do what it could to reduce external pressures on SR so that these moderate Europeans would have a chance to make their voices heard again". However, when asked "whether there could be some sort of new alignment or coalition" opposed to Smith, Garner confessed that he

[305] Williams to Harriman, 4 Feb. 1964, CFPF, Box 2610, NARA
[306] *Ibid.*

did not really have an answer. The Americans were also unhappy to hear that the British "had no clear idea for a plan" to reconcile the two black nationalist factions. This, Fredericks maintained, should be "a paramount objective for the UK" because the feud "increased the probability of violence and decreased the hope of obtaining compromises with the Africans". Garner was vague when the Americans asked him whether the UK would use troops in certain circumstances, such as nationalist-inspired civil disturbances, a Rhodesian "Sharpeville", or the widespread infiltration of nationalist guerrillas. The final exchange between the two sides indicated that, while the African Bureau wanted to be tough on Smith's government, the British favoured leniency. "Mr. Fredericks thought it might be best to leave the SR out [of the forthcoming Commonwealth Prime Ministers' conference] so as to give them a taste of how cold the world would look to them outside the Commonwealth." Garner demurred: "The Southern Rhodesian might well have the opposite reaction, take it as an insult and decide to go ahead with their plans for unilateral independence."[307]

Despite, or perhaps because of, Garner's lukewarm response, the African Bureau continued to recommend American initiatives. In May, its senior figures discussed the advisability of "a US approach to the British with an offer of generous economic, technical and financial assistance to Southern Rhodesia which would be at least matched by British and/or Commonwealth contributions. The aim would be to provide a carrot so enticing to the people of Southern Rhodesia that they would all agree to terms for an extended period of predetermined duration in which there would be an orderly transition from minority to majority rule".[308] Two months later the Bureau urged that the USA should "act as a catalyst in seeking a solution to the Southern Rhodesian problem through mobilization of sympathetic Commonwealth and African forces" as the policy "most likely to achieve our desired goal of a peaceful transition to majority government in SR over a period of 3-5 years". They also recommended "covert support for national political groups with a goal of unifying them",[309] and wanted the USA to have "the best possible relations" with any nationalist government-in-exile

[307] Memorandum of a Conversation, 18 Apr. 1964, CFPF, Box 2615 NARA; Southern Rhodesia was excluded from the 1964 meeting, largely because of the objections voiced by other Commonwealth members; see Watts, *Rhodesia's UDI,* pp. 89-95
[308] Secret AF Bureau memo, 1 May 1964, BAA, 1958-66, Box 45, NARA
[309] MacKnight to Williams, 9 July 1964, CFPF, Box 2610, NARA

formed in the event of UDI, maintaining that "The lack of effective contact would cut the US off from essential intelligence sources and also from possibilities of influencing the course of events so far as the Africans are concerned both in the exile group and with the independent African states."[310]

The Bureau succeeded in persuading the CIA and the State Department to allocate $50,000 for covert assistance to ZAPU, "in order to keep our lines to Nationalists open and to offset Communist assistance".[311] But George Ball insisted that US policy should follow, not lead, the British. In his reaction to Smith's appointment, Ball had already indicated that the US response would be limited. Although he recognised that UDI was now more likely, he reminded US diplomats in Africa that "US has virtually no leverage to exert which could directly influence SR developments at this time" and that "you should make clear US feeling that UK is responsible party to deal with situation". Ball, like the British, thought that there was sufficient white opposition to UDI that Rhodesian politics might come to their assistance. "Department now giving serious attention to developing US assets [*sic*] among those elements in SR who oppose unilateral independence policy."[312]

Nor were the goals of the African Bureau endorsed by the US mission in Salisbury. In early September, Norman Pearson sent the State Department a series of messages critical of US and British policy towards Southern Rhodesia. He thought that the "US aim to contain communist expansion should have priority over all other objectives on African continent" and that "actions proposed toward independent SR should be measured in relation to that outlook". Suggesting that any US statement of opposition to UDI was "likely to be ineffectual", he stopped short of explicitly endorsing it, but opposed immediate majority rule because "it may be found that immediate African government would greatly facilitate communist penetration and influence in SR and Central Africa". US policies, he thought, needed to "take proper account of fact that GSR is power in SR. Since neither UK, we, nor UN is prepared to support military force to dislodge it, we should probably consider most appropriate

[310] Secret African Bureau Paper, *Southern Rhodesia – US support for SR Government-in-Exile*, 1 Sept. 1964, Box 2618, NARA
[311] McClelland to MacKnight, 3 Aug. 1965, BAA, 1958-66, Box 45, NARA
[312] State to various embassies, 15 Apr. 1964, CFPF, Box 2617, NARA

courses of action for bringing about 'ultimate' not immediate majority rule". He opposed "punitive economic measures" since these would only "facilitate communist entrance" and retard the long-term interests of the Africans. He was also critical of the "current of Pan-Africanism" with which the US had hitherto been content "to float easily" because he thought it was "pushing for destructive course of action toward SR which furthers ends of communism".[313] Pearson wanted American policy to acknowledge that "Both Government and Opposition in SR believe transition to African Government requires long time – not less than fifteen years. Will not accept immediate African majority government. Efforts to bring this about will cause greater resistance to African political advance." He emphasised his view that "Economic and political advance of SR Africans will be greatly delayed by disruption SR economic and political organization and loss of technical know-how presently held by whites."[314]

Although Pearson was not suggesting anything different for Rhodesia than Satterthwaite had recommended for South Africa, he was slapped down peremptorily by the State Department, which requested him to "avoid lengthy messages" while they were busy with the Congo and reminded him that US policy was to stress "British leadership on this issue [and] that USG would not expect to recognize UDI".[315] Pearson's démarche illustrates the tendency of US officials in Rhodesia to absorb and reflect the views of the white community.[316] Although the State Department's response made it clear that the USA would not endorse UDI, the conservatism of the mission in Salisbury was closer to the attitudes of the British and the pragmatism of the senior figures in the State Department than to the views of the African Bureau. The Washington hierarchy refused to endorse Pearson's recommendations, less because it disagreed with them, more because too open a recognition of what Pearson called, "the basic fact that GSR holds political power in SR" would enrage Asian-African opinion and lose valuable support in the UN. And Rhodesia (unlike South Africa) provided the USA

[313] Salisbury to State, 2 Sept. 1964, CFPF, Box 2618, NARA
[314] Salisbury to State, 3 Sept. 1964, *Ibid.,* emphasis is in the original
[315] State to Salisbury, 4 Sept. 1964, CFPF, Box 2618, NARA
[316] The British were aware of this. Pearson "has extremely good relations with Welensky". Washington Embassy to CRO, 29 June 1964; the CRO was "inclined to be sceptical about some of Pearson's reports". CRO to Washington Embassy, 14 Aug. 1964; DO183/314, Kew

with a chance "to display its continued support of and good faith toward responsible African nationalism".[317]

Furthermore, adopting Pearson's recommendations would also complicate relations with Britain while British policy remained opposed to white minority rule in Rhodesia. As a result, the US maintained the policy of loyally abstaining on UN motions that threatened to embarrass the British. When the UN Committee of 24 passed three resolutions in March and April 1964 reiterating the demands made by UNGA resolutions of the previous year – describing Rhodesia as a threat to peace, demanding the release of political prisoners and calling for Britain to convene a constitutional conference – the US delegation abstained each time. Unsurprisingly, the African Bureau lamented that "The US has an almost unbroken record of abstentions which leaves many doubts and much dissatisfaction over our position among the African nationalists and friendly African states."[318] But, in public, Williams backed his government's line that the constitutional impasse between Britain and Rhodesia was not a matter for the UN. He told an audience in Chicago in April, "The Southern Rhodesian question is clearly the kind of problem that is best solved by the principals themselves. There is a need for agreement to be reached among the various elements of the Southern Rhodesian population though consultation, negotiation, and agreement… Should the UN call for an immediate constitutional conference in Southern Rhodesia to arrange for majority rule based on universal adult suffrage and fix and early date for independence? Or might such a categorical blueprint actually prevent European and African leaders from getting together to talk about their political future?"[319]

Senior figures in the State Department did, however, share the African Bureau's exasperation with what they perceived as a lack of British contingency planning for UDI. In late August David Bruce, the US Ambassador in London, was instructed to quiz the British Foreign Office as "more likely than CRO appreciate African and international implications of SR independence question". Washington was worried that UDI could complicate US policies elsewhere in Africa, especially if it were declared

[317] State to various embassies, 2 Sept. 1964, CFPF, Box 2618, NARA
[318] Southern Rhodesia Contingency Paper, 2 July 1964, CFPF, Box 2611, NARA
[319] DSB, 11 May 1964, p. 753

"at time US heavily involved in Congo matters and when OAU meeting Addis on Congo problems", and also feared that white mercenaries from Rhodesia fighting in the Congo could enflame both crises. Not surprisingly, the cable complained that "US ignorance of British plans… seriously hampers US contingency planning and could result in US taking course action at cross purposes with British".[320] Bruce duly spoke to Butler, the British Foreign Secretary, but was fobbed off with the hope that Prime Minister Douglas-Home's forthcoming meeting with Smith might prevent UDI after which the British would be "in a better position to determine future policy".[321] A note from the Foreign Office to the CRO confirms the accuracy of Bruce's account but adds that the meeting included "discussion about the unwisdom of economic sanctions, both in themselves and as a precedent for similar action elsewhere".[322]

For its part, the CRO denied that no planning had been done, and assured the British embassy in Washington that it had "given the most careful consideration to the various courses which would be open to us" in the event of UDI and to "the steps which would be necessary to put them into effect". No further details were supplied because "it was a matter of such delicacy and one which involves top Ministerial decisions which cannot be taken in advance". The message admitted that the CRO could not "possibly have committed ourselves to a view" over "the more difficult question of what we would do about de facto recognition in the long term",[323] which suggests that, even at this stage, British officials were contemplating reaching some sort of accommodation with Smith at a suitable interval after UDI. Given that the British Government appeared to have ruled out the use the use of force and Butler was not keen on sanctions, it is hard to envisage what measures the CRO had in mind for responding to UDI.

[320] State to London, 27 Aug. 1964, CFPF, Box 2617, NARA; even the British Embassy in Washington was "in the dark" but admitted to being "quite relieved at not being informed of whatever contingency plans may exist, since they would probably be such that we could not pass them on to the Americans anyway". Washington Embassy to FO, 28 Aug. 1964, DO183/314, Kew
[321] London to State, 3 Sept. 1964, CFPF, Box 2618, NARA
[322] FO to CRO, 3 Sept. 1964, DO183/314, Kew
[323] CRO to Washington Embassy, 3 Sept. 1964, DO183/314, Kew

The talks between Douglas-Home and Smith to which Butler had referred occurred in London between 7 and 11 September during which Douglas-Home agreed to Rhodesian independence on the basis of the 1961 constitution provided Smith could demonstrate that this was acceptable to the Rhodesian people as a whole.[324] Smith then announced that he would hold a referendum of the white electorate on independence and that the test of African opinion would be through an *indaba* of the 200 tribal chiefs and 500 headmen – traditional representatives of the African population but who were paid by the white government and widely seen as their stooges. The *indaba* was device that, in March, had received some support from Stevenson, the US Ambassador to the UN. He wondered then whether it "might not be a constructive undertaking" since "African nationalists could air grievances and present program".[325] But, when suggested by Smith in September, the British Government made it clear that it would not be an acceptable test of black opinion. It also outraged the nationalists. The US mission in Lusaka told the State Department that ZAPU leaders regarded it as no more than a "window dressing" exercise and that "ZAPU would step up its 'program' (meaning presumably sabotage) if the present situation appears to drag on". Lusaka reported that the ZAPU leadership had little confidence in the British government and they even expected the Tories, if re-elected, to send in troops "to protect kith and kin if ZAPU successful in revolutionary activity". They had warned that "any long delay in progress toward majority government and in eliminating present repressive condition would create such bitterness among Africans that all Europeans, even the most progressive, would suffer effects African hatred".[326]

Norman Pearson, commenting from Salisbury on the London agreement between Smith and Douglas-Home, thought that it had merely "postponed the issue [of UDI] which may arise at the end of the year in a form even more difficult to set aside".[327] He also thought it had consolidated Smith's political position in Rhodesia by enabling him "to carry out his plan to unify the whites behind him on independence under the present constitution and also to proceed with his riskier tactic of supplanting

[324] Wood, pp. 231-37; Blake, p. 365; Young, pp. 146-62
[325] USUN to State, 18 Mar. 1964, CFPF, Box 2618, NARA
[326] Lusaka to State, 24 Sept. 1964, CFPF, Box 2616 NARA; the ZAPU leaders were James Chikerema, Vice-President, and George Nyandoro, Secretary-General
[327] Salisbury to State, 1 Oct. 1964, CFPF, Box 2618, NARA

the African nationalists by the traditional chiefs as the political representatives of the African people". Pearson thought that "the RF's own philosophy and objectives" of entrenching white rule for the indefinite future "are driving it to independence". Pearson also credited Smith with "adroit propaganda and political manoeuvres" which had weakened the position of the white politicians opposed to UDI. He concluded by describing Smith as "a resolute, determined and skilful politician… prepared to deal in a very firm manner with HMG".[328]

This impression that Rhodesia was driving inexorably towards UDI made it all the more urgent for the US to gain a clearer idea of British thinking. But Bruce, in early October, could only report on another frustrating attempt. "Repeated efforts throughout meeting to get these [CRO] officials to be more specific were to no avail. Quite clear that no decisions re possible courses of action have been reached and little or no basic contingency planning appears to have been done."[329] The election of the Labour Government in the middle of the month did not appear to make any difference. Bruce reported to the State Department on 24 October: "Still seem to be approaching problem on wait and see what happens basis and only then decide what do about it. One official remarked, 'All very woolly because we don't know what events will occur after independence.'" Bruce pointed out that contingency planning would be useful, but could elicit nothing more than that the British thought "immediate danger UDI has passed". He then reported that the CRO could not even decide whether to issue a stern warning against UDI or ask the US to do the same.[330]

When Patrick Gordon Walker, the new Foreign Secretary, discussed Rhodesia with Rusk and Ball in Washington on 26 October, it was clear that British thinking remained vague. He told them that "HMG wanted to shock the Southern Rhodesians and stop them if it could" by issuing a statement warning of the consequences of UDI which, he hoped, would "encourage resistance to Smith". But, when Rusk "enquired as to the solidity of the white group" Gordon Walker replied "that it was difficult to say". Nor had the British Government thought through the implications of imposing trade

[328] Salisbury to State, 2 Oct. 1964, *Ibid.*
[329] London to State, 8 Oct. 1964, *Ibid.*
[330] London to State, 24 Oct. 1964, CFPF, Box 2610, NARA

sanctions on Rhodesia. Gordon Walker admitted that the proposed statement "was a little vague on trade" and confessed that the British "did not want to do anything about tobacco". When Ball asked "if HMG would have any problems with economic sanctions in view of the precedent this would create for South Africa", Gordon Walker merely confessed that "this would indeed cause problems".[331]

The indecision within the British Government was a reflection Wilson's own ambivalence about whether to be tough or conciliatory. A week after the election, Pearson sent the State Department a copy of a letter that Wilson had sent to Dr. Elisha Mutasa, Legal Defence and Welfare Secretary of ZANU, on 2 October 1964. In it, Wilson had stressed his party's commitment to majority rule: "The Labour Party is totally opposed to granting independence to Southern Rhodesia so long as the Government of that country remains under the control of a white minority. We have repeatedly urged the British Government to negotiate a new constitution with all of the African and European parties represented, in order to achieve a peaceful transition to African majority rule."[332] And in his memoirs, Wilson made much of the public warning against UDI to which Gordon Walker had referred. Broadcast over the radio in Rhodesia on 27 October, it announced that, "A declaration of independence would be an open act of defiance and rebellion and it would be treasonable to take steps to give effect to it… The British Government would be bound to sever relations with those responsible for such a declaration."[333] However, a few weeks later, Wilson wrote to Smith to assure him that "We have no pre-conceived plan that we wish to impose on your country. We want to look for any line of negotiation that may lead to a satisfactory solution." A second letter implied that he was not wedded to immediate majority rule. "We have an open mind on the timing of independence in relation to progress towards majority rule."[334]

[331] Memorandum of a Conversation, Washington, 26 Oct. 1964, CFPF, Box 2618, NARA
[332] Salisbury to State, 22 Oct. 1964, *Ibid.*
[333] Wilson, p. 25
[334] Wilson's letters to Smith, 17 Nov. 1964 and 27 Nov. 1964, quoted in Ziegler, p. 231

Wilson visited Washington to meet Johnson in December 1964 but Rhodesia was not discussed. This was for two reasons. Firstly, neither side was ready to discuss it; British policy remained vague and the senior figures in the US Administration wanted to avoid any commitment to British policy that might lead to an open-ended US commitment. Secondly, both Wilson and LBJ had more urgent matters to deal with. Wilson's main priority was the parlous state of the British economy. He was particularly anxious to avoid having to devalue the pound – a move he believed would destroy the domestic credibility of his government, which had a Commons majority of just four seats.[335] He was fortunate that the Americans shared his concern. The US Treasury believed that the pound was their first line of defence and feared that a British devaluation would be followed rapidly by speculation against the dollar.[336] Johnson was also keen to ensure that Britain maintained its military presence east of Suez and, if possible, contributed to the American effort in Vietnam, although he was warned before Wilson arrived that the latter was unlikely.[337] While Wilson was in Washington, the Americans buttered him up by stressing the importance of British overseas forces. Britain, Rusk told him, "by virtue of both historical and geographical connections fulfilled a strategic function in many parts of the world which the United States could not attempt, and because they could do so with relatively small forces, the value of their contribution extended beyond the immediate local impact".[338] Some British politicians thought the Americans were also worried about "Singapore becoming another Cuba" if the British left.[339] These American concerns meant that the Administration, despite its exasperation with British indecision over Rhodesia, wanted neither to upset Wilson nor to see British prestige badly damaged by one of its African colonies.

It was no surprise that in Rhodesia both the *indaba* in October and the white referendum in early November overwhelmingly endorsed Smith.[340] The British Government's refusal to accept these as valid tests of popular opinion hardened attitudes in Africa. Roswell McClelland, who had just become

[335] Wilson also had painful memories of the impact of the 1949 devaluation on the Attlee administration in which he had served and remarked to one of his Cabinet colleagues, "Devaluation would sweep us away. We would have to go to the country defeated." Crossman, *Diaries,* entry for 24 Oct. 1964, p. 71
[336] Ponting, p. 50
[337] Bundy to LBJ, 5 Dec. 1964, UK, Box 214, LBJ
[338] Quoted in Colman, *A 'Special Relationship'?,* p. 40
[339] Castle, *Diaries*, entry for 14 Feb. 1966, p. 107
[340] Watts, *Rhodesia's UDI*, p. 25

US Consul General, reported that "publication UKG position... makes further consultation with HMG debateable and hastens next UDI crisis".[341] Smith told a crowd of 600 of his supporters that "whatever that government [i.e. the British] might say, we have set our course. This means independence for Southern Rhodesia – that I can assure you". Smith's posture outraged Black African leaders who, meeting in Dar es Salaam, unanimously agreed that "SR situation becoming more and more explosive" and reiterated their view that Rhodesia should achieve independence only "on same basis as other former British African territories".[342]

The political postures that had been taken up in Salisbury, London, Washington and in black Africa during 1964 remained largely unaltered during 1965. Smith sought to strengthen his domestic political position but continued negotiations with London to strengthen his claim that UDI had been forced on him by British intransigence. Harold Wilson who, in the opinion of one of his Cabinet colleagues, "had a consuming need to conciliate"[343], continued to look for a compromise solution which would prevent UDI and allow him to grant Rhodesian independence without causing irreparable splits in the Commonwealth and the Labour Party. Wilson also wanted to be able to shift the blame onto Smith if a breakdown occurred. In Washington, the Administration also hoped that UDI could be avoided and backed British efforts to prevent it, but the disagreement within the State Department continued about the extent and nature of US involvement. And the black African nations maintained their pressure on Britain in the United Nations. When the year began, British ministers still clung to the hope that internal Rhodesian politics might come to their rescue. In January, George Thomson, the Minister of State at the Foreign Office, told Williams that "British policy was to endeavour to put off a showdown on UDI as long as possible because they hoped… the white settler position would soften to the point that in return for considerable aid they would be willing to alter the franchise favourably to the Black Africans".[344]

[341] Salisbury to State, 22 Oct. 1964, CFPF, Box 2618, NARA
[342] Kampala to State, 19 Oct. 1964, *Ibid.*
[343] Interview with Barbara Castle, BBC Radio 3
[344] Notes on a Conversation, 16 Jan. 1965, GMW, Box 5, NARA

Between 22 and 24 March 1965 a sizable delegation of US officials met their British counterparts in London for talks on Africa. The US team was headed by Averell Harriman – just eleven days into his new role as Ambassador at Large with responsibility for overseeing policy in Africa. This appointment was widely interpreted as a demotion for Williams, who was not part of the US delegation. Williams's biographer, Thomas Noer, has suggested that "The White House felt that Harriman's appointment would signal a new toughness and hard-headedness in policy that had been lacking under JFK."[345] Noer also argues that this was part of a new approach to Africa, pointing out that, under Johnson, "US diplomacy in Africa came to be shaped largely by its relationship to the war in Vietnam. Within a few months of Johnson's taking office the tone of Washington's relations with Africa changed, as there was a sudden and strong stress on blocking communist advances in the region."[346] Washington was particularly fearful of the Chinese because, unlike the Russians, they could project themselves to black Africans as fellow victims of Western racism. Harriman's contributions to the discussions in London suggest that he had been influenced by a CIA paper prepared the previous December which claimed that racial tension in southern Africa could be advantageous to the Communists, and especially the Chinese.[347]According to the US record of the London meeting Harriman thought "the Chinese were having a field day in Mali, and Congo Brazzaville had become a veritable cancer in the heart of Africa".[348] He returned to this theme the following day when he produced a metaphor to replace the domino by emphasising "his view that the Communist threat was like a prairie fire, that there had to be immediate counter-action, or it would spread rapidly".[349] Harriman clear that hard-headed strategic calculation was more important to him than the African Bureau's liberal idealism about black liberation, though he did appear to make an exception for Rhodesia because he could see the value of not allowing another white-ruled regime to be entrenched there. His comparison of race relations in southern Africa with developments in the

[345] Noer, *Soapy*, p. 278
[346] Noer, *Soapy*, pp. 276-77
[347] *Communist Potentialities in Tropical Africa* by Sherman Kent, Chairman of the Board of National Estimates at the CIA, December 1964, Africa, Box 76, LBJ
[348] US-UK Talks on Africa, Part 2, 22 Mar. 1965, pp. 2, 6, CFPF, Box 2785, NARA
[349] *Ibid.,* Part 4, 23 Mar. 1965, p. 1

USA suggested that he shared the traditional US goal of persuading the white authorities to accept the notion of multi-racial partnership.[350]

Significantly, perhaps, Harriman was absent when the meeting discussed Rhodesia in detail; he was content to leave Fredericks and MacKnight of the African Bureau to confer with British officials from the CRO.[351] Unsurprisingly, the British admitted that "they had no neat package to offer, but were still groping towards a solution".[352] However, they were much better briefed on Rhodesian politics than Thomson had been in January because their boss, Commonwealth Secretary Arthur Bottomley, had visited Rhodesia for ten days in February and early March. Sir Arthur Snelling, the Deputy Under-Secretary of State at the CRO, observed that "Smith's political strength was very great. He could ditch his colleagues and still win an election handily." Snelling was also well informed about white attitudes. "Appallingly impressed by the Congo and other events to the North, the whites were convinced that they had no long-term future in a Black African state. They equated African nationalism with Communism. The overwhelming majority of whites wanted independence quickly, preferably by negotiation, although a sizeable minority favoured UDI if no other way was practicable. They regarded independence as necessary to get rid of British influence, which they were convinced favoured a black government in the long run."[353] Snelling also made it clear that the British Government had already ruled out the use of force in the event of Rhodesian UDI: "The present temper of British public opinion ruled out military action." However, he was vague about British policies. Efforts to avoid UDI would be "primarily through diplomatic action and economic and financial action" and the UK hoped that President Kaunda of Zambia might "persuade the Southern Rhodesian nationalists to do something positive to woo the support of the whites".[354]

The US and British records of the meetings differ over the contributions made by the American delegates. Both accounts agree that Fredericks and MacKnight stressed the importance of supporting

[350] *Ibid.,* Part 2, 22 Mar. 1965, p. 6
[351] The British minutes list Harriman as one of the attendees but do not attribute any comments to him, which suggests that it was a mistake to include his name; The Record of Anglo-American Talks, 23 Mar. 1964, DO183/691, Kew
[352] US-UK Talks on Africa, Part 5, 23 Mar. 1965, p. 1, CFPF, Box 2785, NARA
[353] *Ibid.,* p. 2; according to the British minutes, Snelling said that "only a minority actually wanted UDI"; DO183/691, Kew
[354] *Ibid.,* p. 3

Zambia and discussed the building of the Tanzanian-Zambian railroad. Fredericks, according to the US minutes, even hoped it could be a "dramatic package in the development of this area which would divert attention from the external political of Southern Africa".[355] But the British record attributes to MacKnight a more forceful tone than appears in the US minutes. Both accounts agree that he thought that the USA could adopt a "slightly more aggressive position" than Britain but he did not, according to the American version, clearly define what that might entail.[356] According to the British minutes, MacKnight reiterated the African Bureau's views about the importance of black Africa: "Mr. MacKnight said that Dr. Kaunda appeared to offer the only hope of progress in Rhodesia but unless he had a practical guarantee of assistance, there was no reason why he should co-operate. Given the importance of Dr. Kaunda in the total African context, we should be prepared to sacrifice a lot in order to protect him. If Britain was not prepared to do this differences between the American and British approach might grow, as could already be seen by the American refusal to sell T-28 aircraft to Rhodesia. The United States thought it important not to lose any more credit over Rhodesia and not to antagonise African critics further on this issue."

Each set of minutes reflects the domestic considerations of the participants. The American version played down the pressure that Fredericks and MacKnight exerted because they knew that senior figures in the State Department were opposed to pressing Britain into making an open-ended commitment to Kaunda, fearful that the USA would be expected to contribute heavily. And the briefing notes supplied to the British delegates before the meeting provide a clue as to why it suited them to portray the Americans as assertive – it allowed them to justify to themselves keeping the Americans in the dark about the lack of contingency planning. "As the measures which we propose to take in the event of a UDI, including those at the United Nations, have not been finally decided, we do not wish to raise these issues with the Americans at this stage."[357] American assertiveness could provoke the very crisis Britain still hoped to avoid. The British believed that "the risk of a UDI remains grave but it is just possible that progress along constitutional lines can be made… Meanwhile

[355] *Ibid.,* p. 5
[356] *Ibid.,* p. 4
[357] Anglo/American Talks on Africa, Item 7a: Rhodesia, DO183/691, Kew

nothing must be done to risk direct confrontation… President Kaunda has therefore been urged not to take any action himself which would precipitate Rhodesian retaliation".

The issue of the T-28 aircraft to which MacKnight referred clearly illustrated this difference of emphasis. In December 1964 the Rhodesian Government had asked the US Government to sell them between 16 and 20 second-hand trainer aircraft – planes that were "capable of conversion to offensive military use". The British Government agreed that the Americans should refuse but were also anxious not to provide Smith with a pretext for declaring UDI. So the African Bureau accepted the British request that "no US official should in any way intimate to the Rhodesians that British views have influenced our negative decision". The reasons for refusing the sale were a classic restatement of the African Bureau's position on Rhodesia; they were being tough, they said, because "Provision of military aircraft to the GSR from US sources would undermine our public position in Southern Rhodesia… A favorable response would provide the worldwide Communist propaganda mechanism with a ready-made weapon to turn against us in Africa and Asia."[358] But the British wished to appease Salisbury. The CRO informed the African Bureau that the British Government was itself planning to offer replacement aircraft to the Rhodesians "in the hope that a unilateral declaration of independence might be staved off pending delivery".[359] Noel Watson, Garner's deputy in the CRO, revealed to the British High Commissioner in Lusaka an element of cynical calculation in their thinking. The aircraft "would not be available for delivery for at least twelve months, by which time it was hoped that the UDI dust would have settled one way or the other".[360]

British officials were also more sympathetic to their Rhodesian diplomatic counterparts than the African Bureau were, especially after the Rhodesian Government made itself unpopular in Washington by what the Americans called the "exaggerated language and generally unfriendly

[358] Williams to Harriman, 19 Jan 1965, BAA, 1958-66, Box 45, NARA; the GSR representative in Washington told the African Bureau that his government "would be very miffed indeed to find that HMG had been influencing the US against providing the aircraft". Confidential Minute, 29 Dec. 1964, *Ibid.*
[359] MacKnight to Williams, 1 Mar. 1965, *Ibid.*
[360] Secret memo by JA Molyneux, 15 Feb. 1965, DO206/3, Kew

tone"[361] of its response to the T-28 decision. As a result, relations between the African Bureau and Alfred Bentley, the new Minister for Rhodesian Affairs in Washington, were frosty. John Killick of the British Embassy in Washington reported that "Bentley, whom I see quite frequently socially, is I think beginning to feel a little lonely politically and I shall do the best I can to keep him happy."[362] Bentley, shortly after he took up his post in May, complained to MacKnight that he had heard that "Department officials boycotted welcoming reception [in] his honor at British Embassy"[363] and he did not meet Williams until 18 June. The bland American summary of this meeting suggested that Bentley blamed the black leadership in Rhodesia for a "lack of responsiveness" and maintained that those gaoled were "restricted because of intimidation and repression not because of political views". Williams "stressed US still hopeful there can be an accommodation in SR" but warned that "whites cannot 'sit on lid' indefinitely".[364] Killick, whose sympathies were clearly with Bentley rather than Williams, provided a more colourful account and suggested that the meeting "probably gave little pleasure to either". He added, "The Governor, no doubt on a brief from Wayne Fredericks, launched out on a sharp and, to judge from Bentley's account, rather heavy footed denunciation of the Rhodesian Government and all its works… [Williams's] main point seems to have been to urge the Rhodesian Government to show some willingness to make contact with the African leaders in the usual sense of 'starting a dialogue'. Bentley replied in the sense that his Government were ready but the Africans showed no willingness to conduct such a dialogue on any reasonable terms and suggested that the United States Administration might practice [*sic*] what they preached vis-à-vis Hanoi in the context of Vietnam. On this elevated note they seem to have parted the worst of friends."[365]

The Rhodesian Government had already demonstrated the prickliness of its attitude to the USA by protesting to McClelland about a short visit to Salisbury by the civil rights activist James Farmer in January. The US mission had given Farmer a luncheon and asked him to speak to an invited audience of approximately 50 people about civil rights in the USA during his 12-hour stop-over between

[361] London to State, 4 May 1965, CFPF, Box 2620, NARA
[362] Killick to Le Quesne, 1 June 1965, FO371/181873, Kew
[363] State to Salisbury, 20 May 1965, CFPF, Box 2619, NARA
[364] State to Salisbury, 18 June 1965, CFPF, Box 2611, NARA
[365] Killick to Le Quesne, 1 July 1965, FO371/181873, Kew

Lusaka and Nairobi. McClelland was hauled in by the Rhodesian Deputy Prime Minister and rebuked for his actions; his comment on the affair shows that he was less inclined to identify with his white hosts than his predecessors.[366] "Clearly, any sort of manifestation or information which might conceivably suggest to Rhodesian Africans that greater political freedom is desirable is anathema to Van der Byl and Co. (which includes his Nazi henchman, Ivor Benson) and they intend to prevent it at all costs. This is the obverse of their policy of brainwashing the whites which is already well advanced."[367]

Given the frostiness between Washington and the Rhodesian Government in 1965, it is not surprising that the African Bureau wanted a more energetic policy. But they had to battle with others in the State Department who were even reluctant publicly to commit the USA to refuse to recognise a post-UDI Rhodesia.[368] In its public posture in the UN, the Administration continued to abstain on motions concerning Rhodesia because they did not wish to alienate the Afro-Asian bloc by identifying too closely with Britain, but were also alarmed by the stridency of black African demands – like London, they wanted to prevent the invocation of Chapter VII of the Charter and the imposition of mandatory sanctions as this would complicate relations with South Africa and Portugal. The Rhodesian Government's decision to hold elections on 7 May raised the temperature at the UN because the black Africans believed they were a prelude to UDI. In April the Committee of 24 discussed a resolution urging Britain to intervene to cancel them, abrogate the 1961 constitution and introduce majority rule. The US delegation refused Britain's request to vote against the resolution and abstained instead. This was because it "did not differ significantly from resolutions on SR on which US has previously abstained".[369] To mollify London, the decision was accompanied by a statement in support of Britain's efforts to arrange a transition to majority government in Rhodesia.

[366] Kenneth Young, a journalist who published an account of UDI sympathetic to Smith, asserted that McClelland "never concealed his antipathy to the Rhodesian Government", Young, p. 260; McClelland, however, claimed that "the relations the Consulate General enjoys with the present Rhodesian Government, however unattractive some of the latter's attitudes and policies may be, are reasonably good". Salisbury to State, 12 Mar. 1965, CFPF, Box 2610, NARA
[367] McClelland to Chalfin, 15 Jan. 1965, BAA, 1958-66, Box 45, NARA; Van der Byl was the Head of the Rhodesian Information Service
[368] MacKnight to Fredericks, 4 May 1965, *Ibid.*
[369] Rusk to USUN, 15 Apr. 1965, CFPF, Box 2619, NARA

The Americans, along with the British, abstained again when the Committee's resolution reached the Security Council in early May. UNSC Resolution 202 was milder than the Committee's; instead of demanding the cancellation of the elections, it merely drew attention to their "serious implications", but it repeated the call for majority rule. The State Department's instructions to its UN delegation made it clear that US Rhodesian policy took account of wider foreign policy goals. "Commendable UK efforts over past month, plus overriding desirability of maintaining US-UK unity on Vietnam and Dominican Republic, make it important than we abstain on resolution, as UK has requested."[370] However, Stevenson, in explaining the US stance, announced that the USA would not recognise a UDI.

But the African Bureau wanted US policy to be ahead of Britain on Rhodesia. In a paper entitled "US Contingency Planning for Southern Rhodesian UDI" submitted to George Ball in May, the Bureau based its case on the importance of the Rhodesian issue in the United Nations and expressed it in terms designed to appeal to the President. "Developments in SR have made it the principal issue in the larger Southern African problem for the West... Our posture on SR, if the situation worsens, as is likely, will be a major factor in how Africans and the world will judge US African policy."[371] As the paper was presented to Ball just two days before Congress passed the Voting Rights Act, it is not surprising that it also emphasised the electoral potential of Rhodesian policy. "At the same time, domestic US audiences, alert to the racial issue will also be giving SR priority attention." In recommending "an initiative not inconsistent with HMG's position but somewhat in advance of it", the paper repeated the familiar African Bureau mantra about the public relations advantages of an assertive policy: "The US can take actions which will not precipitate UDI – a factor which inhibits the British. This line of action would provide us with a most useful offset to our inability at this time to take effective action on South Africa and Portuguese Africa. It would be consistent with the President's civil rights position." The Bureau recommended that the US announce "an embargo on the sale of arms and ammunition to SR… its continued support for HMG economic and financial

[370] State Department to USUN, 5 Aug. 1965, CFPF, Box 2619, NARA
[371] AF to Ball, 24 May 1965, CFPF, Box 2611, NARA; the emphasis is in the original

measures against SR… a tougher position than on SR in the UN" and that "the US broaden existing discreet contacts with SR African exile groups".[372] The Bureau's concern about America's profile in black Africa was supported by the recommendations of a conference of Washington's African ambassadors in June. They also used an argument calculated to appeal to Johnson: "Occasions should be exploited for the President to pronounce himself on matters of interest to Africans. Too many US public statements on African affairs refer to positions taken and comments made by President Kennedy. Few identify President Johnson with African interests in his own right."[373]

But before the African Bureau memo reached Ball, it had been annotated by his aide, George Springsteen Jr. who pointed out that the British had yet to impose an arms embargo or institute any economic measures against Rhodesia and that by "discreet contacts with SR African exile groups", the Bureau was "talking about slush funds". As with previous Bureau recommendations, this was too much for Ball. Springsteen sent the memo back, saying that Ball "did not wish to get out in front of the UK in the event of UDI". He wanted a much more modest set of proposals and requested "to have the memorandum recast in terms of actions we would take publicly in case of UDI and those which we might take quietly with the SR in advance of UDI".[374] Ball's reservations were supported by Ross McClelland in Salisbury who, though not particularly well disposed towards the Smith regime, wanted a softer policy adopted. He agreed with the British, and not only thought that US policy should include "what might be called the 'carrot' element which should doubtless accompany any 'stick' approach to the SRG" but also wanted an element of appeasement, in particular, "avoidance of actions and attitudes (viz. categorical pressure for one-man, one-vote solution to SR problem, for example) which will force Rhodesians into a corner". McClelland's suggestions for contingency preparations were much closer to Ball's thinking than that of the African Bureau. Rather than a slush fund, McClelland wanted a "hard US look at Rhodesian African Nationalist exiles and of their post-UDI potential" which implied a degree of scepticism about them. He also toned down one of his proposals by scoring through the passage indicated to include a milder phrase. "Start UK thinking

[372] *Ibid*.
[373] Files of Ulric Haynes, Box 1, LBJ
[374] Memo for AF, 28 May 1965, CFPF, Box 2611, NARA

about promotion of an acceptable ~~political alternative to the Smith Government~~ solution to the Rhodesian constitutional problem in the post-UDI period."[375]

The African Bureau's unsuccessful initiative had been prompted in part by the changed political circumstances in Rhodesia. In the May elections, Smith's Rhodesian Front had won all 50 A-roll seats. Just 14 Africans and a single European had been elected on the B-roll and formed the official opposition. Smith hoped that the result would greatly strengthen his bargaining position with Britain for independence on his terms although he was also aware that his principal potential ally – South Africa – was opposed to UDI. As Ken Flower, the Rhodesian Director of Intelligence, recalled in his memoir, "In the numerous discussions I had with South African Intelligence personnel, in their Police and Military headquarters and in their Foreign Ministry, I was left in no doubt whatsoever that the South Africans looked askance at the prospect of UDI. Any support they might offer would come reluctantly and only because of the accident of geography."[376] South Africa's reluctance to endorse UDI stemmed from Boer suspicion of the strong identification of Rhodesian whites with Britain and from the realisation that, once isolated by a UDI, Rhodesia would look to South Africa for succour, economically and perhaps militarily. It also led the Americans and Britain, once UDI had been declared, to hope that South Africa could be persuaded to put pressure on Smith to negotiate and to support sanctions against Rhodesia lest they be extended to South Africa itself.

Ross McClelland in Salisbury was in no doubt that the Rhodesian election had narrowed the room for compromise. On 15 May he interviewed Smith and in June sent the African Bureau a gloomy but perceptive assessment of the current political scene. "The voice of white liberalism, which as recently as a little over three years ago gave 2/3rds support to the 1961 Constitution, with its implication of racial partnership, was completely drowned in the almost unanimous cry for continued 'civilized' white control." He called the election result "Smith's personal triumph… [which] has decisively strengthened his position". He was not optimistic about the likelihood of British economic and

[375] McClelland to Kinsey, 11 June 1965, CFPF, Box 2611, NARA
[376] Flower, p. 32

political sanctions bringing down the Smith regime because, "Short of the imposition of… reciprocally harmful, and hence historically rare economic sanctions, whereby the UK would stand to lose upwards of $100 million in annual exports to Rhodesia, there is unfortunately no assurance the Smith Government would collapse." He also thought that "the emergence of a more moderate alternative to the RF" was highly unlikely in Rhodesia's polarised political climate. And, although he thought that it was "conceivable that the Rhodesians and the British might reach a negotiated settlement on independence", he called this hope no more than "a thin band of light" because it was unlikely that "even Smith could impose on his party and the white Rhodesian electorate… the minimum concessions respecting increased African participation… which Britain would require to justify a grant of legal independence".

McClelland also had some harsh words for "the intransigent attitude of the Pan-African community" and for the Rhodesian nationalists for boycotting the 1962 election, arguing that "their active participation would… have made it far more difficult for the RF government to pass the repressive laws which have enabled them to checkmate the Nationalists". He thought that "the virulent ZAPU-ZANU factional spilt" had "vitiated their effectiveness" and made it easier for the Government to crack down on them.[377] As a result, he recommended that some of the $50,000 "earmarked for assistance to ZAPU" by the CIA be diverted to the black parliamentary opposition party, the United People's Party which had won 10 seats in the May elections. He thought their "political line… more realistic" than that of the Nationalists and their leaders, JP Gondo and Chad Chipuza, "impressively reasonable" men who "could succeed in persuading a substantial number of [the] potential African electorate at least to register as voters and perhaps to support the UPP".[378] McClelland's proposal demonstrates that the traditional US ambition for Africa of achieving multi-racial polities run by moderate black or white leaders remained alive.

[377] *Confidential Paper – The Southern Rhodesian Problem*, 21 May 1965, CFPF, Box 2611, NARA
[378] McClelland to MacKnight, 3 Aug. 1965, BAA, 1958-66, Box 45, NARA

This reflected his recommendation that US policy should be based on "certain realities of the present Rhodesian situation", an attitude which placed him closer to Ball than the African Bureau. These included acknowledgement that "the Smith Government will probably remain in power for some time to come". He thought a serious racial conflict unlikely because the regime was so much stronger than the nationalists and that, should the black African nations mount "an effective guerrilla or military campaign", South Africa would undoubtedly assist the Rhodesian whites. Although he suggested that the US support Britain in the event of UDI, he wanted "subsequent US positions and actions… very carefully weighed" in the light of the realities he had enumerated. "Bearing particularly in mind that the prospects of bringing about the necessary peaceful transition in Southern Rhodesia to African majority rule, certainly over the short term, are poor… US policy… should be sufficiently flexible in its implementation to prevent an admittedly bad situation in that country from becoming worse."[379]

The British Government responded to Smith's electoral victory by formulating the five principles which it would require to be met before granting independence. Formally sent from the Commonwealth Secretary, Arthur Bottomley, to Ian Smith on 21 September 1965, they were also made public and had cross-party support in Britain:

1. The principle and intention of unimpeded progress to majority rule, already enshrined in the 1961 constitution, would have to be maintained and guaranteed.
2. There would also have to be guarantees against retrogressive amendment of the constitution.
3. There would have to be immediate improvement in the political status of the African population.
4. There would have to be progress towards ending racial discrimination.
5. The British Government would need to be satisfied that any basis proposed for independence was acceptable to the people of Rhodesia as a whole.[380]

[379] *Confidential Paper – The Southern Rhodesian Problem*, 21 May 1965, CFPF, Box 2611, NARA
[380] Ponting, p. 147; Good, p. 48; Windrich, p. 40; Watts, *Rhodesia's UDI*, p. 31; Blake, pp. 376-77

Notably absent from this list was the NIBMAR requirement (No Independence Before Majority African Rule); Wilson's government appeared to have reneged on its October 1964 promise to ZANU. Wilson's biographer Philip Ziegler certainly thinks so. "If he could get terms that could plausibly be presented as protecting the long-term interests of the Africans he would hand over to a white regime immediately."[381] The five principles also contained no demand for the introduction of a franchise based on the principle of one man, one vote. But, as Elaine Windrich (who drafted Wilson's letter to ZANU) has pointed out, the Labour Party had never been as unequivocally committed to one man, one vote as it had been to NIBMAR. "A Labour Government would be obliged to negotiate a settlement acceptable to both sides, and it was perhaps for this reason that the party took a more cautious line on this divisive issue."[382] Wilson believed that the five principles gave him scope for negotiating a settlement with Smith, but the signals emanating from Salisbury were that the Rhodesian regime was preparing for UDI.

These suspicions had been reinforced by the Rhodesian Government's announcement in late July that it was appointing Harry Reedman, an ex-minister, as its diplomatic representative to Lisbon, in defiance of the constitutional convention that Britain controlled Rhodesia's external affairs. This raised the temperature in several capitals. In August, Bruce reported that "HMG remains adamant against assignment" and "will take a very serious view if GOP [Government of Portugal] receives SR 'diplomatic' representative".[383] The issue afforded Bentley another acrimonious meeting in Washington, this time with Edward Mulcahy of the African Bureau. Mulcahy reported that "Bentley went on at length and with vehemence to state Southern Rhodesia's case" insisting that, legally, "it was only necessary to inform" London about the appointment. Bentley claimed that the Rhodesians had found British prevarication over the issue "maddening".[384] Mulcahy ended the interview by telling Bentley he thought "the Rhodesians were now the aggressors and were instituting a clear provocation which the UK would have no choice but to react against in the most forceful manner".[385]

[381] Ziegler, p. 232
[382] Windrich, p. 31
[383] London to State, 20 Aug. 1965, CFPF, Box 2619, NARA
[384] Memorandum of a Conversation, 10 Sept. 1965, CFPF, Box 2619; the emphasis is in the original
[385] Memorandum of a Conversation, 10 Sept. 1965, CFPF, Box 2619, NARA

In practice, however, there was little the British could do. Wilson told Ball in early September he thought the Portuguese Government was being duplicitous. "The Portuguese say they won't receive such an individual" but the Rhodesian Government "has announced that Portugal is taking Reedman as an 'accredited diplomatic representative'".[386]

Bentley's unhappy encounters with members of the African Bureau led him, in the opinion of McClelland, to misrepresent the real views of the US Government towards Rhodesia: "GSR and RF circles, no doubt encouraged by reports of SR Mission in Washington, tend discount previous USG warnings as reflection views limited AF sector in Department and not those of USG as whole. With vast capacity for self-delusion GSR thinks US opinion in other quarters such as DOD [Pentagon] and Congress, really more understanding toward SR than State Department." Bentley was not entirely wrong about Congress, but McClelland wanted Washington to disabuse Smith of any hope that the US Administration was sympathetic as the Rhodesian premier set off for further talks in London.[387] Fredericks and Goldberg also both urged Ball to restate the US position because it would "serve to strengthen Prime Minister Wilson's hand in dealing with Smith".[388] So, with the caveat that London should first agree, Ball authorised McClelland to request an urgent meeting with Smith and deliver an unambiguous message advising him against "an ill-considered and irrevocable unilateral action on the part of your government" and emphasising that "the United States Government does not intend to deviate from its course of strong support for Her Majesty's Government's position now and – if it occurs – after a unilateral declaration of independence".[389] However, this was too much for the British who "concluded that such a message would be premature and possibly counter-productive at this stage and suggested that United States Consul-General should not go further at present than making a brief oral approach expressing United States Government's concern at deteriorating situation."[390] Wilson may have hoped that his talks with Smith in London in early October would achieve a breakthrough. But, according to Wilson's biographer, Ben Pimlott, Smith agreed to the meeting

[386] Memorandum of a Conversation, 9 Sept. 1965, CFPF, Box 2606, NARA
[387] Salisbury to State, 28 Sept. 1965, CFPF, Box 2611, NARA
[388] Fredericks to Ball, 28 Sept. 1965, *Ibid.*
[389] State to Salisbury, 29 Sept. 1965, *Ibid.*
[390] Foreign Office to Washington Embassy, 2 Oct. 1965, DO183/691, Kew

merely "for form's sake"; it was another attempt on his part to locate the blame for breakdown in London. "Smith did not intend the visit to succeed, and, accordingly, it did not."[391]

Smith's Intelligence chief, Ken Flower, who had counselled against UDI for fear of a British military strike, has suggested that, while Smith was in London, Wilson had intimated that the British would not use force to oppose UDI. "When Smith returned from London… he reacted to some of my representations of British threats with the significant comment that 'It's not practical politics.' It was the first time I heard him use a phrase he was often to repeat."[392] It is quite conceivable that Smith was given this impression while in London because the British Government had ruled out the use of force long before. Just two weeks after the Labour Government took office, Bruce was telling the State Department, "on military front, UK has no RPT no disposition send in troops".[393] In January, a briefing note prepared for the Foreign Secretary's forthcoming meeting on Rhodesia with Averell Harriman, stated "We shall need the help of the American government in resisting measures which are politically impossible (e.g. military action)."[394] Foreign Office minister George Thomson was even more explicit when he told Williams in April that British military intervention in Southern Rhodesia "would be impossible for any British Government in present circumstances. Intervention would be an act of invasion which would be resisted and it could only result in British troops fighting each other in a civil war".[395] Wilson himself told Rusk in May that he "considered impossible" the deployment of British troops.[396] This attitude was welcomed in Washington. Ball was worried that, if the British used force in Rhodesia, they would request American help. On 15 October 1965, Ball had a meeting with Tory MP and former Commonwealth and Colonial Secretary, Duncan Sandys, "who raised the question of Southern Rhodesia and said he assumed the US would not support the use of force. The Under Secretary replied that we would not."[397] Ball is unlikely to have admitted to an Opposition politician something he had not already communicated to the British Government.

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[391] Pimlott, p. 368
[392] Flower, p. 47
[393] London to State, 31 Oct. 1964, CFPF, Box 2610, NARA
[394] Briefing for Secretary of State's meeting with Harriman, January 1965, DO183/691, Kew
[395] Record of a Conversation between George Thomson and Governor Williams, 15 Apr. 1965, DO183/691, Kew
[396] Memorandum of a conversation, 14 Apr. 1965, CFPF, Box 2618, NARA
[397] Memorandum of a conversation, 15 Oct. 1965, *Ibid.*

The Americans had their own reasons for opposing the use of force in Rhodesia. By 1965, their taste for foreign intervention, especially in Africa, had become severely circumscribed. Early in March Johnson had fatefully escalated the Vietnam War by sending in American troops. And in April US marines had been deployed in the Dominican Republic, ostensibly to protect American citizens threatened by civil war but, in reality, to forestall any danger of a left-wing government taking power.[398] From the President's point of view, the Dominican crisis turned out well as the US was able to install a government it approved of, but Johnson was warned by his pollster that "one in five [Americans] disapprove of sending Marines to the Dominican Republic. The main reason is that we're butting into other people's affairs".[399] In June, Johnson had again sent US planes and troops into the Congo but faced criticism from conservative senators in Congress for doing so because they believed that the US had no business to be involved.[400] The American help enabled the anti-communist Mobutu to consolidate his rule, and guaranteed that western economic interests in the Congo would be unaffected, allowing the US Government to withdraw from an area that had been threatened to drag it into a messy racial war. In July 1965, Johnson's aide Bob Komer suggested that, "On the Afro-Asian front, only Africa looks better in general and even there the pressing issues of Southern Africa could put us behind the eightball again… How many problems do we want to tackle at one time – shouldn't some at least be put on the back burner?"[401] Rhodesia, principally a British concern, was an obvious issue for parking there, if possible.

The American Administration also had strong views about where it wanted British military power deployed. Since October 1964, British troops had been policing the so-called 'Confrontation' between the Federation of Malaysia and Indonesia over the border in Borneo. The Americans wanted the British to maintain their presence in the Far East (and would have welcomed a British fighting contingent in Vietnam) as it made repeatedly clear to the British throughout the Johnson Presidency. Dean Rusk, a month after UDI had occurred, gave an off-the-record interview to Alastair

[398] Johnson, p. 188
[399] Dallek, p. 267
[400] Woods, *LBJ,* pp. 765-66
[401] Quoted in Westad, p. 152

Hetherington, editor of *The Guardian*, in which he made it clear that, if British forces were to be deployed anywhere, he wanted them fulfilling their SEATO, CENTO and NATO obligations, and that "it would be unfortunate for the US to be isolated in these commitments… We do consider it important that Britain maintain its global responsibilities to the very best of its ability".[402] With the British Government anxious to find ways of cutting its defence budget, a war in southern Africa would be a very unwelcome distraction for both Britain and the USA.

However, American exasperation with what they perceived as British lack of contingency planning for UDI increased during the autumn. At the end of September the US Embassy in London advised Washington that the British Government had still not made up its mind "in deciding how far it should go in imposing economic restrictions against GSR in event UDI" because Commonwealth pressure for extensive measures had to be balanced against the cost to Britain's balance of payments. The message went on to warn that "One important factor in British decision is their belief USG has given firm assurance of support and cooperation on whatever course HMG takes in reaction to UDI. If, therefore, USG has any question about unqualified support and is concerned about eventual HMG decision... with possible increased calls for US support for UK balance of payments… we feel USG should express its doubts known [*sic*] to British soonest."[403] This alarmed Ball who responded the same day with a strongly worded message for the London embassy.

> Our support for HMG position on UDI is not rpt not without qualification. We cannot undertake, for instance, to make up any balance of payments losses – whether they be 50 million pounds or 200-300 million pounds – which UK suffers as result of sanctions imposed in event of UDI… In short, we are not in position now to give unqualified support to UK economic proposals in event of SR UDI and British should be aware that our political support is not rpt not to be construed as blank check for support in other spheres… Avoid making it possible for HMG to seize upon our yet-to-be-determined ability or inability to follow the UK fully or partially on sanctions or of our unwillingness to offset balance of payments losses as excusing them from taking action or permitting them to place blame for lack of action at our door particularly in justifying themselves to other Commonwealth countries.[404]

[402] Memo of Conversation, 9 Dec. 1965, CFPF, Box 2607, NARA; SEATO and CENTO were anti-Soviet alliances systems, modelled on NATO, that the US and UK had created in the Far East and Middle East respectively, but neither was as strong as NATO
[403] London to State, 29 Sept. 1965, CFPF, Box 2611, NARA
[404] State to London, 29 Sept. 1965, UK, Box 208, LBJ

A few days later Ball warned US embassies in Africa "to refrain from any public statements regarding economic sanctions which might serve only to promise more than we might be able to deliver".[405]

Ball endeavoured to repeat his government's reluctance to underwrite a potentially open-ended commitment when he, and other senior members of the US Administration, met a team of British officials, headed by Michael Stewart, the Foreign Secretary, in Washington on 11 October. However, the British and American minutes of the meeting differ in their accounts of how emphatically he did so. Both accounts agree that Stewart held out his begging bowl. According to the American minutes, "The Foreign Secretary said that unfortunately some of the economic measures and possible Rhodesian retaliatory action against Zambia might undo some of the good work which has been done, with US help, to strengthen sterling. He said that the UK hoped, if financial difficulties for sterling arise from the economic measures taken, that the US will give further help."[406] Both sets of minutes confirm that Ball's response was discouraging and that he referred to potential Congressional opposition to US action against UDI. But only the British mentioned that he added that this was "because of its relationship to the Civil Rights question in the United States".[407] Both accounts agree that Ball suggested that the US could help the UK on tobacco "through medium-term commodity credits" but that he offered little else unless the UN imposed sanctions under Article 41 of the Charter. According to the British minutes, Ball said "this would give the President almost unlimited power" – a claim significantly missing from the US minutes. When discussing the estimated loss of £200m to Britain's balance of payments in the first year should Rhodesia cut off Zambian copper exports, the American minutes were emphatic. Ball and Rusk "gave the UK representatives no encouragement regarding the willingness of the US to give additional support to sterling in these circumstances".[408] The British, by contrast, chose to suggest that US help might still be available. Ball, they recorded, "could not predict straight away the ability of the United States to give additional support for sterling in these circumstances. Mr. Rusk confirmed that he had no authority to make a commitment on this

[405] State telegram, 2 Oct. 1965, CFPF, Box 2606, NARA
[406] Memorandum of a conversation, 11 Oct. 1965, CFPF, Box 2618, NARA
[407] US/UK Discussions on Southern Rhodesia, 11 Oct. 1965, FO371/181893, Kew
[408] Memorandum of a conversation, 11 Oct. 1965, CFPF, Box 2618, NARA

question".[409] The Americans minutes also omit entirely Stewart's renewed request for US financial help at the end of the meeting.[410] As a result, the two sides came away with different interpretations of what had been agreed, so much so that Rusk felt it necessary to tell Bruce to emphasise to the British that asking for further financial help would be an "unreasonable request due to heavy support we already giving sterling".[411]

The Washington meeting had taken place against a background of gossip in both capitals "attributed to US sources to effect that HMG would not repeat not take vigorous action in case of UDI unless substantial financial aid forthcoming from USG".[412] Although officials on both sides hastened to deny them, these rumours of disagreement between the USA and Britain coincided with signs of confidence among Rhodesian officials (doubtless encouraged by Bentley) about the attitude of the US Government to their cause. Early in October a senior counsellor in the Rhodesian office in Washington thought it worthwhile to speak to an official at the White House and suggest to him that "SRG would like USG to hold off hostile nations while SRG worked out independence 'in its own way'". Although the counsellor was urged "to pass on to SRG that US support for UK represents a firm commitment"[413], Smith himself was sufficiently confident about the mood in Washington to tell his Security Council meeting on 19 October that "In the United States of America the Rhodesian 'problem' had now reached the table of the President, and some criticism over its past handling had been directed at Mr. Mennen Williams and the State Department. The American Service Chiefs were sympathetic."[414]

Despite the failure of his London talks with Smith in early October, Wilson hoped his own diplomatic skills could avert UDI and decided to travel to Salisbury himself. Many of his Cabinet colleagues

[409] US/UK Discussions; *op. cit.*
[410] *Ibid.*
[411] State to London, 22 Oct. 1965, CFPF, Box 2606, NARA
[412] State telegram, 2 Oct. 1965, *Ibid*.; Memo by Le Quesne, 2 Oct. 1965, FO371/181893, Kew
[413] State to London and Salisbury, 12 Oct. 1965, CFPF, Box 2611, NARA; the document does not name either the Rhodesian counsellor or the White House official
[414] Flower, p. 248

were horrified – Richard Crossman compared it to Neville Chamberlain's trip to Munich.[415] Wilson was not to know that, before he arrived in Salisbury on 25 October, the Rhodesian Government had already committed itself. According to Ken Flower, "The fateful decision to go for UDI was taken at a planning session of our Security Council on 19 October."[416] Not surprisingly, Wilson found his visit an uncomfortable experience. As he later wrote of his reception in Salisbury, "I could not help suspecting that they had already decided that they were going to assume their independence – illegally – in the very near future… [and that they were] asking me to agree, virtually at pistol-point, to fall into line with their wishes."[417] Nevertheless, while in Salisbury, what Barbara Castle called Wilson's "typical indiarubber cheerfulness"[418] enabled him to find a glimmer of hope amid the gloom, and finally convinced him that pressure from the United States on Smith might be helpful. His lengthy cable to Johnson from Salisbury on 29 October, though not optimistic about the chances of a settlement, still suggested that there were reasons for hope.

> There is just the slightest chance that catastrophe may be avoided. I have today pulled out all the stops in working on Smith and have put to him a reasonable alternative to a UDI which no rational man could refuse, namely a Royal Commission… A message direct from you to Mr. Smith delivered through your Consul General here in Salisbury would be of infinitely greater value than a message delivered through me… since I have found some doubt here in Salisbury not only in government circles, but also more generally, about the attitude of the United States to a UDI.[419]

The US Government obliged immediately and, on the same day, McClelland was instructed to deliver a message from Johnson to Smith: "We are convinced that a unilateral declaration of independence would be a tragic mistake which would serve the true interests of no-one. The United States would have to make known its strong opposition to any such decision, and we do not intend to change our course of firm support for the position of the British Government after any such unilateral declaration."[420] Before he could see Smith, McClelland reported to Washington (presumably briefed

[415] Crossman, *Diaries,* entry for 21 Dec. 1965, p. 418
[416] Flower, p. 47
[417] Wilson, p. 167
[418] Castle, *Fighting*, p. 387
[419] Personal message from PM to US President, 29 Oct. 1965, FO371/181893, Kew
[420] NSF, Rhodesia, Box 97, LBJ Library

by Wilson's delegation) that, in the course of "a stormy two-hour session" between the British and Rhodesians, "Smith as much as admitted GSR had decided on UDI and would have taken it on Oct 22 if Wilson had not intervened".[421] The following day McClelland's cable indicated that Johnson's message had made no difference. "[Smith] received it in his usual disarmingly reasonable manner" but had commented that "being small country SR did not take kindly to threats which served no good purpose". Smith had emphasised his continued willingness to negotiate but did not rule out UDI. Instead, he stressed that his government "reserved right as always to act in best interests SR as they saw them".[422]

For the next few days the Rhodesian Government and British authorities haggled over the terms of reference for the Royal Commission but neither was prepared to make substantial concessions. Wilson, at a press conference on 30 October before his return to London, publicly ruled out the use of force against UDI. "If there are those in this country who are thinking in terms of a thunderbolt, hurtling through the sky and destroying their enemy, a thunderbolt in the shape of the Royal Air Force, let me say that this thunderbolt will not be coming."[423] Wilson's Defence Minister, Denis Healey, later called this a "classic strategic blunder".[424] Ken Flower agreed and suggested that Wilson's declaration immeasurably strengthened Smith's hand. "Smith was holding fewer cards at that stage, knowing that neither his Army nor his Air Force would oppose force with force… By making this statement Wilson had removed any immediate prospect of a negotiated settlement and had cleared the way for the RF government to take matters into its own hands."[425] However, Flower also suggested that Smith knew from his early-October visit to London that the British would not use force and that a decision for UDI had been taken in Salisbury on 19 October. If so, Wilson's declaration would not have made any difference. Wilson's purpose was to emphasise to black

[421] Salisbury to State, 29 Oct. 1965, *Ibid.*
[422] Salisbury to State, 30 Oct. 1965, *Ibid.*
[423] Windrich, p. 49; Pimlott, p. 371; Flower, p. 51; Wilson repeated his statement in the House of Commons: HC Deb 1/11/65, Vol. 718, Col. 634
[424] Healey, p. 332
[425] Flower, p. 51

Africans, the British left, the international currency markets and perhaps also to Washington, that UDI would not be followed by military action.[426]

When the Rhodesian Government made its illegal declaration of independence on 11 November, there was disappointment, but little surprise, in London and Washington. In a bid for American sympathy (given that Rhodesia was the first British colony since 1776 to make an illegal declaration of independence), the declaration was a pastiche of Jefferson's original. It claimed that the Rhodesian Government was acting in the interests of "the people of Rhodesia" but, unsurprisingly, omitted any reference to the "self-evident" truth "that all men are created equal". The repeated demand for "sovereign independence" sat awkwardly with the protestation of "unswerving loyalty and devotion to Her Majesty the Queen".[427] The signing ceremony even took place beneath a portrait of the Queen.

In justifying what they had done, Rhodesian spokesmen made much of their parallels with eighteenth-century America – they, too, believed they were merely standing up for their long-held rights against an oppressive and insensitive government in London. A fortnight after UDI, John Howman, the Rhodesian Minister of Information, defended his government's action as defending civilisation against a destructive ideology.

> The British Government has sold out to an ideology that sterilizes creative political thinking. To satisfy an abstract principle that political power must be exercised on the basis of a counting of heads no matter what may be in them, they are prepared to destroy civilization itself. It is intellectual imperialism. We were facing a cold fanaticism… To say that thousands of our people are not ready for the modern world is not racism. It is plain simple fact.[428]

These arguments resonated strongly with many Americans, particularly those on the right, who were alarmed not only by the developments in post-colonial Africa but by the domestic urban unrest that, for many of them, was an inevitable consequence of America's civil rights revolution.

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[426] Wilson was aware that a collapse of sterling had ended Eden's Suez adventure. According to Robert Good, "When Wilson declared 'no force in Rhodesia' he was talking as much to Britain's financial creditors as to any other audience." Good, p. 61

[427] Armitage, pp. 243-45

[428] Quoted in Young, p. 296

Chapter Four: Closely Interested Observers on the Side Lines

1: The Johnson Administration and Rhodesia after UDI

Two weeks before UDI occurred, White House aide Bob Komer wrote an anguished memo to his colleague McGeorge Bundy expressing his anxiety about its potential consequences for the USA. "UDI will create a mess 10-20 times worse than we've got now. How George Ball can say it wouldn't create much of a problem for us passes understanding. It could be worse than the Congo, with heavy UN and African pressure on us to get in (plus domestic pressure from the civil rights lobby here)."[429] Komer was not alone in fearing chaos in southern Africa, nor were such concerns easily assuaged. A State Department paper of January 1967 also spelt out the stark implications for the USA of African racial conflict and the dilemma it would pose. "Our goals are to avoid a racist war in Southern Rhodesia and serious deterioration in race relations elsewhere in Africa (particularly Zambia)... A racial conflict in Southern Rhodesia would be difficult to keep from spreading into other areas both to the north and south. It would be difficult for the United States to remain totally aloof from such a conflict and we would be faced with the possibility of being urged to support either the 'white settlers' for the sake of stability or the 'black nationalists', who would probably have Communist backing, for the sake of our position in Africa and in other non-white countries in the world."[430]

As members of the Johnson Administration were all too aware, UDI complicated the racial dimension of the international and domestic problems they faced. It occurred just three months after the shocking riots in the Watts area of Los Angeles: disturbances which had involved over 30,000 people, left 34 dead, more than 1,000 injured and caused approximately $35 million of damage to property.[431] Watts stunned Johnson, who was proud of his Administration's legislative achievements in abolishing Jim Crow.[432] Although reluctant to abandon his attempts to assist America's deprived black communities, he nevertheless "felt compelled to mute his public commitment to black rights and opportunities".[433]

[429] Komer to Bundy, 29 Oct. 1965, NSF, Files of Robert Komer, Box 13, LBJ
[430] State Department paper, *Southern Rhodesia*, Jan 1967, Meeting Notes File, Box 1, LBJ
[431] Patterson, p. 588
[432] Quoted in Woods, *LBJ*, p. 591
[433] Dallek, p. 224

This might have included ignoring the black liberation struggle in southern Africa, given that African American civil rights activists had closely identified their own cause with the black nationalist and liberationist movements and with the struggle against minority white rule in southern Africa in particular. Indeed, American disengagement from Africa is precisely what was later recommended by one White House insider. "Africa is a shambles and will continue to be one in the foreseeable future – any efforts on our part to straighten things out (however commendable they may be in moral terms) will be at best useless, at worst counter-productive."[434]

Ian Smith's assiduous efforts to cultivate Rhodesia's image in the USA and his protestations of support for US policy in Vietnam could well have appealed to a president who regarded a foreign leader's attitude to America as much more important than his democratic credentials. Nor did Johnson have any personal motive for helping Harold Wilson whom he is reported to have described as "a little creep".[435] He resented both Wilson's refusal to send British troops to Vietnam and his attempts to act as a peacemaker in the conflict. Ambassador Dean commented that Johnson was unlikely to decide "any important line of policy… simply out of love for the British and what they mean in the world… when there is nothing in it for the United States".[436] Furthermore, the Administration was well aware that any American involvement in the crisis courted domestic unpopularity. On the one hand, African Americans and liberals wanted the US to goad the British into taking tougher actions against Smith than either London or Washington wanted. On the other hand, as Ball's warnings to the British before UDI made clear, measures to bring down Smith's government would be unpopular with the white, conservative Democrats in Congress whom Johnson had alienated by pushing through his civil rights legislation.[437]

But opposing UDI in Rhodesia provided the Johnson Administration with an opportunity to make some low-cost gains. When, in November 1965, Arthur Goldberg, the US ambassador to the UN,

[434] Roche to Moyers, 6 Sept. 1966, EX CO 1-1, Box 7, LBJ
[435] Raymond Seitz, *Over Here*, London, 1998, p. 316; Ball maintains that "Johnson took an instant dislike" to Wilson; Ball, *Pattern* p. 336; Bruce also thought that Johnson had "an antipathy" for Wilson, Bruce, *Diaries*, entry for 22 Mar. 1965, p, 199
[436] Quoted in Colman, 'Patrick Dean' in Hopkins, Kelly, Young (eds.), p. 152
[437] According to one Mississippi journalist, Southerners denounced Johnson as a "turncoat son-of-a-bitch." Fry, p. 273

wanted to remind Rusk of the importance of a principled US stance, he was also (albeit unwittingly) expressing its propaganda value to the Administration. "Africans, at least in UN, look not only to British but also to US for solution of problems of Southern Africa. On many aspects of these problems we are unable satisfy them. SR seems to me an exception... I know of no better opportunity for US to take positive action along lines that will do much to improve our position and prestige in Africa, which so often is eroded by positions we take on Portugal and South Africa. A demonstration of our determination to take firm action in defense of human dignity in Africa could also be helpful with many of those who question the bona fides of our actions in defense of similar principles elsewhere."[438] Because Rhodesia was strategically and economically much less important to the USA than South Africa and Portugal, supporting British and UN efforts against white minority rule in Rhodesia did not risk losing important Cold War allies.

Komer, like Goldberg, was aware of the potential international propaganda value to the USA of its policy in Africa. Two weeks after UDI, he suggested to Johnson that "a few rousing speeches will buy us more than $200 million in aid [could do]". He then observed that the US attitude to the white minority regimes in southern Africa and "the ruckus over Rhodesia" mattered more to black African leaders than Asian or European issues. He stressed the need to appease them.

> As Arthur Goldberg keeps pointing out, we need the 36 African UN votes, and these 36 countries will be looking more at where we stand than at what we give them. They won't be responsive to the case for gradualism, but will be quick to ask whether US opposition to racism at home is also our policy abroad. Such questions are also likely to be asked increasingly by civil rights groups here at home. Finally, we are in competition with the Soviets and Chinese, who will jump to exploit too much US waffling on these issues. Thus, we'd argue that the best and cheapest way to advance US interests in Africa would be a clear US stance on the southern third of Africa.[439]

Johnson took Komer's advice and, six days later, sent Rusk a memo asking for recommendations about how to implement such a policy. "I request the State Department, in cooperation with other appropriate agencies, to submit recommendations by 15 December 1965 on: (a) Strengthening the

[438] Goldberg to Rusk, 1 Dec. 1965, CFPF, Box 2607, NARA
[439] Komer to Johnson, 23 Nov. 1965, Africa, Box 76, LBJ

proposed speech [on US concern for African problems] to restate more forcefully US support of independence and majority rule in Africa, perhaps using Rhodesia as a case in point; (b) A proposal for an occasion when such a speech should be made; and (c) Other actions which can be taken to help toward peaceful solution to the problems of self-determination in Southern Africa."[440]

It was not until May 1966, the third anniversary of the founding of the Organisation of African Unity, that Johnson found a suitable opportunity for such a speech. In a clear bid for black African support, he spoke to a large gathering at the White House which included the ambassadors of the 36 OAU countries.

> The Government of the United States cannot… condone the perpetuation of racial or political injustice anywhere in the world… As a basic part of our national tradition we support self-determination and an orderly transition to majority rule in every quarter of the globe. These principles have guided our American policy from India to the Philippines, from Vietnam to Pakistan. They guide our policy today toward Rhodesia. We are giving every encouragement and support to the efforts of the United Kingdom and the United Nations to restore legitimate government in Rhodesia. Only when this is accomplished can steps be taken to open the full power and responsibility of nationhood to all the people of Rhodesia – not just six percent of them.[441]

The advantage to the US Government of taking a strong rhetorical line on Rhodesia was that the "other actions" Johnson had mentioned to Rusk consisted initially of little more than support for Britain's sanctions against the break-away regime in Salisbury. Had Johnson been serious about not condoning "racial or political injustice" his Administration might have taken stronger measures against South African apartheid, which was worse than the racial policies of the Rhodesian regime. Similarly, his remark earlier in the speech about aspiring "to secure the right of self-government [and] to build strong democratic institutions" was belied by his support for Mobutu. Johnson knew that black Africans thought he "viewed African policy with much less zeal than the late President John F.

[440] Johnson to Rusk, 29 Nov. 1965, *FRUS*, *1964-68, Vol. XXIV*, Doc. 203
[441] *The American Presidency Project*, Lyndon B. Johnson, 243 – 'Remarks at a Reception Marking the Third Anniversary of the Organization of African Unity', 26 May 1966

Kennedy".[442] Furthermore, his aide, Bill Moyers, had advised him that the speech would be important "for its impact on the civil rights people at home; it is a cheap way to keep them quiet on at least one issue".[443] Moyers also pointed out another advantage. "Bobby Kennedy goes to South Africa next week. He will try to get ahead of you on the question of political liberty for Negro Africans. Your speech pre-empts the stage. I think it would be wrong for us simply to offer economic assistance and material aid while Kennedy trots off making hay on the intangible issue of the rights of man."[444]

However, Washington remained divided, as it had been before UDI, over how far its anti-Smith rhetoric should be turned into policy. This is partly why, as the British Foreign Office observed in May 1966, "The United States administration have repeatedly stressed that they regard the solution of the Rhodesian problem as a British responsibility."[445] This stance had an added advantage – Britain, not the USA, would face the opprobrium should the Smith regime survive. In April 1966, John Killick, a counsellor in the British Embassy in Washington, summed up US policy towards Rhodesia. The Americans, he wrote, "regard themselves as no more than closely interested observers on the side lines, willing within fairly severe limits to support us diplomatically when they feel they can".[446] But claims by US officials that they were no more than merely supportive bystanders were disingenuous. The US Administration actively sought to influence British policy towards Rhodesia while claiming detachment as a means of distancing themselves from any British policies they disliked. This was well understood by Sir Patrick Dean, the British Ambassador in Washington, as he observed in a letter to the British Foreign Office in February 1966. "They [the Americans] seem pretty clearly to be trying to stand on one side and to keep their hands free so that, should the situation seriously degenerate, they will be able to take action to secure what they conceive to be their own best interests untrammelled by any inhibiting obligations to ourselves or to any of the African countries."[447] Dean was, of course, correct. American policy was shaped neither by anti-colonial ideals nor by loyalty to any "special

[442] United Press International press release, 17 Oct. 1965, Name File, Box 3, Haynes Memos, LBJ
[443] Quoted in Massie, p. 199
[444] *Ibid.,* See also Borstelmann, *Color Line,* p. 201
[445] Foreign Office briefing paper on US policy over Rhodesia, 13 May 1966, FO371/187980, Kew
[446] Killick to Le Quesne, 29 Apr. 1966, *Ibid.*
[447] Dean to Gore-Booth, 18 Feb. 1966, *Ibid.*

relationship" with Britain, but by the dynamics of Washington politics and by the Administration's perception of its own interests in southern Africa.

2: The immediate response to UDI, November 1965 to March 1966

In the afternoon of 11 November, Prime Minister Harold Wilson announced to the House of Commons the measures he was taking in response to UDI. Confident that the rebellion would soon be over, he stated : "The British Government will, of course, have no dealings with the rebel regime." He then listed the economic restrictions to be imposed; these included a ban on tobacco and sugar imports from Rhodesia, the ending of arms sales and a range of financial restrictions.[448] He also said that Britain was requesting an early meeting of the UN Security Council "to consider the situation" because "if we do not somebody else will".[449] He wanted to prevent the Afro-Asian bloc, with the likely support of the USSR, declaring UDI a threat to the peace and invoking Article 41 of Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which would involve mandatory sanctions against Rhodesia. Worse still, it could lead to intervention by what, the next day, he called "a Red Army in blue berets".[450]

By taking the matter to the United Nations Wilson had to tread a fine line. He wanted support in the UN both to reinforce Rhodesia's international isolation and to encourage other nations to co-operate with Britain's economic sanctions. But he also wanted to retain control of policy towards Rhodesia. Hitherto British governments, both Conservative and Labour, had tried to stave off UN involvement by arguing that Rhodesia was self-governing – just a month before UDI, the London Embassy had told the State Department that the British Government was maintaining "its present position of UN non-competence in Rhodesian issue".[451] However, once UDI had occurred, Wilson's Government, in effect, conceded to the international community a role in determining the fate of Rhodesia by voting in favour of UNSC Resolution 216 on 12 November, which condemned UDI and called on all states "to

[448] HC Deb 11 Nov. 1965, Vol. 720, Col. 354; Wilson also wrote to the Governor of Rhodesia, Sir Humphrey Gibbs, on 13 November and told him, "There can be no question of my meeting Smith or any of his colleagues for so long as they persist in their illegal action." Quoted in Ziegler, *Wilson*, p. 238
[449] HC Deb 11 Nov. 1965, Vol. 720, Col. 355
[450] HC Deb 12 Nov. 1965, Vol. 720, Col. 637
[451] London to State, 4 Oct. 1965, CFPF, Box 2610, NARA

refrain from rendering any assistance" to the illegal regime.[452] Nevertheless, Wilson still maintained that Britain retained "sole responsibility"[453] for the colony.

Resolution 216 did not go far enough for the Afro-Asian nations. They were furious that Britain, which had been only too willing to use force against black unrest in Africa in the 1950s, now refused to crush a white rebellion. To the Latin American and the newly independent nations of the Third World, the central issue of international politics was decolonisation, not the Cold War. They regarded UDI as patently a threat to international peace, and the reaction of the Western world merely confirmed their suspicion that it was racist. As a result, there were several days of bitter debate in New York. The British delegation, with the help of Arthur Goldberg and the white Commonwealth, was able to achieve a compromise resolution only after reluctantly agreeing to include oil in its list of banned exports to Rhodesia.[454] UNSC Resolution 217 of 20 November declared "the situation… extremely grave… and that its continuance in time constitutes a threat to international peace and security" – a form of words that did not quite invoke Chapter VII.

Wilson was confident that Rhodesia was vulnerable to economic sanctions. It sold 95% of its tobacco to Britain, an export which accounted for a third of its overseas earnings and 10% of its GDP. Rhodesian tobacco farmers were among the regime's strongest supporters and the devastation of their livelihood could undermine their loyalty to Smith. Unfortunately for Britain, banning Rhodesian tobacco was a long-term sanction because the major purchasers of Rhodesian tobacco held two years' worth of stocks.[455] Knowing that many members of Rhodesia's business community were unhappy about UDI, Britain extended its list of banned Rhodesian exports on 1 December to include asbestos, copper, iron and steel ores, and a range of foodstuffs.[456] But the crucial commodity was oil because Rhodesia imported its entire supply. Wilson had initially been reluctant to ban it because he did not want to provoke Smith into retaliating by cutting off supplies to Zambia. He also knew that the British

[452] UN website
[453] Quoted in Watts, *Rhodesia's UDI*, p. 195
[454] Bruce reported that "UK accepted UN call for oil embargo only because there would otherwise have been overwhelming pressure for use of collective military force." London to State, 24 Nov. 1965, CFPF, Box 2619, NARA
[455] Rowe, pp. 63, 72
[456] Windrich, p. 69; Young, p. 334

companies that supplied Rhodesia accounted for only 40% of the total and making the ban fully effective would require the co-operation of South Africa and Portugal. As a British planning document of October had observed, "Supplies in South Africa amount to 4.5 million tons a year, and it should be possible for their refineries… to provide considerable help to Rhodesia."[457] Rhodesia's principal source of supply was a pipeline of 189 miles from the port of Beira in Portuguese Mozambique to a refinery at Umtali in Rhodesia. The British Government had no wish to provide a pretext for UN sanctions against either South Africa or Portugal.

Ball in Washington was as keen as Wilson to ensure that the reaction to UDI was contained. He wanted his African ambassadors to do their best to restrain their host governments, telling them "you should be prepared to seize on any UK or US statements in next few days and impress their significance upon your hosts in effort to avoid any precipitate action on their part".[458] He agreed with the British that "our hope is that announced intensified economic sanctions would be sufficient to deflect Africans or at least prevent SC from adopting mandatory Chapter VII sanctions". And he was all too well aware that "should these measures not prove as effective and as prompt as number of Africans would like, we would soon be confronted with invoking Article 42, calling for military measures to make economic sanctions more effective. Natural follow up to economic sanctions would be call for blockade in order to make oil sanctions more effective. It would only bring us one more step closer to an actual call for mandatory military action based on a binding decision of the Security Council".[459]

The wider implications of UDI for the USA were astutely summarised by David Bruce, the US Ambassador in London, at the end of November. He was not impressed by the British reaction. "Their plans lack coherence… [but] British naturally want a maximum of our cooperation in carrying [them] out." This, he realised, posed "serious political considerations for US… We are also concerned over the stability of sterling and have no desire to get involved in undertakings which would require

[457] Quoted in Rowe, p. 136
[458] State to African embassies, 10 Dec. 1965, CFPF, Box 2607, NARA
[459] State to London and USUN, 13 Dec.1965, CFPF, Box 2619, NARA

substantial new commitments on our part". But he was also aware that UDI provided the British with some leverage in Washington. The US could not "ignore the damaging effect on UK position as world power if they fail to undo UDI… Failure of US to provide continued support to British on Rhodesia... will undoubtedly affect British attitude toward UN in other areas of the world where we are more directly involved". Not surprisingly, he observed that "US is therefore confronted by highly unattractive alternatives". Both involvement and detachment were risky. He suggested that support for Britain, even if the US made "it clear that we are not providing a blank check, literally or metaphorically", nevertheless ran the "risk of being dragged further down a slippery slope by forces over which we have little or no control". But neither could the USA disengage. "If on the other hand we are to dissociate ourselves and ask for a full examination of all aspects of matter, questioning British judgments on effectiveness of their plans, we take on the responsibility of proposing an alternative program, because situation is not one in which British or we can do nothing... UK-US relations cannot afford a real break over this problem."[460] Washington, as Bruce realised, was faced with the delicate task of supporting Britain in its objective of overturning UDI, yet simultaneously distancing itself from any British policy it disliked, while all the time claiming loyal support for British leadership on the issue.

Bruce's cable produced a retort from Arthur Goldberg. The US mission to the UN, like the African Bureau, wanted Britain encouraged to respond energetically to UDI. "British continue urgently to seek our cooperation and assistance. I believe very firmly we must give this assistance to greatest possible extent… I wish to urge that we take every feasible action to help UK bring about end of rebellion in SR and encourage them to move ahead firmly."[461] Bruce had not seen this message when he next communicated with Washington, but it is clear that he had Goldberg and the African Bureau in mind when he cautioned, "No doubt some of our crusaders are already buckling on their armor, ready to mount their neighing chargers. I hope their ardour will be restrained." Bruce's thinking was close to that of Ball and Rusk. "I hope we will, for at least a short period, moderate any sympathetic

[460] London to State, 30 Nov. 1965, CFPF, Box 2607, NARA
[461] Goldberg to Rusk, 1 Dec. 1965, *Ibid*.

and generous impulses to participate fully in whatever remedial cures HMG prescribes in this case… We should aid the British in their distress, but should not underwrite, without circumspection, whatever they propose." Significantly, he added, "The door to settlement should be left ajar."[462]

Like Bruce, Washington's pragmatists were keen to restrain the British. Their immediate concern was to ensure that the British did not resort to force lest the United States get dragged in. An anonymous paper in the President's files, dated 1 December 1965, spelt this out clearly. "Our assistance to the UK should avoid underwriting of the pound or the use of US forces in Africa."[463] An internal State Department memo of 23 November stressed: "Every indication… from our military is that they are most negative to idea of a military intervention."[464] Such worries were reinforced by Wilson's announcement in the Commons on 1 December that a British aircraft carrier was cruising off the coast of Tanzania and that, because "Zambia feels herself at present without effective means of air defence", the British were dispatching an RAF squadron of 12 Javelin aircraft and 600 officers and men.[465] This was as much as the British Government was prepared to do in response to repeated pleas from President Kaunda of Zambia. For months he had wanted British troops dispatched to prevent UDI. Now he wanted them, at the very least, to take control of the Kariba Dam in Rhodesia on which Zambia depended for over 90% of its hydroelectric power. The British Government refused this demand, fearing it would provoke the military confrontation with Smith's forces that it was determined to avoid. The Americans, too, were worried that the situation was potentially explosive. Stephen Gebelt warned from the Consulate in Salisbury that, "If armed forces try to move on to dam site… Rhodesian should be expected to resist with vigor; in fact Smith could hardly survive politically unless his troops fight… During this war of nerves, an unfortunate incident at Kariba could set all of central Africa back several years and might even touch off what could become major conflagration."[466]

[462] London to State, 1 Dec. 1965, CFPF, Box 2607, NARA; Bruce's cable reached Washington at 10.08am and Goldberg's at 11.24pm; Bruce's cable was not copied to USUN
[463] *Outline of Rhodesian Problem*, 1 Dec. 1965, Rhodesia, Box 97, LBJ
[464] Memo by Seymour Weiss, Deputy Undersecretary of State, 23 Nov. 1965, CFPF, Box 2612, NARA
[465] HC Deb 1 Dec. 65, Vol. 721, Col. 1429
[466] Salisbury to State, 4 Dec. 1965, Rhodesia, Box 97, LBJ

The CIA was also concerned. On 21 December, Richard Helms, its Acting Director, sent Bundy a memo stating that, despite Wilson's public disavowal of the use of force, "the chances for British military intervention in Southern Rhodesia are rising". It went on to suggest that Wilson, by attaching so much prestige to the rapid defeat of UDI but relying on sanctions which the Americans thought unlikely to work, was "steadily painting himself into a corner". Furthermore, "Zambia might force the British into drastic action". The memo concluded by warning of the implications for the US. "Wilson… may calculate that, as the situation develops, he will be able to extract crucial commitments, such as access to US copper stockpiles, major airlift support, and foreign exchange assistance, which the US has thus far been largely unwilling to commit."[467]

Rusk shared these worries and, early in December, had given an off-the-record interview to Alastair Hetherington, editor of *The Guardian*, which was clearly designed to help dampen any belligerent ardour in Britain. He "noted that the military problem would be of very great magnitude, with 200,000 white Rhodesians willing, if necessary, to fight… Nor would there be a single American there… The Secretary said he hoped the problem and its solution would remain in the political and economic field, and in those areas the US would co-operate with the UK".[468] Rusk also wanted the Africans to understand that the Americans were not going to press the British into sending troops. He told the US Embassy in Tanzania, "You should in no way suggest or imply that US would be willing to influence UK in direction use of force against Rhodesia."[469] He stressed the same point to the London Embassy a few weeks later: "Dept agrees Embassy London should not press British on subject military alternative to economic sanctions as method dealing with Rhodesian problem. We prefer not to query HMG on this or related military matters since we do not wish encourage possible requests for assistance."[470] He returned to this theme in April 1966 when he told Arnold Smith, Secretary General of the Commonwealth, "We will not put troops in Southern Rhodesia nor can we agree to pick up the residue of the costs which others incur in connection with the Southern Rhodesia situation."[471]

[467] Special Memorandum: *Possible UK Military Intervention in Southern Rhodesia*, 21 Dec. 1965, *Ibid.*
[468] Memo of conversation, 9 Dec. 1965, CFPF, Box 2607, NARA
[469] State to Dar es Salaam, 9 Dec. 1965, *Ibid.*
[470] State to London, 20 Jan. 1966, CFPF, Box 2608, NARA
[471] Memo of a conversation, 4 Apr. 1966, *Ibid*.

For the Americans, Zambia was much more significant than Rhodesia. Its President, Kenneth Kaunda, was one of Washington's favourite Africans. When he had visited Washington at the end of November 1964, Rusk had described him to Johnson as "decidedly pro-West", adding, "he is a devout Christian, a sincere advocate of multiracialism, a man of democratic instincts… Kaunda should be treated as a good friend of the US whose attitudes on the whole parallel our own".[472] And, at the same time, an NSC staffer outlined the importance of Zambia to the USA.

> Zambia is one of the few black African countries where there is significant US economic interest. Zambia produces about 15% of free world copper ($360 million last year compared to $700 million US domestic production). Over $100 million of Zambian production is US-owned… Zambia and Congo copper together (they are one field) produce over 20% of free world copper; Zambia has world's largest known reserves. With copper production reasonably tight, and Communist supplies very limited, the Zambia-Congo copper would be a rich prize for the Chinese (who already buy some of it).[473]

Washington was worried that Britain's economic measures against UDI put Zambia at risk, especially if Rhodesia chose to retaliate should Zambia attempt to join Britain's boycott. As a CIA National Intelligence Estimate of October 1965 put it, "Salisbury has a hold on Zambia." Zambia depended not only on the Kariba Dam, but also on the Rhodesian railways, which transported 98% of Zambian exports to the sea ports. Fifty thousand Zambians worked in Rhodesia.[474] Zambia produced 700,000 tons of copper annually, estimated by Washington as "16% of the total free world production".[475] Washington had assessed the "measures open to Rhodesia" at the time of Kaunda's visit. These included "the cutting of rail transit rights to Zambian copper… the cutting off of hydro-electric power from Kariba, on which Zambia depends for copper refining, and the withholding of Rhodesian coal from Zambian smelters". Zambia could retaliate only with a boycott of Rhodesian-manufactured goods. "Zambia is believed to be a market for about one-third of Rhodesia's output."[476]

[472] Memo for the President, 28 Nov. 64, Zambia, Box 102, LBJ; emphasis in the original
[473] Talking Points for Kaunda's visit, 1 Dec. 1964, *Ibid.*
[474] *Repercussions of a UDI by Southern Rhodesia*, 13 Oct. 1965, National Intelligence Estimates, Box 8, LBJ
[475] Memo for Joseph Califano, 6 Jan. 1966, Confidential File, CO 206, Box 11, LBJ
[476] Background paper for Kaunda's visit, 25 Nov. 1964, Zambia, Box 102, LBJ

It was the threat to copper supplies that most worried some senior figures in the US Administration. At the end of November an American team, headed by Thomas Mann, Undersecretary of State for Economic Affairs, went to London to meet their British counterparts, led by George Brown, Secretary of State for Economic Affairs. Mann told them that "he was very bothered about the whole problem of the free world supply of copper. A shut-off of 16% of supplies would be very grave... Demand was already ahead of supplies and US requirements for the Vietnam war had gone up heavily. He doubted whether the stockpile could last for very long in these circumstances. He was also afraid that this could have serious effects on confidence in sterling". Mann thought there were two possible solutions to the problem. "Either working out a scheme for quick military action or for telling the world that we proposed to do nothing for 12-18 months while independent access to Zambia was being built up so that Rhodesia would then be in no position to interfere with the flow of copper." These ideas appalled the British. George Brown had begun the meeting by saying that "it was important to go for the quick economic kill" and reiterated that "the use of troops had so far been ruled out". Since there was to be no military action, Mann was, in effect, suggesting that guaranteeing Western access to Zambian copper was more important than defeating UDI. He was also unhappy about Britain's sanctions, commenting that "it was almost impossible to make an export ban effective provided the country concerned could pay for its requirements".[477] When he returned to Washington he composed his own summary of what had been discussed, in which he claimed to have "expressed doubt as to whether the program suggested would bring down the Smith regime quickly".[478] Nothing as blunt as this had appeared in the British minutes. Mann then dispatched a lengthy memo for the President in which he warned: "If the crisis continued for a long period, confidence in the pound could be impaired, thereby generating pressure on us for large-scale assistance. And there would immediately be demands on us for some scheme to share our copper with the UK and our other allies." He was not optimistic about the future. "We believe that under great pressure the UK has been forced to announce an economic sanctions program which will probably not achieve its objectives either in terms of maintaining the UK's relationships with the African Commonwealth states or of bringing down quickly the Smith

[477] Minutes of the London meeting about Rhodesia, 30 Nov. 1965, CFPF, Box 2607, NARA
[478] Mann's memo on the 30 Nov. 1965 London meeting about Rhodesia, 16 Dec. 1965, CFPF, Box 2607, NARA

regime. We should bear in mind that African resentment against the UK will inevitably rub off on the US." Mann wanted the US Administration to "make clear to the British that they should not count on us for large scale financial aid which we think is likely to be wasted".[479] If Mann was not the author of the anonymous paper on Rhodesia in the President's files, he would certainly have endorsed its recommendation that "we cannot afford to bail the UK out of a long-term copper shortage".[480]

Despite these concerns, the US Administration had little option but to support Britain's economic sanctions. Not only was opposition to Rhodesian UDI important in retaining its credibility among the nations of black Africa but there were risks to doing nothing. Ball pointed out in a memo to Johnson on 18 November that he thought it essential to prevent "the Africans in the UN… mounting a UN peace force… [otherwise] we could end up with a Communist-dominated United Nations force attacking the white settlers in the heart of East Africa [*sic*]. This would create great havoc".[481] The CIA was offering more optimistic advice than Mann about the threat of Rhodesian reprisals against Zambia. In October 1965 the Agency suggested that Rhodesia "would be unlikely to undertake serious economic measures against neighbouring African states unless severely provoked… Salisbury would prefer not to exercise its leverage over Zambia" because "once independence has been declared [Rhodesia] would seek to maintain a 'business as usual' atmosphere".[482] Gebelt at the Salisbury Consulate, commenting 18 days after UDI, agreed. "Smith regime has made no moves against Zambia and continues to affirm its determination to live harmoniously with its neighbours."[483]

The day after UDI, Johnson and Rusk authorised Goldberg to announce the US Government's measures to the UN Security Council. According to a White House memo, "the statement is a strong one and announces that the US Government will take the following actions. (1) Embargo arms. (2) Discourage private travel. (3) Suspend the sugar quota. (4) Suspend action on USG loans or loan guarantees. (5) Point out to private American investors that Southern Rhodesia is an unstable area. (6)

[479] Mann's memo for the President, 22 Dec. 1965, Rhodesia, Box 97, LBJ
[480] *Outline of Rhodesian Problem*, 1 Dec. 1965, *Ibid.*
[481] Ball's memo for the President, 18 Nov. 1965, *Ibid.*
[482] CIA, *Repercussions, op. cit.*
[483] Salisbury to State, 29 Nov. 1965, Rhodesia, Box 97, LBJ

Consider further steps."[484] Johnson's decision suspended the 1966 sugar quota of 6,094 tons, but left undecided what to do about the 1965 quota of 9,542 tons, which had already been contracted to a US importer and was on was on its way by sea to the USA. Although the White House was told that suspending the 1965 quota would "put us out in front of the British",[485] who had chosen to honour sugar contracts signed before UDI, Johnson acceded to a strong request from Goldberg and the African Bureau to suspend this too.[486] He may also have been swayed by the danger of a public relations embarrassment. He was told that "the appearance of a boat load of Rhodesian sugar at an East Coast port would cause considerable excitement at the United Nations and cast doubt on the good faith of our determination to bring down the Smith regime".[487]

Ball advised Johnson that two pieces of legislation permitted him to "shut off exports to Southern Rhodesia on the simple finding that it is necessary 'to protect the security of the United States and implement our foreign policy'". But he also advised that the President could not "block imports without invoking the Trading with the Enemy Act – which would require you to make a determination relating the situation in Southern Rhodesia to our existing national emergency proclamation – which we are not proposing that you do".[488] As a result, American officials, at a meeting with their British counterparts in early December, agreed to try to persuade US importers to co-operate with sanctions. "US has scheduled meetings with asbestos and lithium importers seeking voluntary controls. Similar meeting to be held with chrome importers after consideration has been given to stockpile availability. Voluntary controls on these commodities would approximate 80% US imports from Rhodesia, putting US roughly in line with UK import bans." The Americans agreed to match British export controls on goods to Rhodesia "insofar as possible."[489] In a cable from the White House Wilson was told: "We are asking our importers to restrict the shipment of Rhodesian goods to our shores", but the cable added that the "total value of these imports last year amounted to only $11 million". Mann's concerns, however, had not been forgotten. "Our long-term interests indicate that the only sensible course of

[484] Memo to Bundy, 12 Nov. 1965, *Ibid.*
[485] Memo to Bundy, 18 Nov. 1965, *Ibid.*
[486] Presidential Memo for the Secretary of Agriculture, 19 Nov. 1965, *Ibid.*
[487] Read to Bundy, 18 Nov. 1965, *Ibid.*
[488] Ball to LBJ, 18 Nov. 1965, *Ibid*.; the two laws were the Export Control Act of 1949 and the Mutual Security Act of 1954
[489] State to London, 9 Dec. 1965, CFPF, Box 2607, NARA

action is that which avoids strangling the Zambian economy and dislocating world copper markets for any substantial period of time."[490]

The British economic measures – even though supported by the American Government – were not enough to appease the anger of the black African nations. On 3 December the OAU Council called on its members to sever their diplomatic relations with Britain if UDI had not been crushed by 15 December.[491] Wilson experienced the wrath of the black Africans at first hand when he addressed the UN General Assembly on 16 December and over 100 delegates ostentatiously left the hall before he began speaking.[492] He enjoyed a warmer reception at the White House later the same day. The Americans regarded it as essential, as Bundy reminded Johnson, to maintain "a British role at Singapore for as far ahead as we can see… some British presence there [in the Far East] is of very high importance to us".[493] Wilson, although he wanted to cut British defence costs, was also keen to maintain the British "East of Suez" role, so this was not a difficult condition to accept. In return, Washington agreed to support the oil embargo, when it was announced by the British Government on 17 December by denying US firms export licences for Rhodesia.[494] The USA also agreed to participate in an airlift of oil to Zambia (whose supplies had been cut off by the Smith regime in retaliation for Britain's oil embargo) and to comply with Britain's ban on the importation of Rhodesian chrome, issued in January 1966. Not surprisingly, when Wilson reported to his Cabinet on his return to London, he was, according to Barbara Castle, "full of beans about his trip".[495]

The British began the Zambian airlift on 19 December and the Americans joined early in January.[496] The US Administration, however, was less enthusiastic about underwriting the development costs of long-term projects to bolster the Zambian economy, especially the alternatives to Rhodesian routes for getting Zambian exports to the sea over the 1,000 miles from Lusaka to Dar es Salaam. These included

[490] Johnson to Wilson, 8 Dec. 1965, *Ibid.*
[491] Watts, *Rhodesia's UDI*, p. 103; nine African states complied, including Tanzania and Ghana, who were the only two Commonwealth members among them
[492] Good, p.106
[493] Quoted in Colman, *'A Special Relationship'?,* p. 92
[494] State to American Diplomatic posts, 31 Dec. 1965, CFPF, Box 2608, NARA
[495] Castle, *Diaries*, entry for 21 Dec. 1965, p. 78
[496] Good, p. 110

upgrading the "Great North Road" – a grand name for the existing gravel track – and a proposal for a railway line (known as the Tan-Zam line), which was estimated to cost approximately $400m. In December 1965 Dean told Mann that Britain had allocated £108,000 to improve the road and asked for US help. Mann replied that the Administration had "earmarked" $2 million "for airlift and related costs and there might be some part of that amount available" for the road.[497] This sum was a reflection of the US Government's reluctance to take on a potentially open-ended financial commitment being fully aware that US aid to Africa was becoming increasingly unpopular in Congress.

As the new year began, Wilson was ebullient about his Rhodesian policy.[498] Wilson told Johnson he was "totally convinced, privately, that we have Smith on the run, and that it will not be long before this becomes clear publicly".[499] His confidence was based on the attitude of South Africa's Prime Minister, Hendrik Verwoerd, who thought that UDI had been a mistake because it had intensified international anger against the white-ruled nations of southern Africa. On 12 November, Verwoerd had announced that South Africa would remain neutral and wished to preserve "normal and friendly relations" with both Britain and Rhodesia.[500] The British Government interpreted this to mean that South Africa would not increase its supply of oil to Rhodesia. As a result of gaining the co-operation of the major British and American oil companies, the Beira storage tanks ran dry by the end of the year and the pipeline to Umtali was shut down. The Rhodesian government was forced to impose progressively severe petrol rationing.

Wilson was not alone in his confident assessment. Gebelt told Washington, "The Rhodesian situation looks as if it could deteriorate dramatically very soon. Oil sanctions are having most easily identifiable direct impact, but commerce and industry being affected by other elements such as loss foreign markets and shrinkage domestic demand… Business and industrial leaders are desperately discouraged." Gebelt even thought that, "Barring substantial underwriting from South Africa and/or

[497] State to London, 27 Dec. 1965, CFPF, Box 2608, NARA
[498] Castle, *Diaries*, entry for 3 Jan. 1966, p. 90
[499] Wilson to Johnson, 7 Jan. 1966, FO371/187980, Kew
[500] Quoted in Good, p. 22

Portugal, Smith regime is doomed... Writing on wall now clear."[501] The State Department was sceptical about imminent collapse but agreed that sanctions were having an impact.[502] Wilson, together with some of his Cabinet colleagues and their officials, believed that the "quick economic kill" was achievable within two months once Zambia joined Britain's embargo against Rhodesia in mid-February.[503] It was this confidence, and Wilson's anxiety to appease angry black leaders at the Commonwealth Conference in Lagos in January, that led him to make the fateful remark that "the cumulative effects of the economic and financial sanctions might well bring the rebellion to an end within a matter of weeks rather than months".[504] Not all American officials shared Wilson's optimism, as Dean reported in December 1965.

> I imagine that American thinking runs somewhat as follows: (a) sanctions will not overthrow Smith in the short run, i.e. within the next three to four months… (b) there is likely to be intensified economic warfare between Rhodesia and Zambia whether we want it or not… (c) copper production will then cease, and it is simply not feasible to keep it going by emergency "airlift" type measures. The consequences for the United Kingdom economy and balance of payments will be disastrous…. They [the Americans] fear, I imagine, that they may become progressively committed to a massive, expensive and long-term rescue operation for Zambia without any real light at the end of the tunnel.[505]

Dean returned to this theme in January when he warned that these worries had reached the top of the US Administration. "The President, like others in the United States Administration, is concerned lest the rescue operations for Zambia should prove to be a never-ending drain on United States and United Kingdom resources."[506] British officials also knew that the Americans did not have much confidence in their management of the crisis. Sir Roger Allen, the Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, in a perceptive memorandum of February 1966, wrote, "The Americans at the top think that we have got ourselves into a mess over Rhodesia unnecessarily, and they fear that the mess will be a good deal worse before we get out. Naturally enough, they do not wish to be too closely associated

[501] Salisbury to State, 13 Jan. 1966, CFPF, Box 2608, NARA
[502] State to American Diplomatic posts, 31 Dec. 1965, *Ibid.*
[503] Mann to Bruce, 16 Dec. 1965, CFPF, Box 2607 NARA; London to State, 5 Jan. 1966, Rhodesia, Box 97, LBJ
[504] Quoted in Pimlott, p. 377; Good, p. 121; Windrich, p. 73
[505] Dean to Gore-Booth, 30 Dec. 1965, FO371/187980, Kew
[506] Dean to FO, 5 Jan. 1966, *Ibid.*

with us, and still less to be seen to be taking a lead."[507] Dean realised that American officials wanted to keep their distance from the problem of Rhodesia because "if we were to accept any alternative they might suggest, they would inevitably be to some extent committed to it themselves… High-ranking members of the State Department fear that to engage in frank discussions with us may in some sense commit them to particular courses of action".[508]

The divisions between the African Bureau and other senior members of the US Administration were also well known. Allen correctly observed that "there are two conflicting schools of thought within the Administration: the Governor Williams school, which fears that in the end we shall do a deal with the white Rhodesians which will be objectionable to the whole of black Africa; and the Tom Mann/George Ball/White House school, which only wishes that we can get out of the thing before we lose the Zambian copper and come begging on the American doorstep in consequence, or, even worse, get involved in economic sanctions against South Africa with disastrous results upon our balance of payments".[509] These divisions were even reported in the British press. On 2 March the *Daily Mail* asserted, "There is growing conflict between Under-Secretary Mann and Assistant Secretary Williams. Mann and Williams agree sanctions are not producing [the] 'quick kill' Wilson predicted, Mann believes UK has no alternative but to negotiate with Smith, while Williams favours stepping up sanctions, even going so far as military action to overthrow rebel government."[510]

British officials, though, knew that Ball's group was winning the power battle in Washington.[511] Dean believed that Ball was strenuously reining in the African Bureau's enthusiasm for an active Rhodesian policy. "We have learned… in confidence from White House contacts, that at the end of December, Mr. Ball forbade US officials to initiate conversations with British officials about the possibilities of the use of force as a solution to the Rhodesian rebellion. Early in January, he also ruled that British

[507] Memo by Allen, 22 Feb. 1966, FO371/187980, Kew
[508] Dean to Gore-Booth, 18 Feb. 1966, *Ibid.*
[509] Memo by Allen, 22 Feb. 1966, *Ibid.*
[510] Quoted in London to State, 2 Mar. 1966, CFPF, Box 2608, NARA
[511] Johnson's December cable to Wilson had indicated that Ball, rather than the African Bureau, would be controlling the Administration's Rhodesian policy. "George Ball has himself organised a group within his own office at the State Department which is acting as a focal point for the Rhodesian situation." Johnson to Wilson, 8 Dec. 1965, CFPF, Box 2607, NARA

officials should not be told how much money the State Department has at its disposal for assistance to Zambia. This odd edict was undoubtedly prompted by the anxiety of senior officials to prevent Governor Williams and the Africa Bureau from involving the Americans deeply in the Rhodesian problem without prior approval."[512] The *Daily Mail* was correct that Williams was recommending American pressure on the British to take forceful action against Smith. In an undated memo to the President (probably submitted immediately before Wilson's December visit), Williams had urged that "reliance on economic sanctions is likely to lead to an economic morass in central Africa with indeterminable but certainly high cost for the US while the timely use of even limited force stands a much better chance of rapid results with a much lower cost for the US".[513]

Dean believed that the power struggle between Williams and Ball was undermining British efforts to co-ordinate policy with Washington. "We also noted that when Roger Allen was here at the Africa talks [1-3 February] there was no one on the American side during the formal sessions who was in a position to make policy pronouncements of any moment on Rhodesia. We have since learnt from the White House that this was a result of a deliberate decision. In other words, not only does the US Government distrust Governor Williams and his officials, but even high-ranking members of the State Department fear that to engage in frank discussions with us may in some sense commit them to particular courses of action. The American attitude is, I think, reflected in the lethargy of their reactions to the requests for help which we have put to them." He thought the American Administration was beginning to find Rhodesia an unwelcome distraction. "The White House has… suggested to us that senior American officials are growing bored with Rhodesia. They simply wish it would go away."[514] Allen agreed because he realised that, although it suited the US Government to blame Congress for its parsimony, the Administration's reluctance to ask for more money for Africa was well founded. "Opinion in Washington (i.e. Congress) is on the whole in favour of the white Rhodesians: as Mr. Rusk told the [British] Secretary of State, there would probably be a three to two majority in Congress in favour of Smith if there were a vote. Against this background, it is perhaps

[512] Dean to Gore-Booth, 18 Feb. 1966, FO371/187980, Kew
[513] Memo by Williams, undated, Rhodesia, Box 97, LBJ
[514] Dean to Gore-Booth, 18 Feb. 1966, FO371/187980, Kew

not surprising that the Americans… should wish that the Rhodesian question would somehow go away."[515]

At the Washington talks in early February Allen had loyally talked up the success of sanctions as "both more complete and more effective than HMG had dared to hope… [and estimated] that Southern Rhodesia should run almost completely out of oil and gasoline about mid-April".[516] He was more honest when he returned to Britain and concluded gloomily that American scepticism about British policy was justified. "No explanations which we can make are likely to convince them, in the light of the evidence from Rhodesia, that economic sanctions will bring about a capitulation on the sort of terms we should wish in the near future. At the present moment, it appears that there are all too good grounds for their belief that either we shall come into conflict with the impatience of the black Africans, and hence into a possible confrontation with South Africa, or else we shall go on with sanctions until the Rhodesian economy is virtually destroyed, with the attendant disagreeable consequences on Rhodesia and Zambia including a cut off of copper for a longer or shorter period."[517]

Wilson did not, in public at least, seem to share his officials' pessimism and he continued to hope for a "quick kill". Nevertheless, his statement in the House of Commons on 25 January, by holding out an olive branch to Salisbury, suggested some flexibility. He announced: "The Governor is authorised to receive from the régime any proposals about the means by which the rebellion is to be brought to an end", and emphasised that "a return to constitutional rule would not and could not mean an immediate advance to majority rule".[518] But he added a sixth principle (to the five originally set out in September 1965) which would have to be satisfied before independence could be granted, "namely, the need to ensure that, regardless of race, there is no oppression of majority by minority or of minority by majority".[519]

[515] Memo by Allen, 22 Feb. 1966, *Ibid.*
[516] US-UK Talks on Africa, 1-3 Feb 1966, CFPF, Box 2786, NARA
[517] Memo by Allen, 22 Feb. 1966, FO371/187980, Kew
[518] HC Deb 25 Jan. 1966, Vol. 723, Col. 40
[519] *Ibid.,* Col. 42

By this time Wilson had already decided to dissolve Parliament.[520] He knew that Rhodesia was unlikely to feature as an electoral issue because his Tory opponents were deeply divided over it, but he hoped that a successful "quick kill" might enhance his electoral prestige. However, by February, his New Year optimism about the impact of sanctions had faded. Verwoerd told the South African parliament on 25 January that his government would not interfere with gifts of any kind to Rhodesia. This encouraged the formation of a successful "Petrol for Rhodesia" campaign, and the subsidiaries of the major British and American oil companies (registered as South African businesses and thus beyond the reach of British or US law) then began to act independently and to compete with one another for the Rhodesian market. By March the British Government knew that Rhodesia was receiving, mainly from South Africa, between 125,000 and 150,000 gallons of oil a day, and by May double that amount – enough to start building stocks.[521] But it was President Kaunda who effectively ended the hopes of the "quick kill". On 14 February, the day before he was supposed to join the boycott, he made it clear in a BBC interview that the "formidable aid" reaching Rhodesia from South Africa meant that UDI could be reversed only by military force.[522] The British Government realised that Zambia could not be expected to commit economic suicide. Even before Kaunda's interview, Wilson had begun, in correspondence with colleagues, to refer to a "long haul… which it will require all our courage and determination to keep up".[523]

The March general election returned the Labour Government with a substantial majority of almost 100 seats, but this complicated as much as helped Wilson's Rhodesian policy. Labour MPs on the left of the Party, who feared a sell-out to Smith, could now oppose the Government without risking its survival. Shortly after the election, in a conversation about golf, Wilson ruefully commented that his handicap had gone up from three to 97.[524]

[520] Wilson, p. 199
[521] Rowe, pp. 147-48, 151
[522] Good, p. 124; Pimlott, pp. 379-80
[523] Quoted in Ziegler, p. 237
[524] Ziegler, p. 248

3: The start of Wilson's 'Long Haul', March to December 1966

The breaches in the oil blockade became an international issue when, on 21 February, the Rhodesian Minister of Commerce and Industry announced that a tanker with oil for Rhodesia would dock at Beira "in the foreseeable future".[525] Were the Beria-Umtali pipeline to reopen, as Wilson himself recalled in his memoirs, "sanctions would have become totally ineffective and our Rhodesia policy would have been destroyed. Pressure for the use of force would have become stronger and stronger, with incalculable results, particularly if eastern bloc countries joined in the struggle on the ground".[526] For the British Government it was essential not only to prevent the oil reaching Beira but also to ensure that black African nations did not secure stronger measures in the UN – in particular, a Chapter VII resolution obliging South Africa and Portugal to comply with sanctions and authorising the use of force to resolve the crisis. Britain's UN delegation managed to secure passage of UNSC Resolution 221, which gave authority for British ships to use force, if necessary, to prevent oil for Rhodesia being landed at Beira.[527]

This was only a very limited achievement; it was certainly not, as Andrew DeRoche claimed, a "major success".[528] Britain alone was saddled with the cost of keeping warships on permanent patrol off Beira,[529] and the resolution did little to restore the credibility of Britain's sanctions because it did not cover the other major port in Mozambique, as the Commonwealth Office was well aware. "The current estimate of supplies of POL reaching Rhodesia [totals] 250,000-320,000 gallons/day. Our latest assessment is that the bulk of the above POL supplies reach Rhodesia along the railway from Lourenço Marques to Gwelo. The regime have organised the operation in such a way as to obscure the origin of these supplies."[530] Although Resolution 221 gave to Britain alone the authority to use force, it did so under Chapter VII of the Charter, thereby widening the scope of UN involvement in the crisis

[525] Quoted in Good, p. 132
[526] Wilson, p. 223
[527] UNSC Res 221, 9 Apr. 1966, UN website
[528] De Roche, *Black, White and Chrome*, p. 148
[529] The Beira Patrol remained for 10 years until the end of Portuguese rule in Mozambique; in the first five years of operation it intercepted 47 tankers of which 42 were allowed to proceed; Mobley, *The Beira Patrol*, p. 79
[530] Brief of 12 May 1966 by Commonwealth Relations Office for Mr. George Thomson's visit to Washington, FO371/187980. In June 1967 the Portuguese Government claimed that, in the previous year, 169 tankers had entered Lourenço Marques, of which 58 were British; Good, p. 208

and further undermining Wilson's claim that Rhodesia was solely Britain's responsibility. Once Chapter VII had been invoked, it would be harder in future to prevent it being applied to South Africa and Portugal.

The British Government briefly tried to use the threat of Chapter VII sanctions to persuade the South Africans to stop supplying Rhodesia, but dropped the idea when Verwoerd threatened reprisals – a prospect British officials considered "too awful to contemplate".[531] Senior figures in Washington were alarmed by these signs of increased British pressure on the white regimes that were supplying Rhodesia. A well-informed article in *The Guardian* in May claimed, "Mr. Rusk and Mr. Ball had been reluctant to support UK's move in Security Council last month to obtain authority to prevent oil intended for Rhodesia from reaching Beira."[532] Dean reported to the Foreign Office, five days after passage of Resolution 221, the sharp warning he had been given by Ball.

> Mr. Ball said that he must again express his own and the Government's grave misgivings about the possible and even likely consequences of Her Majesty's Government moving any farther along the Chapter VII road. There was in the United States Government's judgment a serious danger of both South Africa and Portugal leaving the United Nations if they were pushed much farther and of Portugal leaving NATO. This would have for the United States and the rest of NATO important military as well as political implications, so would the denial by the South African Government of the tracking facilities which the United States now enjoy in Pretoria. The United States Government also continued to be seriously concerned at the very great damage which the United Kingdom would suffer in financial and economic terms if matters came to a breaking point with the South African Government.[533]

These were not the only Rhodesian issues causing friction between London and Washington, who each thought the other was not doing enough to enforce sanctions. Shortly before his meeting with Ball, Dean had had Anthony Solomon, the Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs, complaining to him. "His conclusion was that unless something dramatic were done soon to show that sanctions were working, there would be serious erosion in their application and in the goodwill of those in the world who really supported them. In the United States in particular the Administration badly needed

[531] Quoted in Rowe, p. 150
[532] Quoted in London to State, 16 May 1966, CFPF, Box 2609, NARA
[533] Dean to Foreign Office, 14 Apr. 1966, FO371/187980, Kew

ammunition to counter the criticism of co-operation with Britain over sanctions which he now expected."[534] At what appears to have been a fractious meeting between Ball and George Thomson for the British Government. Thomson pointed out that the American companies were undermining sanctions. "The Union Carbide Company had been remitting money to Rhodesia in payment for chrome which was coming out of Mozambique… US companies were also importing pig iron… Continental Ore in particular were buying Rhodesian pig iron." Ball retorted that "US Rhodesian policy did not command general support in Congress… Because of invidious comparisons of UK policy on Rhodesia with British trade with North Vietnam, it was hard to mobilise Congressional opinion". And when Thomson asked whether the US could do anything further to prevent the flow of oil through Mozambique, "Mr. Ball thought that it would not be possible to do anything further."[535]

Awareness on both sides of the Atlantic about the difficulties of making sanctions work endorsed what the Americans had been suggesting for some time – that the economic and diplomatic costs of confronting Rhodesia would inexorably increase. The only alternative was a negotiated settlement, something which, in private, Wilson had never entirely ruled out.[536] British officials suspected the Americans would be sympathetic. Allen observed that "The only thing that the White House would presumably like to hear from us would be that we were opening secret negotiations forthwith with the Smith regime, though even so they would not underestimate the trouble that this would be likely to cause in the United Nations."[537] Bruce recommended his Government to "urge upon the British the desirability of a negotiation" but to be careful not "to underwrite without reserve whatever policies HMG may think it expedient to adopt".[538] Many in the US Administration were, therefore, pleased when, on 27 April, Wilson told the House of Commons that, as a result of discussion between his personal envoy and the Governor of Rhodesia, "informal talks" were to be held with the Salisbury regime "directed only to see whether a basis for negotiation genuinely exists; and they are without

[534] Dean to Gore-Booth, 2 Apr. 1966, FO371/187980
[535] Record of State Department meeting, 16 May 1966, Ibid.
[536] Memo of a conversation, 12 Jan. 1966, CFPF, Box 2608, NARA
[537] Memo by Allen, 22 Feb. 1966, FO371/187980, Kew
[538] London to State, 16 Apr. 1966, CFPF, Box 2608, NARA

commitment on either side".[539] Anxious to avoid both the impression of a sell-out and awkward reminders of his repeated pledges about having no dealings with Smith, Wilson stressed that these were not negotiations.[540] As a result, they were rapidly dubbed "talks about talks". For a number of commentators and historians Wilson's announcement was an important watershed – it was the moment at which he abandoned any hope of defeating UDI.

Most historians' accounts of the genesis of Wilson's announcement stress the roles played by the South Africans and Wilson's intermediary, the Rhodesian Governor, Sir Humphrey Gibbs. None until now mentions the part played by the Americans, but on 29 April, John Killick in the British Embassy wrote to Martin Le Quesne of the Foreign Office indicating that Washington had used some backstairs influence.

> It will be no surprise to you that the Americans and South Africans are delighted that talks, even of limited scope, are to be started... The South African Minister told me in strict confidence that some two weeks ago Mann summoned the South African Ambassador privately and urged him strongly to put to his Government that they should do something to get talks going. The Ambassador had passed this on. The State Department have never told us that they did this. Botha [of the South African UN delegation] incidentally indicated rather cautiously to me that he was virtually sure that Dr. Verwoerd had done a good deal more with Smith than he had let on to us in South Africa in his official discussions with Sir Hugh Stevenson [the British Ambassador in Pretoria].[541]

Killick was well informed.[542] Mann had indeed given the South African Ambassador his "personal opinion" that he "did not see why, with the exercise of imagination and ingenuity by reasonable elements in the countries most directly concerned, a political settlement would not be possible". He went on to suggest that "the South African government might… use its influence to help bring about a settlement".[543] Mann's conversation coincided with a paper presented to the African Bureau by William "Red" Duggan, a member of the Policy Planning Council of the State Department. He thought that, "Although the US cannot afford to take up an open posture of insisting on negotiations,

[539] HC Deb 27 Apr. 1966, Vol. 727, Col. 708
[540] *The Times*, 28 Apr. 1966, p. 14
[541] Killick to Le Quesne, 29 Apr. 1966, FO371/187980, Kew.
[542] Although he did not know the correct spelling of Stephenson's name
[543] Memorandum of a conversation, 21 Apr. 1966, CFPF, Box 2609, NARA

it does appear that the US, in company with certain Commonwealth members, could persuade both Wilson and Smith to adopt a face-saving formula by negotiation." Significantly, Duggan's list of suggested formulae for negotiations included important constitutional changes but did not demand majority rule before independence.[544] A memo of 22 April by Rick Haynes (a member of the NSC staff who was concerned with US policy in Africa) confirms that US officials were active behind the scenes. "State is currently taking quiet and discreet soundings in London and with the Australians and New Zealanders to explore possible approaches based on mediation leading ultimately to negotiations by the principals."[545] Rusk knew that discussion of US involvement could be embarrassing, especially in black Africa, so at the end of April he told US embassies there: "Entire subject should be treated with caution. It is important US reps avoid comment on content, prospects, or conduct talks. SR problem remains primarily UK responsibility and we should do nothing prejudice possible favorable outcome."[546]

The "talks about talks" began in May and continued intermittently in London and Salisbury until August without making any progress. However, the American role in helping them to occur demonstrates that US officials were more than "closely interested observers on the side lines". This was, in part, because the management of the Rhodesian crisis had also changed in Washington in spring 1966. Williams, a consistent advocate of a strong US response to the Rhodesian crisis, left the African Bureau at the end of March to stand for a Senate seat. His influence on policy had already waned by the time of UDI; Johnson's appointment in March 1965 of Averell Harriman as Ambassador at Large with responsibility for overseeing policy in Africa was widely interpreted as demotion for Williams. He was to suffer further humiliation in 1965 when his plan to increase US aid for black Africa was shelved. Presidential adviser Bob Komer was dismissive, calling it "regrettably rather a mouse".[547] Johnson then appointed Edward Korry, a former US Ambassador to Ethiopia, to report on US overseas aid. When it became clear that Korry was going to recommend cuts in US aid

[544] Duggan to Palmer, 19 Apr. 1966, BAA, 1958-63, Box 45, NARA
[545] Haynes to W.W. Rostow, 22 Apr. 1966, Files of Ulric Haynes, LBJ
[546] State to African embassies, 30 Apr. 1966, CFPF, Box 2609, NARA
[547] Komer to LBJ, 23 Nov. 1965, Africa, Box 76, LBJ

and a new focus on a few strategically important countries, Williams realised that he had little future in Johnson's Administration. His biographer believes that his influence on Rhodesian policy had been considerable. "To Williams Rhodesia was another test of America's commitment to racial equality and majority rule… A forceful policy toward Smith and the white minority would help undo the damage caused by Washington's intervention in the Congo. Williams led the fight to persuade Johnson to impose strict economic sanctions on Rhodesia, and, despite opposition within the Defense and State Departments, he triumphed."[548] This is an exaggerated claim. Williams and his colleagues in the African Bureau had, much to their frustration, exercised little decisive influence on the formulation of US policy. Nor could the sanctions be described as "strict", given that they represented symbolic rather than substantive evidence of "America's commitment to racial equality and majority rule" and were being openly evaded by Rhodesia's allies.

Williams's departure signalled a shift in Washington that mirrored Wilson's change of tack. Williams recommended that Fredericks should succeed him. So did Komer, who thought the African Bureau's "posture… is really in the best interests of the US" and regarded "Wayne Fredericks as a lot more tough-minded than Joe Palmer".[549] But it was indicative of the suspicion of this "posture" at the top of the State Department that, instead, Williams was replaced by Joseph Palmer II, a career diplomat with extensive experience of Africa, which included a period as US Consul General in Salisbury from 1959 to 1960. Palmer, like most of the officials in the African Bureau, was genuinely committed to racial equality and wanted the US actively to promote the interests of black Africans. But, as his lengthy despatches from Salisbury during his time as Consul General make clear, his analysis of black African fitness for government was remarkably similar to the views of the white minority governments of southern Africa. This did not make him a supporter of white minority rule; rather he was a believer in the traditional American goal of "racial partnership" and felt that the United States had a duty to protect the interests of whites as well as blacks.

[548] Noer, *Soapy*, p. 294
[549] Komer to Johnson, 8 Mar. 1966, Name File, Box 6, Komer Memos, Vol. 2, LBJ

Palmer, though, shared the worries of his colleagues in the African Bureau about a settlement that would be seen by black Africa and the international community as a "sell-out".[550] Fredericks felt so strongly about this that he planned to return his OBE were it to occur.[551] In preparation for Wilson's visit to Washington at the end of July, Palmer recommended that the US should adopt "a position that would permit US dissociation from any settlement of the Rhodesian rebellion that leaves a white minority government in control of Rhodesia." But he also demonstrated that his approach was much less idealistic than that of either Williams or Fredericks by suggesting (perhaps thinking of Wilson's refusal to send troops to Vietnam) that Britain could have bought stronger American support for "a legitimization of the minority regime" by being more loyal. "If the British invariably supported our positions elsewhere in the world, it would be appropriate to support them in an unpopular position." He also thought that any US protest should not be very loud. "The importance of the alliance requires that we limit any act of disassociation to the minimum required in the US interest."[552] The Europeans in the State Department, predictably perhaps, disagreed with the African Bureau and pointed out that "Majority rule as an essential condition prior to independence, it should be noted, is not one of the five (now six) principles of a settlement to which the UK is publicly committed." Instead, they recommended a wait-and-see approach.[553] This was the advice that Rusk adopted in his undated Rhodesia memo to Johnson for his meeting with Wilson. "I recommend you avoid a commitment" [on any agreement negotiated with Smith]. Although he explained the potential embarrassment to the US of any settlement with white-ruled Rhodesia, Rusk did not propose that Johnson should pressure Wilson into demanding majority rule before granting independence. Instead, he suggested that, "if effective guarantees [of progress to ultimate majority rule] could be devised that are credible to the international community, this should affect our attitude positively".[554]

[550] Rose to Allen, 11 July 1966, FO371/187980, Kew
[551] Le Quesne to Watson, 22 July 1966, FCO39/194, Kew; Fredericks had been a bomber pilot in World War Two and been awarded an honorary OBE
[552] Palmer to Rusk, 27 July 1966, CFPF, Box 2612, NARA
[553] Stoessel to Rusk, 25 July 1966, *Ibid.*
[554] Rusk's Memo for the President, undated, Rhodesia, Box 97, LBJ; Andrew DeRoche maintains that this memo "does exemplify the view at the highest level of the State Department that the US should not support a British deal with Smith that would not virtually ensure majority rule", an interpretation which overstates Rusk's commitment to majority rule before independence, DeRoche, p. 181, n. 29

When Wilson and Johnson met in Washington at the end of July, neither was inclined to discuss Rhodesia in any detail. The "talks about talks" had not yet concluded, there were other, more pressing, issues on their agenda and the Foreign Office had recommended to Wilson that he remain cagey on the issue because "the kind of solution which is at present being considered here… will find its way down to circles who would not have much hesitation in doing their best to queer our pitch in advance".[555] Despite these fears about the influence of the African Bureau, the British were receiving several nods and winks from influential members of the Administration about a settlement with Smith. Allen suggested that "the Americans… are likely publicly to express their disapproval of it, though privately certain members of the Administration may tell us that they recognise that it is the best outcome possible for our policy".[556] British officials believed that Rusk favoured a settlement. Michael Rose of the Foreign Office had told Killick in the Washington Embassy that, "in a recent conversation with the Prime Minister Mr. Rusk said he thought we were paying too much attention to African opinion – which is very far from what Jo Palmer and Wayne Fredericks said to me!"[557] Rose was referring to Rusk's visit to Downing Street on 10 June at which he had hinted to Wilson that the US might be prepared to accept a compromise settlement. Wilson "was concerned that if an independence settlement emerged, on a basis of majority rule in x years, this could cause trouble with African opinion which tended to insist that there could be no independence whatever before majority rule. Mr. Rusk said that he wondered whether in practice African opinion would not accept a settlement that went less far than the Prime Minister seemed to think necessary".[558] Killick told Rose he believed that, in the event of a settlement, "the US Government as a whole will be unlikely in the last resort to line up alongside Afro-Asian criticism of us". He explained that he had floated the idea of "a solution short of immediate majority government" with Duggan. "I prodded him in particular on the attitude the US might take towards such an outcome. Would they support us in public or would they merely be gratified in private but feel bound, out of regard for their image in Afro-Asia and at the United Nations, to join the chorus of critics? Duggan said that my assessment seemed a very

[555] Allen to Gore-Booth, 12 July 1966, FO371/187980, Kew
[556] *Ibid.*
[557] Rose to Killick, 17 June 1966, *Ibid.*
[558] PREM 13-1890: 1965-67, United States, Kew

reasonable one. There was no question but that many important people in the Administration (particularly those who were concerned with the effect on our economic situation of continued failure to deal with the problem) would privately be immensely relieved by such a settlement."[559]

Duggan's hint to Killick indicated that senior US officials continued to be worried about the financial implications for Britain and Zambia, and ultimately for the USA, of a long-drawn-out sanctions battle with Rhodesia. Dean reminded the Foreign Office in August about US financial worries.

> They [the Americans] are extremely wary of embarking on something which they regard as a dangerously open-ended commitment (in which their attitude is perhaps not unlike that of the Zambians themselves). They have at present little confidence in the likelihood of our working out with the Zambians a sound and sensible plan for increasing Zambian economic pressure on Rhodesia… And even if we did manage to reach a satisfactory agreement with the Zambians, the Americans would still have no money available from aid funds. The foreign Aid programme is having a very rough time in Congress. They are scared of asking the Congress for any money connected with contingency planning against Rhodesia, and they have no contingency funds which they can raid…[560]

British policy was, however, complicated by the opposition of Arthur Goldberg (the US Ambassador to the UN until June 1968) to any a settlement that was not acceptable to black African opinion. According to the British UN ambassador, Lord Caradon, "He made two main points on Rhodesia. Firstly… if we were to give in to the illegal regime the United States, having backed our good faith, would be in grave difficulty and unable to continue to support us. Secondly – here he was speaking personally but obviously from his own strong conviction – he considers that in our determination to achieve our purposes we must not exclude the eventual use of force (a show or threat of force might in the end be sufficient)."[561] Goldberg was no more willing to stand on the sidelines than Ball, Mann or Rusk, and his help to the British in the United Nations had been invaluable. They could ill afford to alienate him, especially because the "talks about talks" had generated enormous mistrust among the Afro-Asians in the UN.[562] In May, 32 African nations supported a resolution for the Security Council

[559] Killick to Rose, 1 July 66, FO371/187980, Kew
[560] Dean to FO, 6 Aug. 1966, *Ibid.*
[561] Lord Caradon to George Brown, 28 Aug. 1966, *Ibid.*
[562] British officials, in December, were at pains to express their appreciation "for Amb. Goldberg's help in obtaining acceptable resolution on Rhodesia", Bruce to State, 23 Dec. 1966, CFPF, Box 2610, NARA

drafted by Mali, Nigeria and Uganda which drew attention to the potential "harmful consequences" of Wilson's talks and called on "the United Kingdom to take all necessary measures, including the use of force, to abolish the racist minority regime in Southern Rhodesia". Goldberg joined the British delegation in abstaining and, with New Zealand voting against, the resolution was defeated.[563] Although they regularly needed Goldberg's support in the UN, the British were rightly sceptical about how much influence he had with Johnson. Dean, in April, had reported: "The picture which Goldberg paints of President Johnson's and his own thinking on Rhodesia differs of course very substantially from everything that Rusk, Ball or Mann have ever said to us – I wish it did not – but I continue to think that the President, who in any case is going to have quite a difficult time with Congress before the mid-term elections, is most unlikely to add Rhodesia, on which Congressional opinion is at least 3 to 2 in favour of Smith, to his catalogue of troubles."[564]

Throughout the year the British continued to be concerned that US companies were undermining sanctions. In June, one Foreign Office official observed that "there seems to be a real danger that the Americans will undermine our whole sanctions policy".[565] And, after a meeting with Wayne Fredericks in July, Martin Le Quesne of the Foreign Office was apoplectic.

> There is an element of double talk in Mr. Fredericks' saying that there would be no difficulty in maintaining sanctions in the United States if the struggle went on. The Americans are not imposing any sanctions. They have, it is true, done their best to organise voluntary abstentions from importing from Rhodesia. The most important of these have been in the field of tobacco. But here statistics just published by the United States Government show that in May of this year the Americans imported twice as much tobacco from Rhodesia as in May 1965 they imported from Rhodesia, Zambia and Malawi together… In the specific case of United Carbide's imports of chrome it comes fairly close to impertinence for Mr. Fredericks to say that the front is being held better than previously. It was only last week that the US Embassy told us on instructions from Washington that they are acquiescing in the import into the United States of a large quantity of chromite at present stock-piled in Lourenço Marques.[566]

[563] Sisco to Rusk, 23 May 1966, CFPF, Box 2609, NARA; the voting was 6/1/8
[564] Dean to Gore-Booth, 2 Apr. 1966, FO371/187980, Kew
[565] Rose to Killick, 17 June 1966, Ibid.
[566] Le Quesne to Allen, 29 July 1966, FCO39/194, Kew

Le Quesne was back on the warpath in August, telling the British Embassy in Washington: "The figures… about the present level of US imports of pig iron and ferro-alloys from Rhodesia are extremely disquieting... To say that we are disappointed to see the Americans step in to rescue the Rhodesians is putting it mildly."[567]

For their part, the US Government continued to maintain that it was doing all it could. In September, the State Department claimed that "pressures we can bring to bear on US companies operating in Rhodesia are limited. On the one hand, both US and UK remain opposed to mandatory sanctions, making it extremely difficult for US to invoke legal restrictions on operations of US companies". They also expressed some sympathy with US companies who were reluctant to burn their boats with the rebel regime. "Where future interests these companies are concerned, it clearly impossible for them in present circumstances to predict with certainty that Rhodesian problem will be resolved with agreement containing iron-clad provision for transition to majority rule, which would mean they would eventually have to count on dealing with African government, rather than expect possible retaliation from Smith if he establishes himself definitively."[568] Six months after Le Quesne's outburst, Gebelt's report from Salisbury on the extent of US trade with Rhodesia suggested that the British estimate had not been far wrong but also pointed out that "British claims on British exports to Rhodesia since UDI must be treated with reserve, as British figures would presumably not record Rhodesia as destination where goods went to South Africa or Mozambique, for subsequent transmission."[569] The Foreign Office had already admitted that it was unable to prevent the South African subsidiaries of the British oil companies selling oil to Rhodesia. "If they tried to make their deliveries conditional on the oil not reaching Rhodesia they would come into conflict with the South African Government's proclaimed policy and their action might well be counter-productive since it would be regarded by the South African Government as an attempt to pressurise them."[570] In October 1966 Dean even suggested that the British Government should itself condone some relaxation of the rules by allowing the US tobacco company, Dibrells, to sell its holdings of the 1965 Rhodesian crop

[567] Le Quesne to Killick, 12 Aug. 1966, FO371/188019
[568] State to USUN, 2 Sept. 1966, CFPF, Box 2619, NARA
[569] Gebelt to State, 1 Feb. 1967, CFPF, Box 2446, NARA
[570] Notes for Mr Thomson for his talks with Mr Ball, 14 May 1966, FO371/187980, Kew

in Belgium. “It will be in our interest to avoid… unnecessarily alienating the American tobacco companies [because maintaining the sanction] would probably reduce to nil our chances of getting Congress to agree to ending the present tax discrimination against imported bottled Scotch whisky in favour of American whiskies. This discrimination… could in certain circumstances result in an eventual loss of 80 million dollars per annum in export earnings.”[571]

The leakiness of sanctions merely confirmed for George Ball that they were ineffective. Early in September 1966, at a dinner at the British Embassy in Washington, he denounced them.

> George Ball... made it clear that he did not believe in sanctions as an effective weapon and that his chief concern was that if we were to embark on mandatory action we would not only fail to achieve our objectives over Rhodesia but would bring on an immediate economic crisis, with fatal damage to the British economy and to sterling. At the same time… he expressed the view that if a mandatory resolution were to pass it would prove totally ineffective and the ensuing crisis in the UN would be of the same order as the case of Ethiopia and the League. The United States would do nothing whatever to enforce such a resolution by participation in blockade measures and so on. This was not merely because of American commitments in Vietnam, but because the Administration would be unable to defend such action internally.[572]

Ball was outspoken in part because the British press baron Cecil King was also at the dinner and, as Ball admitted the following day, “he had thought it right to make the United States position absolutely clear for the benefit of British public opinion (Cecil King) as much as for HMG”. The unspoken message of this diatribe was clear: with force ruled out and sanctions failing, the British needed to settle with Smith as quickly as possible.

Harold Wilson needed no encouragement but, because of his willingness to negotiate, he endured a torrid time at the Commonwealth Conference in London in September. His refusal to commit himself unambiguously to the NIBMAR formula (no independence before majority rule) outraged most members and his position was supported only by Australia, New Zealand and Malta. Simon Kapwepwe, the Zambian Foreign Minister, walked out of the conference in disgust and told reporters,

[571] Dean to Foreign Office, 29 Oct. 1966, FO371/188020, Kew; Dean’s proposal was ignored
[572] Michael Stewart, British Embassy, to Gore-Booth, British Foreign Office, 10 Sept. 1966, FO371/187981

"Wilson is coming to be a racialist."[573] Wilson did confirm that independence would only be granted on the basis of the six principles, but left vague exactly how the fifth principle (ensuring that "any basis proposed for independence was acceptable to the people of Rhodesia as a whole") would be implemented. Significantly, he also agreed that, if negotiations with Smith broke down, Britain would sponsor a Security Council resolution to impose selective mandatory sanctions. Wilson told Johnson that, "Provided that the Commonwealth supported us at the United Nations in limiting the impact of sanctions… (i.e., so as to avoid, if possible, an overt clash with South Africa) I also agreed that we would then withdraw all previous offers made to Rhodesia and declare that there would be no independence before majority rule." He was quite correct when he surmised that "a clash with South Africa… is something which is, I believe, equally repugnant to you and to us. The consequences… are incalculable. They could in the longer run lead to armed conflict with the South Africans and would certainly produce economic warfare, the effect of which, for both our countries in particular but also I believe for Western economic interests generally, would be excessively damaging".[574]

Johnson, in his reply, offered to "have a go at Vorster".[575] As a result, the US Ambassador in Pretoria was told to deliver a message to the new Prime Minister warning that, if South Africa did not co-operate with sanctions, "pressures would inevitably arise in UN to extend mandatory sanctions to South Africa".[576] This attempt was no more successful than the British effort had been in April. Vorster told the Ambassador he thought he was being given a "politely worded threat or ultimatum", and repeated Verwoerd's line that South Africa would not act as a mediator.[577] The US Administration was particularly concerned about "the shift from voluntary to mandatory sanctions… and the possible consequences of extension to South Africa and the Portuguese territories". Significantly, they were worried that Wilson's promises to the Commonwealth Conference "virtually preclude a negotiated settlement".[578] It was to help keep this possibility alive that Palmer and Ball's successor as Undersecretary, Nicholas Katzenbach, both recommended that a draft reply to Kenya's

[573] Quoted in Good, p. 175
[574] Wilson to LBJ, 23 Sept. 1966, FO371/187981, Kew
[575] Johnson to Wilson, 18 Oct. 1966, *Ibid.*
[576] State to Pretoria, 21 Oct. 1966, CFPF, Box 2609, NARA
[577] Pretoria to State, 24 Oct. 1966, *Ibid.*
[578] Palmer and Sisco to Katzenbach, 1 Nov. 1966, *Ibid.*

President Kenyatta prepared for Johnson's signature "should not press the British" on the issue of majority rule for Rhodesia "while they are playing out their last card with Smith".[579]

Wilson and Smith met for direct negotiations between 2 and 4 December on the British warship HMS *Tiger*, off Gibraltar, where the ship, perhaps appropriately, circled in bad weather. Wilson offered immediate independence provided that Smith promised to accelerate progress towards majority rule. Wilson was taking a huge risk; his concession threatened the survival of the Commonwealth should the black nations leave in protest against this abandonment of the NIBMAR formula. He was also likely to face resignations from some members of his Cabinet and his UN Ambassador; there would, too, be a storm of protest from within the Labour Party. Andrew DeRoche (referring to LBJ's May speech to the African ambassadors) suggests that Wilson's willingness to meet Smith was "action worthy of Johnson's lofty rhetoric".[580] But the Tiger terms were a surrender, and Wilson knew it. According to Richard Crossman, Wilson told the British Cabinet when he returned, "Let's not forget we aren't like General MacArthur… accepting the unconditional surrender of the Japanese… This is a British Government which has failed to achieve its objectives, painfully accepting the best agreed terms they could get for the voluntary winding-up of the rebellion by the rebels themselves and since that is the case we can't quite expect the terms we would have imposed if we'd won."[581]

Smith, though, turned down Wilson's offer. Neither he nor his core supporters could accept the principle of majority rule – however distant its implementation. Smith also knew that his security services had the measure of the divided black nationalists and that Rhodesia could continue to evade the worst of the sanctions (albeit with difficulty) so long as he had the co-operation of South Africa and Portugal. British officials thought that senior Americans had been as hopeful of a settlement as they were. As the talks began, Martin Le Quesne told his Foreign Office colleague Michael Rose, "My guess is that, if a settlement emerges, the whole Administration with the exception of the Bureau of African Affairs will heave a sigh of relief, but that they will keep this to themselves and will give

[579] Palmer to Katzenbach, 28 Oct. 1966; Katzenbach to LBJ, 4 Nov. 1966, *Ibid.*
[580] DeRoche, *Black, White and Chrome*, p. 151
[581] Crossman, *Diaries*, entry for 4 Dec. 1966, p. 147

the Bureau of African Affairs a free hand to reinsure [*sic*] with the Africans by pointing out that they had no part nor lot [*sic*] in the settlement."[582] Rose commented that he thought that "Mr Rusk and Mr Katzenbach take a much more relaxed view than Messrs Palmer and Fredericks and the African boys. I hope that we can count on their broader perspectives coming in aid to us in a crunch."[583] Patrick Dean, writing a year later, thought that American hostility to Smith was largely a public relations exercise. "Publicly… they would not be prepared to damage their relations with the Black Africans and their influence in the United Nations by endorsing a 'Tiger' type constitution. The best we could probably hope for from them would be a non-committed silence." He also believed that the US Administration would have gone along with the Tiger terms, while condemning them in public. "On the question of recognition of a white minority government… the State Department would probably try to fudge the issue for as long as they could… Privately, I am sure those members of the US Administration (including Mr. Rusk) who take a broader view and are concerned about the British economy would be relieved that we had got ourselves, and thereby the Americans too, off the hook of sanctions, which they firmly believe are and will continue to be totally ineffective politically."[584]

These British assessments were sound. The American Administration was more worried about the implications of a Chapter VII resolution on relations with South Africa than about the fallout from an agreement with Smith. When British Foreign Secretary George Brown arrived in New York in early December to propose mandatory sanctions against Rhodesia, Katzenbach told Goldberg to find out from him whether "another attempt might be made to get Smith and Cabinet to swallow proposals rejected last weekend… We know that any move in this direction would produce strong reaction from Africans. Nevertheless, hazards of continuing to move on inexorably toward crunch in Southern Africa are such that we would like to be sure every possible effort is made to avoid them". He also wondered whether "a further demarche to South Africans might be desirable… to bring Rhodesians around".[585]

[582] Le Quesne to Rose, 2 Dec. 1966, FO371/187981, Kew
[583] Rose's comment on Le Quesne's memo, 5 Dec. 1966, *Ibid.*
[584] Dean to MacDonald, 9 Dec. 1967, FCO36/193, Kew
[585] Katzenbach to USUN, 6 Dec. 1966, CFPF, Box 2610, NARA

But the British could not go back on the promise that Wilson had made at the Commonwealth Conference in September to ask for mandatory UN sanctions if the negotiations failed. Britain's draft, introduced on 8 December, and supported by the US delegation, was too weak for the Afro-Asian nations; it did not describe Rhodesia as a threat to the peace and made no mention of oil among the proposed sanctions. There followed a week of wrangling. By the time UNSC Resolution 232 was finally passed on 16 December the British had conceded these two points but had managed to defeat Afro-Asian attempts to include a call for the use of force and a denunciation of South Africa and Portugal for supporting Rhodesia. The black Africans were not appeased; the Senegalese representative "described British motives as devious and calculated to buy time for consolidating the illegal regime while fobbing off the black Africans with illusory measures".[586]

Although Palmer did not say so explicitly, he seemed relieved that Wilson appeared to be leaving open the door to further negotiations with Smith. In London, he told British officials that he was "pessimistic about success of selective mandatory sanctions, particularly since SAG, buoyed by HMG statements that it would avoid confrontation with SA, could not be counted on to cooperate". But he did not want a confrontation with South Africa either, knowing the damage it could do to Britain's balance of payments. He commented that "he had impression from recent trip that African CW [Commonwealth] states had no idea what implications sterling problem might have for them".[587] At least one of Johnson's advisers thought Rhodesia had become a poisoned chalice. "The Republic [of South Africa] will not permit Rhodesia to fall into hostile hands. Economic sanctions will not work – indeed, they may be counter-productive. Whatever hardship results will hit the black population before the European. Rhodesia has the capacity to destroy Zambia's economy. The Republic has the British in a vice. Only great power, armed intervention on a major scale could bring down the Republic. This is an escalator we do not want to get onto. What we have to do – I think – is find a way

[586] Information Memorandum, 12 Dec. 1966, *Ibid.*
[587] London to State, 23 Dec. 1966, *Ibid.*

of expressing approval of the sanctions (it is too late now to take patently evasive action) with the full intention of ignoring their active implementation."[588]

4: The politics of mandatory sanctions

The passage of UNSC Resolution 232 changed the nature of the Rhodesian problem for the US Administration. In practical terms, mandatory sanctions made little difference. A memorandum by the CIA thought them "not likely to have much more effect than the previous voluntary ones. The white Rhodesians as a whole are more firmly behind Smith's Rhodesian Front Party than they were a year ago. They are confident that they can continue to survive any measure that the outside world is likely to take against them. Continued South African and Portuguese support in circumventing sanctions seems assured, and Rhodesia for its part is more experienced in evading sanctions".[589] Politically, however, Resolution 232 increased the problems for the Administration. Rhodesia was no longer simply an issue on which it could claim, however disingenuously, merely to be following the lead of its ally, Britain. The USA, for the first time in its history, was obliged to implement an economic boycott imposed by the United Nations. Accordingly, President Johnson, on 5 January 1967, exercising powers given him by the United Nations Participation Act of 1945, issued Executive Order 11322 requiring Americans to co-operate with the sanctions listed in the resolution. This order made Rhodesia a much more contentious issue in American domestic politics than it had been hitherto. Conservatives were outraged that the USA, at the behest of the Afro-Asian nations, was seeking to overthrow a seemingly stable, non-communist regime, and doing so in alliance with Britain, which continued to trade with Cuba and North Vietnam.

The increased seriousness of the Rhodesian problem for the US explains why, on 24 January, the NSC, for the first and only time in the Johnson presidency, devoted a meeting to it.[590] The briefing paper prepared by the African Bureau for this meeting indicates just how far their views had

[588] Roche to Moyers, 9 Dec. 1966, Confidential File CO312, Box 13, LBJ
[589] CIA Intelligence Memorandum: *Rhodesia and Zambia – From Voluntary to Mandatory Sanctions*, January 1967, Meetings Notes File, Box 1, LBJ
[590] The meeting was brief, lasting only 35 minutes

mellowed since the days of Williams. They were not recommending NIBMAR any more than Wilson was. "We share the British view that a phased movement toward majority rule in Rhodesia is the best way to achieve our aims… We must do whatever we can to provide the British with maximum leverage to use with the Rhodesian regime to reach an acceptable settlement." The Bureau's main reservation was that, "The British should not be given the impression, however, that the United States is so interested in a solution as to be urging concessions to Smith which would be unacceptable to the international community."[591]

The minutes of the meeting indicate that Johnson himself had little interest in the problem; he did nothing more than read out the briefing notes that Walt Rostow had prepared for him.[592] They also reveal just how completely the pragmatic concern about a confrontation with South Africa had triumphed over the initial idealism of the African Bureau in wanting to see Smith defeated.[593] Rusk emphasised once again: "This problem cannot be settled by force. The thought of using US troops is appalling." Not surprisingly, he stressed the need for a negotiated settlement. "We should not take a dominant role but should seek to get the parties together… We must get UK Prime Minister Wilson talking to Smith and exert our influence behind the scenes… We must get negotiations going again because there is rising support in the UN for sanctions against South Africa." Even Goldberg (perhaps because he was sensitive to the atmosphere in the room) did not mention either the use of force or NIBMAR. His views appeared to have moved a long way from those he had expressed to Caradon in August and he seemed almost apologetic when he explained: "We were obliged to vote in the UN as we did because to do otherwise would have caused us domestic racial difficulties and hurt our business interests in every African country." He added: "Our role is a moderating one… Sanctions will not work against Rhodesia." The nearest he came to suggesting that US policy should ensure that the interests of black Africans were protected was his remark that, "We have told the British to settle this honourably." Rusk's final comment was a lament that the Tiger talks had failed. "We must tell the British to resume their negotiations with the Rhodesians. At one point the parties were close to a

[591] Briefing Paper for 25 Jan. 1967 NSC discussion of Rhodesia, CFPF, Box 2448, NARA
[592] W.W. Rostow to LBJ, 24 Jan. 1967, Meeting Notes File, Box 1, LBJ
[593] The African Bureau was not represented at the meeting

compromise agreement which would not make black Africans happy but would get closer to a peaceful solution."[594]

During the year, attitudes to the Rhodesian problem became more entrenched in all of the countries involved. The US Administration found itself having to fend off conservatives' increasingly strident criticism of its support for Britain and UN sanctions. Dean observed in August, "The President's relations with Congress are more difficult now than they have ever been since he took office. And in any event electoral considerations are already beginning to militate against any but the most essential new departures in foreign policy." Dean was also convinced that, for the US Government, Portugal and South Africa mattered more than black Africa and knew that the influence of the African Bureau had significantly declined. "There would also be strong opposition within the US Government to any action which might precipitate a confrontation between the US and South Africa (and the departure of Wayne Fredericks from the Africa Bureau has probably weakened the countervailing liberal pressures in the State Department)."[595] Robert Owen, one of Dean's subordinates, suggested to the Foreign Office that domestic US politics had significantly narrowed the options available to the Administration. "The hard core of extreme conservatives (assisted by the Rhodesian Information Office here) have… been keeping up a steady pressure on the Administration… What the conservatives are, I think, achieving is to help induce in the Administration a desire to avoid as far as possible appearing publicly to be associated with the measures against Rhodesia." Owen pointed out that Johnson's Rhodesian policy had not won him support among Smith's American opponents either. "Congressional liberals have been notably quiet about Rhodesia in recent months… But… these members do not really agree with current US policy either since they would like to see sanctions strengthened, extended to South Africa and Portugal if necessary and enforced militarily. The failure of the present limited sanctions to produce any visible results has added to the dissatisfaction of this liberal group and greatly reduced their willingness to support the Administration. Also… some of

[594] Summary Notes of 567th NSC Meeting, 25 Jan. 1967, NSC Meetings File, Box 2, LBJ
[595] Dean to Foreign Office, 24 Aug. 1967, FCO36/193, Kew; Fredericks left the African Bureau in September to re-join the Ford Foundation

these liberals have discovered that their advocacy of black African causes has been having unwelcome repercussions for them in their electoral districts."[596]

John Killick of the British Embassy, accurately gauging the political mood in Washington, concluded in June that "there will, I am sure, be no attempt on the part of the Americans to prevent us from reaching a negotiated settlement".[597] The British Government, in early July, made another attempt to open negotiations with Smith by sending to Salisbury a Conservative peer, Lord Alport, who had considerable experience of African politics. The auguries were not good: Alport had made no secret of his opposition to UDI, and Smith described him as "almost a listed enemy of Rhodesia". However, after three weeks in the country during which Alport met approximately 1,000 people, he reported to Wilson that he thought almost all Rhodesians wanted a settlement along the lines of the Tiger proposals.[598] One historian has called his report "unduly optimistic".[599] However, Wilson was encouraged, as were some of the Americans. Killick reported to the Foreign Office that Tom McElhiney of the African Bureau had recommended that "HMG should resume negotiations with the regime pretty quickly, before the trend to the right in the Rhodesia Front brought about a situation in which further talks would be impossible".[600] The British were also getting signals from Pretoria that South Africa wanted a settlement, so Wilson arranged for his new Commonwealth Secretary, George Thomson, to include Salisbury on his autumn tour of Africa. Smith, though, was in no mood to compromise. He told his party's congress in September: "We have got real independence, we have proved our case, we know that it is successful… so there is no alternative and if we were to pause for one moment to consider any other alternative that may be put before us, we should be stark, staring mad."[601] Thomson and Smith met on 8 November but achieved nothing. Thomson had been obliged to promise the Afro-Asian Commonwealth delegates he had just conferred with in Uganda that Britain would not back away from NIBMAR. And Smith was less committed to the Tiger terms than he had been a year earlier.

[596] Owen to Snodgrass, 17 Nov. 1967, FCO36/193, Kew
[597] Killick to Le Quesne, 23 June 1967, FCO36/193, Kew
[598] Good, p. 221
[599] Windrich, p. 112
[600] Killick to Le Quesne, 25 July 1967, FCO36/193, Kew
[601] Gebelt to State, 2 Oct. 1967, CFPF, Box 2442, NARA

Tom McElhiney had been correct to observe a "trend to the right" in Rhodesia. Its government had successfully contained opposition from the communities hardest hit by sanctions – the tobacco farmers and commercial and business sectors – by extending its control over the economy and clamping down on dissent.[602] Towards the end of the year the Rhodesian parliament introduced measures to allow segregation of public facilities, residential accommodation and education. A Law and Order Act extended the use of the death penalty to actions deemed to be terrorist.[603] This was in response to increased militancy from the nationalists. President Kaunda of Zambia, who had initially advocated a non-violent response to UDI, had lost faith in Wilson's commitment to majority rule when he heard news of the "talks about talks" in April 1966 and had begun granting covert support to the nationalists. On 19 August 1967, Oliver Tambo of the South African ANC and James Chikerema, vice-president of ZAPU, announced in Lusaka that their two organisation were forming a "military alliance" and launched larger raids into Rhodesia than they had managed hitherto. These were suppressed by the Rhodesian security services but the involvement of South African police units (publicly acknowledged by Vorster in September) renewed fears of racial conflict engulfing southern Africa. The British Government managed to irritate both sides in this worsening dispute. In September it protested to South Africa about the deployment of its police units in Rhodesia, only to be told by Vorster that they would remain as long as necessary. In response to Kaunda's demand that Britain use its forces because its colony of Rhodesia had been invaded, Britain protested to Lusaka about Zambian territory being used as a base for terrorism. This served only to confirm Kaunda's view that Wilson was aligning himself with Smith. Wilson had the scant consolation that the organisers of the Labour Party conference in October managed to keep Rhodesia off the agenda.[604]

Wilson's difficulties were compounded by evidence that sanctions were not working. In September the Rhodesia Committee on Economic Sanctions met to discuss the "implications of a mandatory ban [by the UN] on all Rhodesian imports and exports" and came to a gloomy conclusion about the existing measures.

[602] Rowe, pp. 83-92, 107-30
[603] Good, pp 228-30
[604] Good, pp. 232-42; Windrich, pp. 114-15

> Most countries have been even more reluctant to impose sanctions on their exports to Rhodesia than on Rhodesia's exports to them and so far trade sanctions have had little or no direct effect on the level or commodity composition of Rhodesia's imports. Voluntary embargoes have in fact been imposed by the United Kingdom, the United States (in part), and by a number of countries whose trade with Rhodesia is relatively unimportant; but Rhodesia has been able to find alternative sources of supply for most of the goods cut off. UN sanctions have been applied to the import of oil and oil products, motor vehicles and parts, arms and aircraft and parts, but these sanctions have so far proved ineffective on oil and only partially effective on the other commodities.[605]

Even the African Bureau was not optimistic when its senior officials met their British counterparts two weeks later. Palmer admitted that "Africa did not have a high priority in Western thinking" and that "the strategic interests of the United States in Africa were marginal". When Sir Denis Allen lamented that the Rhodesian problem had reduced British influence with the Salazar regime in Portugal, Palmer made it clear that, unlike Williams, he accepted the priority of maintaining America's Cold War European allies over winning friends in black Africa. "Mr. Palmer said that… the US Government influence was also very low and they were prisoners because of their dependence on facilities in the Azores." The British minutes of the meeting make it clear that the Americans shared London's analysis of sanctions. "Mr. McElhiney said the US felt increasing scepticism about the effectiveness of sanctions. They believed that it was most unlikely that any settlement which at present could be envisaged would open the way to majority rule and that only through the use of force could this be brought about." McElhiney agreed with the British that Smith's security forces had the nationalist insurgency under control, which, given that neither the British nor the Americans were prepared to use force, suggests that even the African Bureau had become reconciled to a settlement short of NIBMAR.[606] As a result of this meeting the British Foreign Office thought that Dean had been correct in his assessment of the mood in Washington when he had reported that "we could expect US sponsorship of Black African causes to be a good deal more cautious than it had been six or twelve months ago".[607]

[605] Rhodesia Committee on Economic Sanctions meeting, 1 Sept. 1967, FCO29/88, Kew
[606] Record of Anglo-US Talks, 12-14 Sept. 1967, FCO36/193, Kew
[607] Foreign Office to Dean, 13 Nov. 1967, FCO39/194, Kew

By early 1968 it was abundantly clear that there were no immediate prospects for the overthrow of Smith and that his position looked more secure than at any time since UDI. Britain's impotence was underlined when, in March 1968, the Rhodesians hanged three Africans who had been convicted of murder, despite a very public royal reprieve. This event caused further outrage among the African and Asian nations. On 18 April they tabled a UN resolution demanding the use of force to end UDI and sanctions against South Africa and Portugal for assisting Rhodesia. These demands were no more acceptable to the Americans than they were to the British. Rusk told a number of his ambassadors to "approach friendly govts represented on SC to ensure widest possible opposition to ASAF [Asian and African] proposals that US and UK cannot support." Aware of American conservatives' anger over Rhodesia, he pointed out that "USG finding it difficult for domestic reasons to apply against SR measures that it does not apply against Cuba, Communist China etc". And he made it clear that "US opposed to censure of any specific countries, e.g. S. Africa, for assisting SR in defiance of SC reses."[608]

After a month of diplomatic wrangling, Security Council Resolution 253 was passed on 29 May. This reaffirmed that the Rhodesian situation constituted "a threat to international peace and security" and imposed mandatory comprehensive sanctions. But the British and American delegations had succeeded in eliminating its stronger measures; the resolution merely deplored "the attitude of States… which have persisted in trading with the illegal regime" without actually naming them. They also managed to ensure that the resolution made no mention of the use of force or NIBMAR. However, the resolution did urge all states "to render moral and material assistance to the people of Southern Rhodesia in their struggle to achieve their freedom and independence".[609] This, to critics, looked like a requirement to support terrorism. The British disagreed. When questioned about it in Parliament, George Thomson responded: "we would never have voted for this paragraph if we had believed that its terms in any way implied we either support or condone the use of violence."[610]

[608] Rusk to various embassies, 2 May 1968, CFPF, Box 2448, NARA
[609] UN website
[610] HC Deb 30 May 1968, Vol. 765, Col. 2138

Washington was no more optimistic than the British that Resolution 253 would make any significant difference to Rhodesia, as a CIA report of June made clear.

> The comprehensive sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council on 29 May 1968 against Rhodesia are unlikely to have much more effect in forcing Salisbury to relinquish its independence than have previous limited sanction efforts. So long as South Africa and Portugal refuse to comply with the Security Council's demand, Rhodesia will almost certainly be able to sell sufficient exports and obtain necessary imports to maintain its economy. Most of Rhodesia's foreign trade has been reoriented to adjust to previous sanctions and already either is with South Africa and Portugal or is carried out through disguised trade arrangements. Moreover, the country is more self-sufficient now than at the time of its Unilateral Declaration of Independence in late 1965 and is, therefore, better able to cope with the increased sanctions.[611]

With force ruled out, only an agreement with Smith could end the impasse. Wilson knew this only too well, as did the US Administration. Hopes of an agreement were boosted by a change of mood in Pretoria because comprehensive mandatory sanctions threatened to complicate South Africa's relationship with the USA and Britain. Smith, too, needed to appear receptive to negotiation because he was under domestic pressure from Rhodesian businessmen, some of whom were members of the Rhodesian Front, to settle.[612] The US Administration was as pleased as the British by these signs of flexibility. Rusk told a number of his ambassadors, "Dept. greatly interested possible new moves to arrange joint Portuguese-South African pressure on Smith to bring about settlement Rhodesian situation."[613] The British Embassy thought that, privately, the Americans were likely to acquiesce, even with an agreement "to the right of the 'Tiger' proposals", telling the Commonwealth Office in September that "senior members of the Administration, including Mr. Rusk, would certainly be relieved that we had got ourselves (and thereby the US too) off an awkward hook… The replacement of Mr. Goldberg by Mr. Ball has removed one element in the US Administration likely to press for a dissociation from British policy".[614]

Smith and Wilson met on HMS *Fearless* (again, off Gibraltar, but this time at anchor) between 9 and 13 October 1968. Smith was confident. He thought that Rhodesia could survive even comprehensive

[611] CIA Intelligence Memorandum, June 1968, Rhodesia, Box 97, LBJ
[612] Rowe, p. 110
[613] Rusk to various embassies, 1 July 1968, CFPF, Box 2445, NARA
[614] Wilford, Washington Embassy, to Commonwealth Office, 13 Sept. 1968, FCO 36-194, Kew

UN sanctions and knew that his security forces could contain the nationalist guerrillas. Wilson, as Thomson later admitted, "was very anxious for a settlement and was prepared to take risks to secure one".[615] Washington was aware of this. As Roger Morris of the National Security Council staff astutely observed, "Wilson is clearly anxious to be rid of this problem. British public sympathy for the black Rhodesians has gradually melted into resignation or indifference."[616] Race relations had become a highly emotive issue in British domestic politics earlier in the year. In February, approximately 10,000 Asians expelled from Kenya arrived in Britain and, in April, Enoch Powell sparked a firestorm by his so-called "Rivers of Blood" speech in which he predicted domestic unrest "of American proportions long before the end of the century".[617]

Wilson offered even more generous terms than he had done on HMS *Tiger*. He did not insist on NIBMAR and dropped the conditions for a return to legality that Smith had rejected after Tiger. He also offered a package of aid for African education. After the talks, Smith returned to Salisbury and Wilson sent Thomson after him to help continue negotiation over outstanding details. The Americans were aware that Wilson was doing all he could to obtain a settlement. The NSC's Roger Morris summarised the issues at stake in the post-Fearless negotiations.

> Wilson made important concessions on the question of legitimizing Rhodesian independence. The last obstacle was the old British ace-in-the-hole: an external guarantee that the white-dominated Rhodesian Parliament wouldn't renege, after the fact, on the negotiated constitutional provisions for eventual majority rule. Wilson's vehicle for the guarantee was a Privy Council – with a majority of Commonwealth watchdogs – to review and annul any infringement of the process. Smith, of course, rejected the idea on the grounds that the Council posed an unacceptable violation of Rhodesian sovereignty. Now the British have gone back to Salisbury with a very attractive compromise to dilute the powers of the Privy Council. The rather elaborate legal formula… papers over another British retreat.[618]

American officials debated how far they should support any settlement reached with Smith. As ever, the African Bureau and the European Division disagreed. However, Palmer merely recommended

[615] Quoted in Pimlott, p. 455
[616] Morris to Rostow, 15 Nov. 1968, Rhodesia, Box 97, LBJ
[617] Quoted in Butler and Jones, p. 298
[618] Morris to Rostow, 15 Nov. 1968, *op. cit.*

caution, not outright rejection of anything short of NIBMAR. "Ultimately, leaving Smith in control depends on question of trust in him and Europeans in general to carry out agreement in good faith. On basis past record and evident British unwillingness use force even if agreement violated, this is a slender reed… I urge USG proceed cautiously, take reserved attitude should agreement materialize quickly and avoid advanced commitments."[619] Eugene Rostow of the European Division was prepared to brush aside Palmer's reservations and thought : "It is as much in our interest as in Britain's that the situation in Rhodesia be normalized, on reasonable terms, as soon as possible." In his view, the alternative to an agreement with Smith was not "liberalization" (by which he meant greater freedom and political participation for Rhodesia's blacks) but "a drift to extremism ending in a real apartheid state north of the Limpopo". He recommended that the US should "let the British know in advance that we trust their judgment in this matter and will give any agreement they reach our strong support, in the UN and in Africa". He thought that the sooner this was done, "the greater their likelihood of success".[620] Rusk's advice to the US embassies in London, Lusaka and Pretoria and the US mission in Salisbury straddled these views. He observed that, because "any settlement now on horizon will be subject to strong criticism in Africa and elsewhere, we will continue to approach subject with great circumspection". But he concluded that "we will be under great pressure to go along with any agreement the UK succeeds in achieving with Smith and will in all probability do so".[621]

The Afro-Asian nations endeavoured to keep the pressure on Britain in the United Nations. On 25 October the General Assembly voted in favour Resolution 2379, which called on Britain not to grant independence before majority rule. The US delegation joined the British in abstaining. Two weeks later, by large majority, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 2383, which was even tougher. This called for the use of force against Rhodesia and for the imposition of sanctions against South Africa and Portugal. Britain and the United States were joined by just seven other nations in voting against.

[619] Palmer to State, 19 Oct. 1968, CFPF, Box 2447, NARA
[620] Eugene Rostow to Katzenbach, 21 Oct. 1968, *Ibid*.; emphasis in the original
[621] State to various missions, 23 Oct. 1968, *Ibid.*

The Johnson Administration never did have to make up its mind about the Fearless terms. By the time it left office in January 1969 it was clear that the negotiations had run into the sand because Rhodesia was preparing to draw up a new constitution designed to entrench white rule for the indefinite future. It is possible that Smith had always regarded the talks as nothing more than a public relations exercise. He recorded in his memoirs that he thought that the Fearless terms "would have been tantamount to giving us second-class independence" and that "the indications at the end of the year [1968] were that things were continuing to improve, so there was no need to compromise".[622] There is no reason to suppose that he demurred from the conclusions of his Secretary for Internal Affairs about the Fearless terms. "This fearful package… contains germs which sooner than later will cause the death of this country as a civilised and progressive entity and in the process we would endure the pattern of turmoil and suffering now so familiar wherever Britain has sought to impose her 'one man, one vote' philosophy."[623] The Wilson Government made no further efforts to reach an agreement before it lost office in June 1970, by which time Rhodesia had declared itself a republic.

The Rhodesian crisis had done considerable damage to American hopes at the start of the decade that the US might win friends in black Africa and reduce the appeal of communism to newly independent states and nationalist movements. Instead, Rhodesia had helped sharpen the Americans' African dilemma. As the CIA had warned in 1967, US policy was doing little to win friends in Africa: "The liberation cause has broad support among African states, and many of these believe that the US and the other great powers should take action that would terminate white rule in Southern Africa. The continued frustration of the liberation movements, therefore, will complicate US relations with African states and also US efforts to garner African support at the UN."[624] By supporting Britain's limited moves against Smith and the imposition of sanctions, the Johnson Administration had complicated its relationships with two important Cold War allies – South Africa and Portugal – and helped to stoke the fires of right-wing resentment against American co-operation with the United Nations.

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[622] Smith, pp. 146-47
[623] Quoted in Flower, pp. 297-98
[624] *The Liberation Movements of Southern Africa,* 24 Nov. 1967, National Intelligence Estimates, Box 8, LBJ

Chapter Five: We Can Only Respond and Cannot Take a Leading Role in the Struggle

1: The historiography of African Americans and US foreign policy

In May 1966, Roy Wilkins, Executive Director of the NAACP, was moved to write an open letter to President Johnson. He urged the President to adopt "a harder, bolder, more imaginative, more resourceful Rhodesian policy than that now in effect". Wilkins was worried that Harold Wilson's exploratory talks with Smith would result in "a compromise that will permit another apartheid government, even if expediently modified, to be established alongside that of apartheid South Africa". He suggested the US Government should abandon its policy of merely following the British lead over Rhodesia by making "clear that it will make further moves on the Rhodesian question in accord with its own policies of supporting national freedom movement and of vindicating the principle of racial equality in national life and in government". However, the following passage from the draft of his letter, in which Wilkins seems to imply that the USA should be fighting in Rhodesia rather than Vietnam, was omitted from the final version.

> Understandably our chief national concern at the moment is the war in Vietnam, for wherever American men are fighting and dying must claim priority in our attention. In Vietnam our reiterated objective is the establishment of a government which the people of Vietnam will choose in free elections and in whose benefits all will share. We are expending precious lives and billions of dollars to aid the Vietnamese people to attain that objective. We submit that our country can act to assure the black majority of Rhodesia a government in which it can participate. We can do this at a far less cost than that of the Vietnam campaign, and without placing ourselves behind the British as a mere supporting force.[625]

Wilkins's letter, and his decision to omit the reference to Vietnam, encapsulates the historiographical debate about the African-American attitude to US foreign policy in the Cold War era. Was Wilkins, in making his cut, demonstrating the timidity that had characterised moderate African-American attitudes to US foreign policy since the late 1940s? Or was he making a sensible, pragmatic choice because the circumstances of the mid-1960s left him little room for manoeuvre and because he was

[625] Draft of Wilkins's letter to LBJ, 4 May 1966, *NAACP,* Reel 1, p. 52, RAI

reluctant to jeopardise such influence with the White House as he possessed?[626] The response of the African-American community to the Rhodesian declaration of independence can only be fully understood in the context of the attitudes and decisions that black Americans had made about their nation's overseas policies since the onset of the Cold War.

A significant group of historians believes that moderate African Americans, by too readily accepting the establishment view that anti-communism was more important than racial equality, destroyed the chance of meaningful change in both the USA and the non-white world. Carol Anderson, in criticising what she saw as the mendacity and ruthlessness with which the NAACP leadership distanced itself from the black communists of the CRC[627], has argued that in 1948 it was "seduced", and effectively neutered, by Truman's unfulfilled campaign promises. The NAACP leadership, she argues, "had ceded its leverage to play off the Democrats against the Republicans [and] jettisoned its international strategy". This, she believes, left it with "a very limited range of options to secure black rights". By stressing its patriotism, the NAACP "confined itself to a civil rights platform stripped of the economic rights necessary to overcome more than 300 years of oppression".[628]

Penny von Eschen has made a similar criticism. She suggests that the African-American anti-colonial activists of the 1940s had a coherent anti-colonial and anti-capitalist agenda, and were hopeful of dramatic change in the world order after World War Two. This was because Roosevelt's dislike of European colonial empires, the wartime alliance with the USSR and the emphasis on human rights in the establishment of the United Nations had made these African Americans optimistic that the post-war world might be shaped by a worldwide, anti-colonial New Deal making the world's poor rich enough to become consumers. Although recognising that the Truman Doctrine, McCarthyism and the powerful anti-communism of the early Cold War limited the scope of the civil rights movement, her

[626] Andrew DeRoche describes Wilkins as "Johnson's closest contact among the civil rights leaders", *Black, White and Chrome*, p. 115
[627] The Civil Rights Congress (CRC) likened Jim Crow America to the Nazi Holocaust and wanted to indict the US Government under the UN Convention on Genocide. The NAACP did not want to join the CRC in encouraging international criticism of the USA. See Carol Anderson, 'Bleached Souls and Red Negroes, The NAACP and Black Communists in the Early Cold War, 1948-1952', in Plummer (ed.), *Window,* pp. 93-113
[628] Anderson, *op. cit.* pp. 106, 107

book criticises the African-American response to these pressures. She claims that "the mass politics of the earlier anti-colonial alliances had been superseded by a middle class politics of symbolism and federal patronage which continued to be advocated by black American leaders throughout the 1950s". This, she feels, was a major strategic error. "By acquiescing in a narrowed civil rights agenda, many civil rights leaders forfeited the means to address… structural changes."[629] While acknowledging that some moderate civil rights leaders, such as Martin Luther King Jnr. and Bayard Rustin, were concerned about decolonisation, she maintains that "anti-colonialism… was not a programmatic part" of their movement. And, although she accepts that some African Americans benefited from America's post-war prosperity, she maintains that the majority gained little. "For most black Americans, as the sphere of struggle narrowed from an embrace of economic, political and social justice to a more circumscribed notion of civil rights, the post-World War II re-segregation of the labour market and housing created new structural and institutional inequalities and barriers to advancement." The civil rights strategy of the moderates was, for von Eschen, "a tragically narrow choice".[630]

Robbie Lieberman and Clarence Lang agree that post-war moderate black leaders sacrificed "a global struggle for human rights encompassing anti-colonialism and economic justice" in order to achieve domestic civil rights and that the late 1940s represented a missed opportunity for black unity in pursuit of a radical international agenda. "There was a moment of opportunity for black radicalism, born of the hopeful, expectant atmosphere coming out of World War II – a moment in which issues, organisations, and people on the Left might perhaps have come together in a broad-based progressive movement."[631] Gerald Horne's criticism of moderate African Americans is even more trenchant; he has claimed that what von Eschen called "a tragically narrow choice" was nothing less than "a Faustian bargain that was to define black America for decades to come". This, Horne argues, made the NAACP actively complicit in the conservative foreign policy agenda of the establishment. "When black America's leading organisation – the NAACP – embraced the Democrats so wholeheartedly, they also felt compelled to swallow their [i.e. the Democrats'] foreign policy agenda, favouring the

[629] Von Eschen, pp. 148-9
[630] *Ibid.,* pp. 186-7
[631] Lieberman and Lang, pp. 6, 10

waging of hot wars in Korea and Vietnam and a cold war globally, which not only demonised anticolonial movements as 'Communist' but also drained the federal budget that could have addressed pressing needs in housing, health and education."[632] In return, Horne claims, the NAACP was given only "a semblance of civil equality".[633] Francis Njubi Nesbitt has also been critical of the moderate American Committee on Africa (ACOA) which was formed in 1953. He maintains that, "constrained by its roots in liberal, anti-communist organisations", it limited its own effectiveness by condemning the violence of the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya which had begun the previous year.[634]

In lamenting the impact of the Cold War, Robbie Lieberman and Clarence Lang have pointed out that "we cannot count or measure the effect of books that were not written, plays and films that were not produced, ideas that were not discussed, and reforms that were not enacted". This is true; but nor can we measure what would have been achieved had the McCarthyite witch hunts not occurred. While it is possible to agree with all these authors that the paranoid persecution of the American left during the post-war Red Scare stunted the opportunities for a radical critique of US foreign policies, it remains doubtful whether Lieberman and Lang's "broad-based progressive movement", even without the stultifying impact of McCarthyism, could have both maintained its unity and achieved an ambitious agenda encompassing decolonisation and international economic transformation. To what extent was the religious commitment that inspired and sustained much civil rights protest compatible with a political and economic agenda that owed much to the atheist Karl Marx? Did the non-white peoples of the world possess sufficient power and unity of purpose to undertake a "global struggle for human rights encompassing anti-colonialism and economic justice"?[635] Furthermore, the divergent attitudes to violence and the role of liberal white allies that fractured the US civil rights movement in the 1960s, were not simply a product of the government-sponsored persecution of the 1950s, but were as much rooted in differing concepts of black identity.

[632] Horne, *Du Bois,* pp. 155, 158
[633] Horne, *Mau Mau*, p. 115
[634] Nesbitt, p. 25-26
[635] Lieberman and Lang, pp. 10, 6

Some historians, rather than criticise moderate African Americans civil rights campaigners for making a supine strategic choice have, instead, argued that the atmosphere of the 1950s circumscribed their freedom of manoeuvre. Mark Ledwidge's study regretted the domestic focus of the civil rights campaign of the 1950s but interpreted this as less a conscious choice by African Americans than a response to elite pressure: "Cultural and racial bigotry and the ethno-centric parameters of American political culture coupled with anti-communism discouraged Negroes from acknowledging their hyphenated identity." He also points out that, in response to the McCarthyite atmosphere of the 1950s, "Most Negroes were quick to affirm their loyalties to America and America alone."[636] Unsurprisingly, this had, from the government's point of view, "the desired punitive effect of encouraging a neutered brand of internationalism. In particular, the political assassinations of Du Bois and Robeson may have encouraged the new generation of black leaders to endorse a more state centric and rhetorical form of internationalism lacking any real practical engagement with transnational actors".[637]

Brenda Gayle Plummer, one of the first historians to investigate the relationship between African Americans and US foreign policy, also blamed circumstances for the narrowness of vision of the activists of the 1950s: "The conformity [that the Cold War] exacted played upon the desires of all citizens to reap the benefits and promise of American life. The climate of the times encouraged Americans to turn inward, away from the threats emanating from abroad."[638] Plummer also pointed out that race made criticism of the establishment more difficult. "White Americans were free to either embrace or discard obvious indicators of ethnic origin, but black Americans could not."[639] Arguably, this made it all the more important for them to demonstrate their loyalty to the USA and its post-war values if they were to make any progress on civil rights. As Martin Weil observed in a 1974 article comparing the influence on US foreign policy of Polish Catholics, American Jews and African Americans,

> Blacks as blacks may identify with Africa, but it is only as Americans that they can change United States policy in Africa. If Afro-Americans ever gain leverage in

[636] Ledwidge, p. 123
[637] *Ibid*., p. 136
[638] Plummer, *Rising Wind*, p. 239
[639] *Ibid.,* p. 35

> foreign policy, it will be those black politicians who are most successful within the system who will do so – those who can command the respect of their black constituents and reassure white America at the same time. To aid the revolution abroad, blacks must first join the establishment at home.[640]

This would suggest that African Americans made a shrewd choice in stressing their pro-American, anti-communist credentials and making domestic reform their priority. Robert Harris, in an article about Ralph Bunche, has pointed out that this tactic provided them with some leverage: "as they sought to use the Communist threat as a wedge to improve racial conditions in America, Afro-American leaders and organisations stressed domestic rather than international affairs."[641] Lisa Brock's assessment of the ACOA and its Executive Director, George Houser, has also suggested that their accommodation with the establishment was not only essential, but bore fruit.

> ACOA during its first few years emerged as the premier US Africa solidarity organisation. It did so through sophisticated coalition building, through work with the young United Nations, and by cultivating good relations with emerging African leaders… The 1950s was a strange time. Not only was ideological conformity demanded, but false accusations could destroy individuals and organisations. ACOA's success stemmed in large part from its careful navigation of these charged waters… The ACOA and the US civil rights movement succeeded in getting a wide range of white Americans interested and engaged in the nonviolent struggle for racial justice, both in the United States and on behalf of Africa… The United States was a majority white country, and if US policy was to be affected, Houser believed, members of the majority group had to be engaged.[642]

Ryan Irwin has also suggested that, for the achievement of African American goals, establishment allies were important and productive. He points out that "Soapy" Williams, former governor of Michigan and head of the African Bureau in the State Department from 1961 until 1966, fully accepted the black American view that "The struggles of African and African Americans were two sides of a single coin. If the governor supported the civil rights movement at home, it followed that he had to embrace African decolonization abroad."[643] Irwin argues that Williams made significant progress in helping to change official thinking, especially about apartheid, even if only in the long term. "The assistant secretary's views on international order provided a consistent counterweight to

[640] Weil, pp. 109-130
[641] Harris, p. 133
[642] Lisa Brock, 'The 1950s' in Minter, Hovey, Cobb, (eds.) pp. 66-67
[643] Irwin, p. 78

those policymakers apathetic about Third World political demands. His views were not novel, but Williams's place at the center of the policymaking establishment – his ability to introduce these beliefs into high-level discussions and embed them in state-sanctioned thinking – made him influential… More than any other figure in Washington, Williams shaped the antagonism that characterised US-South African relations in the mid-1960s."[644]

Some historians have demonstrated that the Cold War, however much it may have constricted the American left, nevertheless accelerated the achievement of some of the goals of moderate civil rights reformers in the USA. Mary Dudziak has shown how much successive post-war US governments were compelled, albeit reluctantly, to tackle the issue of civil rights by the strength of international opinion. The Cold War emphasised the painful contradiction between the American claim to stand for freedom and peace against an aggressive, tyrannical Soviet Union while simultaneously denying civil rights to African Americans. This difficulty became all the more acute for the USA as it tried to influence the newly independent nations of the non-white Third World – a task complicated by the eagerness of the USSR and Communist China to exploit America's domestic record.[645] Thomas Borstelmann has also charted the response of successive post-war US administrations to the challenge posed by the non-white world. Having shown that the Eisenhower Administration was hesitating and uncertain in its response to decolonisation and civil rights, he argues that "the Cold War was the key to unlocking the Kennedy administration's concern about racism [in the USA]" but that the activism of the civil rights campaigners was also essential to forcing the Administration to act. "The Southern civil rights movement – aided by the viciousness of its opponents – managed to change Kennedy's political calculations and perhaps even his core attitudes."[646] The Cold War and the domestic civil rights movement, far from merely turning moderate African Americans into uncritical apologists for the foreign policies of the US Government, also opened a space for them to exercise some influence on attitudes in America towards the racist regime in South Africa. Brenda Gayle Plummer has pointed out that the "Day of Protest" organised by the NAACP in 1957 to draw attention to the South African

[644] *Ibid.,* p. 75
[645] Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*
[646] Borstelmann, *Color Line,* pp. 165, 171.

Government's refusal to endorse the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, supported by well-known figures including Eleanor Roosevelt and Martin Luther King, resulted in a "growing respect for civil rights activism among US elites [which] expanded the critical focus on South Africa".[647]

2: African Americans and Africa

Could the civil rights revolution have achieved more? One of the major problems in assessing the potential of African Americans to effect "a global struggle for human rights encompassing anti-colonialism and economic justice"[648] lies in measuring the degree to which black Americans identified with Africa. Many did not. They believed that stressing their African heritage too strongly played into the hands of white American racists who denied that blacks were truly American and therefore did not deserve full civil rights. The views of Roger Wilkins (who served in the Kennedy Administration) were typical of these black Americans.

> 'What is Africa to me?'… For most blacks of my generation, who grew up in the 1930s and 1940s and came to full height – if not to maturity – in the 1950s, the answer was simple: nothing. Nothing, except a reminder of shame: irrelevant except for our need to repress and forget it in our drive for assimilation here in America… Slavery broke our continuity. My 'old country' is Mississippi, and I can trace the trail only three generations back… Slavery broke the link with Africa… To identify with the black clods of Tarzan's Africa never entered my mind.[649]

He was not alone. A black American woman interviewed by the Baltimore Afro-American newspaper in October 1952 made the same point with an analogy: "There is no more in common between me and an African than [between] Roosevelt and [Queen] Juliana though they were both of Dutch extraction."[650] Mary Jane Patterson, a civil rights activist and Presbyterian missionary in Kenya felt a special bond with Africa, but nevertheless believed herself to be wholly American. "I wasn't one of those crazy African Americans who went over and kissed the soil and said, 'God, I'm home.' You can't be home if you've been in the diaspora for 14 generations! You're not home. Home is where

[647] Plummer, *Rising Wind,* p. 268
[648] Lieberman and Lang, p. 6
[649] Wilkins, pp. 130-142
[650] Quoted in Meriwether, *Proudly*, p. 105

you are for 14 generations."[651] Horace Cayton, a journalist and sociologist, expressed similar views in his 1963 autobiography. "I am not taken in by any spurious notions about my African heritage," he wrote. "American Negroes are really just dark-skinned Americans. We are not held together by any idea of a common African background, history or culture but rather by the opposition of white Americans. As a group we don't even resemble Africans. Culturally we are wholly American… this is our home, our country."[652]

National opinion surveys suggested that there was widespread ignorance of international issues among the American population in general, and among African Americans in particular. A poll undertaken by the American Institute of Public Opinion (AIPO) in February 1953 revealed that only 21% of the African Americans (and 32% of whites) interviewed read any news about international issues regularly. Another AIPO poll in April 1955 found that 30% of African Americans and 22% of whites questioned were unable to locate one of seven European countries on a map. Knowledge of Africa was even worse. The National Opinion Research Center (NORC) in April 1957 revealed that 70% of African Americans questioned could not name an African country or territory, and that only 1% could name as many as five.[653] And yet this poll was undertaken less than two months after Ghanaian independence, an event widely celebrated by African American newspapers and civil rights activists.[654] The size of the sample in these polls was small, and the results reflect both the standard of education in black schools in the 1950s and the low status given to Africa in the US media. The black press in the USA was unable to do much about this because it lacked the resources to maintain reporters and independent news agencies in Africa. George Houser, writing in 1967, confirmed these impressions. "Generally speaking, the American people have not been well informed through the mass media or the more formal educational system, about the real issues in southern Africa although this situation has improved slightly over the last few years. We have also had to contend with a certain

[651] Quoted in Edmunds, 'The 1960s' in Minter, Hovey, Cobb, (eds.), p. 86
[652] Quoted in Meriwether, *Proudly,* p. 107
[653] Hero, pp. 220-251; The figures for whites answering the questions on Africa were 55% and 6%
[654] In an article published in 1965, scholar Elliott Skinner suggested that Ghanaian independence "was celebrated only by a handful of intellectuals and veterans of the Garvey Movement". Quoted in Hickey and Wylie, p. 290

amount of apathy toward critical problems in Africa."[655] His views were endorsed by political scientist, John Davis, who suggested in 1969 that black activism on behalf of southern Africa had been hampered by "the general aloofness and confusion of the Negro public in the United States toward the fratricidal struggle of their brothers" and by the "confusion and ignorance existing among the majority of Negroes".[656] Clearly, building an anti-colonial mass movement among African Americans would not have been easy.

For African Americans, identifying with black Africa was made more problematic by the stereotypes that permeated mainstream white culture in the USA and the white Western world. The novelist and civil rights campaigner, James Baldwin, recalled the ubiquity of negative impressions of Africa during his formative years. "At the time that I was growing up, Negroes in this country were taught to be ashamed of Africa. They were taught it bluntly by being told, for example, that Africa had never contributed 'anything' to civilization. Or one was taught the same lesson more obliquely, and even more effectively, by watching nearly naked, dancing, comic-opera cannibalistic savages in the movies. They were nearly always all bad, sometimes funny, sometimes both."[657]

For American media, black Africa was at once exotic and mysterious, exciting but dangerous and, above all, uncivilised and backward – an image typified by this 1953 extract from an edition of *Life* magazine.

> For centuries the rhythm of Africa remained unchanged. It was not slow, as in lands where the sun swings wide, but sharp and savage as the tom-tom beat. Enormous brooding silences were broken by the shrill squeak of leopards. The yellow snout of a crocodile slid silently over a pool to end in an abrupt snapping of jaws. Men's activities were molded by the environment. Life was dominated by the witch doctor prancing in his devil mask and swaying headdress; peace was abruptly stopped by the stabbing spear.[658]

[655] Houser, 'The Freedom Struggle', p. 2
[656] Davis, pp. 242-243
[657] Quoted in Staniland, p. 179
[658] Quoted in Staniland, p. 42

Most American school textbooks had very few pages on Africa and devoted the majority of those they did have to Egypt. One history of the world published in 1950 depicted black Africa in wholly negative terms. "The Dark Continent is an unexplored wilderness, with an unbearable climate, a Negro population largely barbarous, and deserts and jungle quite impenetrable… The people are dark of skin; many of them are even darker of mind."[659] It was widely believed by the white elite in both the USA and Europe that Africa's history began only with European colonisation. The US Consul General in Dakar told the State Department in September 1955 that, "In Africa, we are faced with an almost complete historical void… [and] with civilization as we know it only in its birth pains."[660] This view was given academic respectability by Oxford's Regius Professor of Modern History, Hugh Trevor-Roper, who argued that there was no African history before the Europeans arrived, merely "the unrewarding gyrations of barbarous tribes in picturesque but irrelevant corners of the globe".[661] For many Americans – black and white – the Tarzan stories of Edgar Rice Burroughs provided their principal images of Africa. Although Tarzan himself is white, he swings through the trees in a primeval jungle inhabited by black Africans who are, at best, naive innocents lacking modern culture and sophistication and in need of redemption by white Americans. By 1970, the Tarzan books had sold 30 million copies and the stories had been reproduced in 10 million comic books.[662] There were regular film, stage, radio and television versions of the stories throughout the twentieth century. However, Hollywood's responsibility for shaping the images of Africa in the minds of Americans went well beyond the Tarzan films, as Thomas Borstelmann has indicated.

> Africa in the movies before World War II appeared as a kind of manifestation of the unrestrained id: savage to the point of cannibalism and thoroughly sensual. Black magic and voodoo abounded, while notably simian African men not under white control provided a steady subtext of sexual menace to white women. Africans were portrayed in uniformly derogatory fashion as American filmmakers constructed a fantasy Africa out of their own projections of supposed white superiority and convoluted fears of black sexuality. Decency and morality were almost exclusively associated with the presence of white people.[663]

[659] Wilson, 'Tarzan', p. 43
[660] *FRUS, 1955-57 Vol. XVIII,* Doc. 38, p. 156
[661] Quoted in Philips, hnn.us/node/24954; in 1968 Trevor-Roper referred to "unhistoric Africa", ironically in a lecture warning that "the present cannot be fully understood in isolation from the past", 'The Past and the Present, History and Sociology', *Past and Present*, No. 42, Feb. 1969, pp. 6, 8
[662] Staniland, p. 36
[663] Borstelmann, *Reluctant Uncle*, p. 9

Unsurprisingly, these attitudes were prevalent in Washington. Throughout the 1950s, US government officials expressed their doubts about the wisdom of hasty decolonisation in Africa. And institutional racism also affected recruitment to government posts. Michael Krenn has established that African Americans, in trying to get jobs in the State Department and diplomatic service, "ran into a stone wall made up of equal parts of disinterest [*sic*], racism and tradition".[664] These difficulties made identification with black African independence highly problematic.

3: African Americans and African decolonisation in the 1950s

Nevertheless, events in black Africa elicited an empathetic response from some African Americans. Historians of this topic attest to the influence of the Italian invasion of Abyssinia (also known as Ethiopia) in October 1935 in galvanising black opinion in the USA.[665] In the post-war era, the 1952 Defiance Campaign led by the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa against the imposition of strict apartheid laws led to the formation of a pressure group, Americans for South African Resistance (AFSAR), which became the ACOA in 1953 once the Defiance Campaign ended. George Houser in recounting its achievement also revealed the limits of its influence. "ASFAR managed to build up a mailing list which approached one thousand people around the US and raised several thousand dollars which… was sent to the ANC." Of the ACOA, he admitted that, until that late 1950s, "our existence was marginal".[666]

The response to the outbreak of the Mau Mau uprising in British-ruled Kenya in 1952 widened the gulf between moderate and radical African Americans and prefigured the disagreements among them over the legitimacy and efficacy of violent protest that is usually associated with the oratory of Malcolm X and the emergence of the Black Power movement in the mid-1960s. The ACOA, the NAACP and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, although they sympathised with the challenge to white minority rule in Kenya, were quick to distance themselves from Mau Mau violence. The reaction of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, in its editorial reflecting on the events of the 1952, was typical.

[664] Krenn, *Black Diplomacy,* p. 5
[665] Plummer, *Rising Wind,* pp. 37-56; Meriwether, *Proudly*, pp. 27-56; Von Eschen, p. 11; Kelley, pp. 1066-70
[666] Houser, 'Meeting Africa's Challenge', pp. 16, 18

> The year of 1952 saw the black man in ferment, both at home and abroad, meeting face to face new challenges and matching strides towards a new era with the rest of humanity… Racial prejudice also helped to foment revolt among the African people. The African in Kenya, in Rhodesia, Bechuanaland, South Africa, Tunisia, and the West Coast was active. His action ranged from the South African's passive resistance, or refusal to abide by the segregation laws of his white (temporary) rulers, to open violence in the vicious street fighting of the North Africans and the stealthy, more terrifying, executions of the Mau Mau in East Africa.[667]

Given how successful British propaganda was in portraying the Mau Mau as uncivilised savages, it is not surprising that many in the African American community did not want to reinforce existing negative stereotypes by endorsing the Mau Mau. In January 1953, the *Chicago Defender* reported on "a continuing campaign of murder and pillage waged by the Mau Mau, secret native terrorist society, sworn to drive out the whites or kill them to achieve black supremacy".[668] In the same month the *New York Amsterdam News,* reporting the murder of 11 Africans, revelled in the horror of "the Mau Mau cult", claiming that "Swinging pangas, native knives, they hacked four to death, beheaded one, and slashed a woman and two children."[669] An article in 1955 suggested that, were the Mau Mau to be successful, "the Kenyan people would simply have exchanged evil white rulers, driven by blind, piggish bigotry, for evil black rulers driven by revengeful, bloody and superstitious cruelty".[670]

However, for radical African Americans, the Mau Mau uprising was an inspiration. Carlos Cooks, for whom black Christian integrationists were "the stoutest defenders of white supremacy and the loudest defamers of Africa and everything pertaining to it", described the uprising as "the eternal war against the white aliens. The spirit of Mau Mau is a forerunner of the mighty surge of Martial Black men [that will] drench Africa with the blood of the parasitical white colonial exploiters".[671] Malcolm X wanted American blacks to follow their example. "What we need in this country is the same type of Mau Mau here that they had over there in Kenya. Don't you ever be ashamed of the Mau Mau. They're not to be ashamed of. They are to be proud of. Those brothers were freedom fighters."[672] He credited them with playing "a major role in bringing about freedom for Kenya, and not only for Kenya but other African

[667] *Pittsburgh Courier*, 3 Jan. 1953, Editorial
[668] *Chicago Defender*, 17 Jan. 1953, p. 15
[669] *New Amsterdam News*, 3 Jan. 1953, p. 4
[670] *Ibid.*, 28 May 1955, p. 18
[671] Quoted in Nesbitt, p. 28
[672] Malcolm X, speech, 20 Dec. 1964, Breitman (ed.), p. 133

countries".[673] And Stokely Carmichael was probably correct when he observed that, "to most whites, Black Power seems to mean that the Mau Mau are coming to the suburbs at night."[674]

The achievement of Ghanaian independence in March 1957 was an event that both moderate and radical African Americans could celebrate. Kwame Nkrumah, the country's first independent premier, was a socialist with Pan-African aspirations. Malcolm X described his hour-long meeting with Nkrumah in Ghana in May 1964 as the "highest single honour"[675] of his African trip. And in an article written two months later, Malcolm extolled Nkrumah's radical vision for Africa. "Nkrumah's Pan-Africanism is the most advanced political doctrine being voiced on the African Continent today, and for this reason President Nkrumah is both feared and hated by the White Western Powers who are still trying to maintain a neo-colonialist foothold."[676]

Martin Luther King (who attracted more media attention at the Ghanaian independence celebrations than Vice-President Nixon)[677] was also inspired by Ghana's freedom because, to him, it demonstrated both that "a nation or a people can break loose from oppression without violence" and that "the forces of the universe are on the side of justice".[678] Ghanaian independence prompted a profound and positive re-thinking towards both black American identity and African decolonisation.[679]

4: Liberal optimism about the future of black Africa in the early 1960s

Ghanaian independence was followed by what British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan famously termed "the wind of change" in Africa. In 1960 no fewer than 17 African nations attained independence, to be followed by eight more by 1963. As a result, a growing number of non-white, newly independent nations, increasingly assertive in world affairs, altered the balance of power in the United Nations. This development not only obliged the United States to woo black Africa but

[673] Malcolm X, speech, 14 Feb. 1965, Clark (ed.), p. 81
[674] Quoted in Horne, *Mau Mau*, p. 230
[675] *Autobiography*, p. 472
[676] Quoted in Sherwood, p. 35
[677] Ambrose, *Nixon,* p. 432
[678] Quoted in Meriwether, *Proudly,* p. 165
[679] Meriwether, *Proudly,* p. 159; Plummer, *Rising Wind,* p. 277

coincided with what historian Larry Grubbs has termed "secular missionary" zeal among Western liberals to shape the destiny of the Third World. Sponsoring development in black African nations offered the US a chance to achieve several objectives simultaneously: to shape new nations in the image of the USA while projecting a positive, humanitarian image of America in contrast to European colonial exploitation, and containing communism in Africa.[680]

The rapid retreat of European colonial empires in Africa in the early 1960s coincided with a brief period in which Western liberals in general, and the Kennedy Administration in particular, were suffused with optimism about the transformative power of American expertise to shape the future of the developing world. In December 1959 *The New York Times* summed up the prevailing mood of optimism about Africa's future while simultaneously reiterating the traditional stereotypes about the history of both Africa and America: "Primitive customs are disappearing from the continent almost as fast as its wild animals. The spear, the ostrich feather, the juju mask, the thumping dance with naked breasts and swinging monkey tails – all these soon will be as extinct as the redskin stockade and the pony express."[681] The youthful social scientists – notably Walt Whitman Rostow – who dominated the strategic thinking of the Kennedy Administration believed that their academic analyses could provide universal models which would enable Third World nations to emulate American progress and success.[682]

This was the inspiration behind the Peace Corps – youthful volunteers whose enthusiasm and energy would, it was hoped, enthuse the grateful natives in developing countries with a love of American values. The Peace Corps would thereby help American strategic concerns.[683] Africa was central to this, as Kennedy himself made clear in an election speech to students at the University of Michigan in October 1960.

[680] Grubbs, pp. 3-4, 9, 15-16
[681] Quoted in Grubbs, p. 22
[682] Latham, pp. 2, 3-4
[683] *Ibid.,* p. 116

> How many of you… are willing to spend ten years in Africa or Latin America or Asia working for the United States and working for freedom? How many of you who are going to be doctors are willing to spend your days in Ghana; technicians or engineers, how many of you are willing to work in the foreign service and spend your lives travelling around the world? On your willingness to contribute part of your life to this country will depend the answer whether we as a free country can compete.[684]

For American modernisers, black Africa – because it had no "past" – was an ideal recipient of American development aid, thus combining liberal idealism with traditional assumptions about African inferiority. As one social scientist wrote in 1959,

> The Africans do have one tremendous advantage over the Asiatic peoples – they do not have to divest themselves of entrenched cultural obstacles. They have had no ancient greatness with which to mask their present inequality. The cultural state of the Africans is so low that they are considerably more adaptable to the challenge of Western civilization than the Arab or the Indian. They do not have to defend their past. Their past has meant only the basic struggle with hunger, disease and the burning sun... the fact of cultural backwardness can be viewed as an advantage in that there are fewer "bad" habits for the African peoples to overcome before acquiring the more productive aspects of Western civilization.[685]

Liberal enthusiasts for African development assumed, because they believed their values to be universal, that the leaders of newly independent nations shared them. As a result, American liberal thinkers were willing to overlook the tendency of these states to become one-party dictatorships. Some thinkers, such as Immanuel Wallerstein writing in 1961, even regarded one-party rule in Africa as essential. "The structural prerequisites for [a multi-party system]… do not yet exist to a sufficient degree in Africa." He argued that, without a single-party government, newly independent states would descend into anarchy, which would be disastrous for modernisation and development. Without strong central government, he believed "power reverts to local princelings and patrons, remote from the intellectual contact and stimulation which infuse the modernizing elite of the national structures".[686]

Convinced of the need for development and modernisation, successive US administrations also adopted the seemingly schizophrenic thinking of liberals such as Wallerstein; they endorsed anti-

[684] Quoted in Latham, p. 114
[685] Quoted in Staniland, p. 63
[686] Quoted in Staniland, p. 89

colonialism in theory but, in practice, were fearful of its consequences – a dilemma that support for strong rulers appeared to resolve. American policy-makers continue to believe, as they had done in the 1950s, that black Africans were not yet ready for self-rule and that what they called "premature independence" would create unstable governments vulnerable to communist influence. Authoritarian rulers were needed to maintain order, encourage economic development, and prevent the spread of communism.[687] Liberal apologists invoked American history to explain away the more awkward aspects of post-colonial societies. These new "young" states were behaving as the United States had done in its early days; the assumption was that they would "grow up" in the same triumphant way as America.

> In terms of parallels with American history, Africa is in the 1790s. That was the period when we physically drove out of the country and into Canada a good portion of our opposition, tarred-and-feathered some who remained and expropriated (legally and illegally) the property of not a few. We oppressed the native tribes, saw corruption flourish in our new officialdom and denounced the idea of foreign military bases on our soil. We took large quantities of foreign aid and credits, while simultaneously denouncing the greed of those who offered it.[688]

5: The Congo and the division among African American over developments in Africa

US governments continued for decades to support some unsavoury regimes, but faith in the progress of black Africa faded from the mid-1960s onward. The confident nostrums of American liberals about development were undermined by urban rioting in the USA, the Vietnam War and the number of black African nations that experienced military coups, one-party dictatorship, corruption and civil war. Africa rapidly lost its appeal to liberals as the place where modernisation could transform backward societies into progressive nations.[689]

The chaotic developments in post-independence Congo were, as much as any other issue, responsible for liberal disillusionment with black Africa. War in the Congo was accompanied by lurid reports of the rape of white women, including nuns, which served to reinforce the old stereotypes about black

[687] Schmitz, pp. 9-10; Westad, p. 10; see also Hunt, pp. 159-62
[688] Quoted in Staniland, p. 94
[689] Staniland, pp. 106, 109

incapacity for government. As George Houser put it, somewhat laconically, "the romance of supporting the struggle against colonialism was tarnished".[690] Events in the Congo, though, galvanised radical black opinion. The Congo's first leader after independence, Patrice Lumumba – a man of humble origins with a socialist agenda – was lionised by the radical African Americans. His murder in January 1961 – in which the US Government was widely (and probably correctly) thought to be complicit – provoked an international outcry andmradicalised part of the African American community.[691]

News of Lumumba's murder caused a major disturbance at the United Nations headquarters in New York on 15 February. While US Ambassador Adlai Stevenson was speaking, a demonstration by African Americans erupted; UN guards, newsmen and protestors were injured and a large protest march outside the building was halted by mounted police. For historian Komozi Woodard, the UN demonstration was a watershed moment which divided the African American community because, while it was condemned by the conservative leadership, it "announced the emergence of a New Nationalism… formulated in international solidarity with the emerging nations of Africa" and "was not confined to Harlem, [but] there were circles emerging in other American cities not only on the East Coast but also in the Midwest and on the West Coast."[692]

Woodard may be correct to stress the numerical strength and geographical spread in America of the "New Nationalism" but it is difficult to see how the "international solidarity with the emerging nations of Africa" manifested itself in the 1960s, other than in the radicals' view of themselves. He himself makes it clear that it was not until 1970 that the Congress of African People was formed at a meeting of 3,000 black people in Atlanta, Georgia.[693] The enthusiasm with which Black Power thinkers invoked their African past seems to have been principally designed to create a sense of ethnic pride among African Americans, as the subtitle of Stokely Carmichael's book indicates.[694] John A. Davis,

[690] Houser, 'Meeting Africa's Challenge', p. 21
[691] Joseph, p. 38
[692] Woodard, 'Amiri Baraka', in Joseph, (ed.), p. 60
[693] *Ibid.,* p. 62
[694] Carmichael and Hamilton, *Black Power*

writing in 1969, thought that the Black Power agenda was primarily domestic. "It is a common black nationalist boast that after they get 'whitey' out of their business at home they will straighten out things in Africa."[695] Furthermore, radical black Americans were as guilty as conservative whites in having a stereotypical vision of black Africa. For Malcolm X, black Africans were the oppressed victims of white colonial capitalism who would rise as one, given the opportunity. His references to Africa make no mention of ethnic and religious rivalries, nor of linguistic, cultural and ideological differences among black Africans. Speaking in New York in December 1964, and employing his own version of the domino theory, he maintained that the Congolese civil war could trigger the liberation of sub-Saharan Africa. "The Congo… is so strategically located geographically that if it were to fall into the hands of a real dyed-in-the-wool African nationalist, he could then make it possible for African soldiers to train in the Congo for the purpose of invading Angola. When they invade Angola that means Angola must fall, because there are more Africans than there are Portuguese, and they just couldn't control Angola any longer. And if the Congo fell in to good hands, other than Tshombe, then it would mean that Angola would fall, Southern Rhodesia would fall, Southwest Africa would fall and South Africa would fall."[696]

Several historians have concluded that African American identification with Africa during the 1960s was superficial. Martin Staniland argues that it was little more than "a postulated, symbolic alternative to the United States, and to the indignities experienced by blacks living there". He maintains that "Black nationalists and pan-Africanists in the United States, on the whole, had little to say about particular African issues, whether these issues were political, economic, or diplomatic. They tended to regard the continent as a cultural symbol, and its inhabitants as potential allies of African Americans in their struggle for civil rights."[697] Peter Duignan and L.H. Gann maintain that there was no sustained interest in African languages and culture. "In schools and colleges the ethnic revival was apt to end where the irregular verbs started."[698] William L. Van Deburg has endorsed this, suggesting that, for

[695] Davis, pp. 248-9
[696] Malcolm X, speech, 20 Dec. 1964, Breitman (ed.), pp. 124-25
[697] Staniland, pp. 200, 201
[698] Duignan and Gann, p. 344

radical African Americans, identifying with the African freedom struggle had more to do with their own culture, mind-set and self-esteem than the politics of black Africa. "To recognise, participate in and venerate black culture was to have one's spiritual core renewed, to receive effective psychotherapy treatment. By adhering to this culture-based African philosophical orientation, black Americans could draw upon the power of the collective in their struggle to become active agents in shaping the world... In essence, black Americans' view of the [African] continent was a projection of their own psychological and emotional needs."[699] George Houser came to a similar conclusion. He recognised that the emergence of black radicalism had "brought a strong sense of identification with Africa" and contributed to "a new self-awareness… among many American blacks". But he added that it did not amount to much more than that "dashikis, Afro haircuts, and beads and bracelets with an African motif became popular".[700]

Part of the appeal of Africa to black American radicals was the assumption that the newly independent states would implement the kind of economic and social transformation they wanted to see in the USA. For example, Malcolm X, speaking in New York to the Organisation of Afro-American Unity on 20 December 1964, lauded what he saw as the socialism of post-colonial societies. "Almost every one of the countries that has gotten independence has devised some kind of socialistic system, and this is no accident... You can't operate a capitalistic system unless you are vulturistic; you have to have someone else's blood to suck to be a capitalist. You show me a capitalist; I'll show you a bloodsucker... The nations in Africa are developing socialistic systems to solve their problems."[701] Charles V. Hamilton (who co-wrote *Black Power* with Stokely Carmichael) also maintained that black liberation would only come in America if accompanied by radical political, social and economic change. "Before many of the problems of race could be resolved there would have to be a substantial transformation of the political system itself… The demands coming out of the racial protest must be seen as challenging more than the *effectiveness* of the existing institutions. Those demands are calling

[699] Van Deburg, *Babylon*, 151.
[700] Houser, 'Freedom's Struggle', p. 180
[701] Malcolm X, speech, 20 Dec. 1964, Breitman (ed.), pp. 120-21

into question the *legitimacy* of those institutions."[702] Stokely Carmichael was equally outspoken about the revolutionary nature of the change he sought and explicitly linked black freedom in America with radical change the world over.

> Ultimately, the economic foundations of this country must be shaken if black people are to control their lives. The colonies of the United States, and this includes the black ghettoes within its borders, north and south, must be liberated. For a century, this nation has been like an octopus of exploitation, its tentacles stretching from Mississippi and Harlem to South America, the Middle East, southern Africa, and Vietnam; the form of exploitation varies from area to area but the essential result has been the same, a powerful few have been maintained and enriched at the expense of the poor and voiceless colored masses. This pattern must be broken. As its grip loosens here and there around the world, the hopes of black Americans become more realistic. For racism to die, a totally different America must be born.[703]

In contrast to moderate African Americans whose vision of international solidarity was rooted not just in their patriotism but also in their commitment to the ideals of American democracy, black radicals shared with the US Government a predilection for authoritarian rulers, albeit rulers with different credentials; their heroes were Nasser, Castro, Nkrumah and Mao – all non-white autocrats who had successfully challenged white hegemony, were anti-American and endeavoured to implement fundamental changes to the societies they ruled. As a result, black writers were prepared to justify regimes which, had they been white, they would probably have condemned. Charles V. Hamilton provides an example of this thinking.

> In some African countries, they find it necessary to reject a two-party or multi-party system as dysfunctional to development; therefore, they opt for the less competitive mass, single party. It is irrelevant to tell them that this latter approach is taking them toward dictatorship and totalitarianism. Either they (1) are operating from a different vantage point of political reality, and thus do not agree; or (2) have weighed the alternatives and settled on that approach which they think best; or (3) must find out for themselves.[704]

Such views were not universally popular among African Americans. One writer in *Liberator* poured scorn on what he saw as the self-deluding and romantic vision of Africa common among radicals.

[702] Hamilton, pp. 106, 107; the emphasis is in the original
[703] Quoted in Wright (ed.), p. 573
[704] Hamilton, p. 109

"They prefer to sink into easy fantasies about the homeland of their ancestors. In the fantasies of those who have never touched its soil, Africa is a continent peopled with Mau Mau generals, steel-nerved freedom fighters and militant Black masses marching against Whitey. This never-never world, of course, does not exist, and the fact that it does not correspond with the complex reality is certainly not the fault of the Africans."[705]

Many of the African Americans who did travel to Africa found the experience disconcerting and they did not find the racial solidarity they had expected. In February 1962, Grayson Kirk, President of Columbia University, who had just visited Africa, reported to the Department of Commerce on the Kennedy Administration's efforts to post more African Americans to US embassies there. He detected "a curious psychological barrier" because "American negroes frequently have difficulty in adjusting themselves to Africa. The assumption of a natural bond of kinship, based on common racial origins, which our negroes bring with them to Africa, is not reciprocated by the Africans who regard our colored citizens simply as Americans and therefore just as foreign as any white American." He also thought that things were made worse by the Americans' "attitude of superiority and condescension toward the 'natives'".[706] In analysing the experiences of black Peace Corps volunteers, historian Jonathan Zimmerman has concluded that "Volunteers rarely connected with Africa along the axes they had anticipated: physical features marked them as foreign, while neither civil rights nor Black Power had the same resonance across the ocean as at home."[707] Some volunteers were surprised by the ethnic differences and animosities they discovered; others were startled to find that some Africans regarded them as white or as agents of Yankee imperialism. As with the diplomats, the incomprehension was often mutual. One US diplomat who served in Kampala, Uganda, in the early 1960s recalled the reaction to a concert given by some African American musicians.

> Many Ugandans came up to me afterwards and asked, "Are those American blacks?" I said, "Yes." And they said, "Are you sure they are not American whites who are made up to look like blacks?" I said, "No, they are genuine American blacks." At the party

[705] Quoted in Staniland, pp. 210-11
[706] Kirk to Hodges, 5 Feb. 1962, Series IV, Reel 14, Williams Papers, Bentley
[707] Zimmerman, p. 1017

> we gave for them, Ugandans would come up to one of the singers and would say something to the effect, "You are our brother." And the singer would say, "No, I am not. I am an American."[708]

Some black Peace Corps members, on returning to the USA, found recounting their experiences troubling because they were unable to reinforce the assumptions that black radicals had about Africa.

> Critics bridled at volunteers' remarks about political and sexual oppression in Africa, fearful that such hints would hamper racial pride. Others objected to descriptions of African ethnic diversity, which contradicted romantic stereotypes of a pristine, monolithic motherland. "They wanted you to give them one response," volunteer Leon Dash recalled, "a universal answer that was applicable to all of Africa." Hence some Blacks even maligned volunteers' African dress, so different from the dashikis that became de rigueur for many young radicals during this era. In one particularly painful incident, dashiki-clad Blacks mocked Esther White for wearing the simple Malawian wrap that a villager had given her. Associating Africa with promiscuity, they also asked how much sex she enjoyed during her stay there.[709]

It is difficult to disagree with the verdict of Thomas Borstelmann that "the ties of African Americans to Africans were real and growing during the early 1960s, but they were also complicated and limited".[710] Black Power activists, evoking a largely mythical Africa, demanding radical change within the USA and abroad, and spurning white allies (even those of the left), were never likely to achieve much support outside the ranks of African Americans frustrated and disillusioned with what they saw as the meagre achievements of civil rights reform. Furthermore, these demands, articulated in rhetoric that was often deliberately provocative,[711] helped to alienate liberal white support for post-colonial regimes in black Africa and provided ammunition for right-wing racists who viewed black self-assertion as indistinguishable from communism.

Unlike the Black Power radicals, the moderate African Americans did not stress their racial affinity with Africans. Nor did they advocate a US-led war of liberation in southern Africa. This was not, as Komozi Woodard would have us believe, a result of White House intimidation of the black leadership,

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[708] Hendrick Van Oss, *Country Reader, Uganda*, ADST; Zimbabwean leader, Joshua Nkomo also found that African American identification with Africa could cause problems, Nkomo, p. 84
[709] Zimmerman, p. 1027
[710] Borstelmann, *Color Line,* p. 169
[711] Black Power leader, Amiri Baraka, claimed that, "to be an American, one must be a murderer; a white murderer of colored people". Quoted in Woodard, 'Amiri Baraka', p. 66

nor because "the civil rights leadership was being conditioned to proceed with extreme caution in international politics, particularly when voicing opinions regarding Africa".[712] Instead it reflected the international vision of men such as Martin Luther King; this was rooted in his Christian commitment, patriotism and faith in American democracy. King's inspiration came from Gandhi, not Lenin. King shared the radicals' view that colonialism in Africa and segregation in the USA were identical, but believed he was struggling on behalf of what he called "the oppressed people"[713] of the world rather than expressing racial solidarity with Africans. The difference between King's vision and that of Malcolm X has been summed up by historian Manning Marable. "King wanted to convince white Americans that 'race doesn't matter' – in other words, the physical and color differences that appear to distinguish blacks from white should be meaningless in the application of justice and equal rights. In striking contrast, Malcolm perceived himself first and foremost as a black man, a person of African descent who happened to be a United States citizen."[714]

The irony of this is that King and his allies probably achieved more for the cause of black African liberation – little though that was – than did the radicalism of the African Americans who stressed their racial connection with black Africans. In the early 1960s, African American moderates were optimistic that they could help to influence events in southern Africa. The formation of the American Negro Leadership Conference on Africa (ANLCA) in 1961 reflected this. The ANCLA was created by the leaders of the NAACP, CORE and other African-American organisations to co-ordinate their response to developments in sub-Saharan Africa and to US policy there. They were encouraged by the election of Kennedy, who had made much of his support for colonial liberation in his election campaign, and by the prospects for progress in the civil rights campaign. In November 1962 they held their first conference and outlined their goals.

> We believe the 19 million American Negro citizens must assume a greater responsibility for the formation of United States policy in sub-Sahara Africa. Negroes are of necessity deeply concerned with developments in Africa because of the moral issues involved and because the struggle here at home to achieve in our time equality

[712] Woodard, 'Amiri Baraka', p. 57
[713] Quoted in Cone, p. 456
[714] Marable, p. 482

> without respect to race or color is made easier to the extent that equality and freedom are achieved everywhere.[715]

The election of Kennedy had given them reason for optimism; he was much more warmly disposed towards black African states than Eisenhower had been, and took concrete steps to assist development and to improve US diplomatic relations with African states. However, when Kennedy met King and other ANLCA leaders on 17 December 1962, the Cold War crises in Berlin and Cuba had switched the President's focus away from Africa, and events in the Congo had led many in his administration to question whether black Africans were truly ready for self-government.[716] When Johnson became President, black Africa slid down the government's list of priorities. Although Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, spoke at the second ANLCA conference in 1964, the criticisms of US policy made at the conference were ignored.[717] Johnson, despite his identification with the poor and dispossessed, judged nations by their power and influence and black African states mattered to him only because they wielded votes in the United Nations. In January 1965 LBJ slapped down an ANLCA proposal to create a permanent organisation concerned with African American influence on US foreign policy in Africa. He told Rusk to tell the ANLCA, "We don't want an integrated domestic policy and a segregated foreign policy."[718]

6: African Americans and UDI

African American leaders were sufficiently alarmed by developments in Rhodesia after the election of the Rhodesian Front, and especially by the assumption of power by Ian Smith in April 1964, to think it worthwhile lobbying the government. At the second ANLCA conference in September, they passed a resolution denouncing the "reactionary" government of Ian Smith, predicted that UDI would result in "racial oppression not too different from that of the Republic of South Africa", and urged the US Government to use its votes at the UN to oppose Rhodesian independence "until the African majority

[715] Quoted in Watts, 'The American Negro Leadership Conference', in Laville and Johnstone (eds.), p. 109
[716] Schmitz, p. 25
[717] Rusk initially turned down an invitation to speak despite being urged to accept by Williams and Fredericks and their assurance that the ANLCA merely wished to "emphasise Negro interest in foreign policy, not necessarily Negro interest in African policy". Fredericks to Rusk, 6 June 1963, Series V, Reel 23, Williams Papers, Bentley
[718] Bundy to Rusk, 7 Jan. 1965, Africa, Box 76, LBJ

of that country enjoys full participation in government".[719] But by the time Rhodesia made its illegal declaration of independence in November 1965 the chances of African Americans being able to influence the policies of their government towards sub-Saharan Africa were very slim indeed. The moral high ground that the civil rights campaign had won at Montgomery, Birmingham and Selma was threatened by the Watts riots. The sympathy of white Americans for black causes was fatally compromised by Watts and the urban rioting which plagued major America cities in subsequent summers. The confident liberal shibboleths that underpinned development theory and the notion that federal government intervention could ameliorate racial injustice, poverty and inequality were badly damaged both by these domestic developments and by events in black Africa. Not surprisingly, Africa became less newsworthy during the 1960s. The *New York Times* devoted 3,608 column inches to African news in 1961, but by 1969 that had declined to 955 inches. The trend was the same in *Time* magazine; its coverage dropped from 748 to 307 inches over the same period.[720]

African American attitudes to, and interest in, Africa became much more complex and problematical during the 1960s, as the experiences of the Peace Corps activists demonstrates. Criticism of the white minority regimes of southern Africa offered African Americans a more straightforward cause than identifying with the independent black regimes of Africa. As Meriwether observes, "The unrelenting complexities of independent Africa made it simpler to focus attention on the parts of Africa that seemingly offered fewer complications. As the 1960s moved into the 1970s and 1980s, African Americans attended most sharply to areas where black freedom fighters fought with whatever weapons they could muster against white minority regimes that used skulduggery and violence to hold on to white supremacy."[721] So, within days of UDI, James Farmer, Martin Luther King, Adam Clayton Powell, A. Philip Randolph and Roy Wilkins had all dispatched telegrams to the White House and State Department urging US resistance to the Smith regime. King's telegram, sent on the day that UDI was declared, outlined what was to become the constant refrain of Smith's African American critics – that the existence of this white minority regime was a threat to peace in southern

[719] ANLCA resolution on Southern Rhodesia, Sept. 1964, Series V, Reel 23, Williams Papers, Bentley
[720] Staniland, p. 265, n. 2
[721] Meriwether, *Proudly*, p. 243.

Africa. It also illustrates King's moral internationalist vision and his faith in what he understood to be US values.

> [UDI] is one of the most serious threats to freedom and justice to emerge on the African continent since the establishment of apartheid in South Africa… This action [is] in direct opposition to the principles of this nation and a tragic moral catastrophe for the free world. Furthermore this action must be viewed as an open invitation to rebellion and bloodshed on the part of the majority of Rhodesia's citizens who are now denied the right of full citizenship.[722]

James Farmer of CORE echoed King's sentiments and saw UDI as "threatening African and world peace".[723] King's second telegram made a pointed reference to US policy in Vietnam. "The threat to world freedom and democracy is certainly as serious in this fascist, apartheid regime as is the communists' assault on freedom in South-East Asia." He also repeated his fear of future conflict in southern Africa. "In the event that non-violent methods of economic power fail, violence may erupt again on the African continent. A strong stand now may prevent needless bloodshed later."[724]

Anthony Lake has argued that these appeals had an impact. "According to a number of those who knew him during this period, Johnson was… very concerned with his standing with black leaders… Johnson would not want to be caught lagging behind the British, and thus make himself vulnerable to criticism by black Americans or Africans over Rhodesia."[725] However, in urging support for British efforts to topple Smith and for the imposition of economic sanctions on the rebellious regime, the African American moderates were not advocating anything much more dramatic than the US Administration was already intending to do. Even the African Americans wanting tough action could only allude to the use of force. Adam Clayton Powell's telegram merely suggested that "if [economic] boycott insufficient to resolve the conflict, hopefully country will support even stronger measures".[726] The official position of the US Government was that, because Rhodesia was primarily a British responsibility, it intended to follow Britain's lead. Harold Wilson's government in Britain had already

[722] King to LBJ, 11 Nov. 1965, Gen Co 237, Box 65, LBJ
[723] Farmer to LBJ, 12 Nov. 1965, *Ibid.*
[724] King to LBJ, 16 Dec. 1965, *Ibid.*
[725] Lake, p. 89
[726] Powell to LBJ, 15 Nov. 1965, CFPF, Box 2607, NARA

eschewed the use of force against UDI and immediately imposed its own sanctions on Rhodesia. Thus, in November 1965, the only difference between the Johnson Administration and the African Americans and their liberal white supporters was one of emphasis. Because the British initially did not include oil among the banned items, the African Americans wanted this rectified immediately and urged the US government to take the lead, if necessary, in ensuring that effective sanctions were imposed on Rhodesia. In this they were joined by Congressman Benjamin S. Rosenthal from New York who told the President in December 1965, "Our measures, at present, are inadequate. We must do more." Rosenthal expressed some scepticism about whether sanctions that did not include oil would work. "An oil embargo should be imposed immediately… The symbolic effect of such a complete American commitment would contribute significantly to the efficiency of systematic economic sanctions. Without such a commitment, I am not at all convinced that such a strategy against Rhodesia can succeed." He went on to urge that the USA put pressure on South Africa and Portugal to co-operate. "I think it is equally important that we express in no uncertain terms our refusal to tolerate any South African or Portuguese support of the Smith regime."[727] Rosenthal (and he was not alone in this) had drawn attention to the flaw in the sanctions policy – without the co-operation of South Africa and the Portuguese colonies of Mozambique and Angola, it would be impossible to strangle the Rhodesian economy and only the USA possessed the political and economic strength to force South African and Portuguese compliance.

The US opponents of Smith were initially not without allies in the Johnson Administration. Those who wanted more than a mere rhetorical commitment to black Africa included Arthur Goldberg, Ambassador to the UN, Ulric Haynes at the NSC, and "Soapy" Williams and his deputy, Wayne Fredericks.[728] One NAACP supporter, Barbara Ward Jackson (a British friend of Kennedy who had acted as his informal adviser on Africa), described Fredericks as "superb". But she was correct when she observed, "Wayne cannot break through the almost complete indifference to Africa of Rusk and

[727] Rosenthal to LBJ, 16 Dec. 1965, Gen Co 237, Box 65, LBJ
[728] Haynes was the African specialist at the NSC and one of the few black men in an influential position in the foreign policy establishment

Ball."[729] The departure of three of these key allies (Williams and Haynes left the Administration in 1966 and Fredericks the following year) added to the gloomy mood among African Americans and their supporters because it signalled a weakening of the Administration's commitment to black liberation.

By spring 1966 it was clear that the optimistic hopes that sanctions would bring a quick end to UDI were misplaced. South Africa's refusal to co-operate was enabling the Rhodesian regime to survive the worst privations. In March, Harold Wilson won a substantial parliamentary majority in the British general election and felt domestically strong enough to put out feelers to the Smith government in the hope of reaching a negotiated settlement. This was the context in which Wilkins wrote his open letter to Johnson, quoted at the start of this chapter. Wilkins knew that criticism of the American war effort in Vietnam was likely to be seen as unpatriotic and would alienate support rather than win the Administration over to a tougher stance on Rhodesia. The result was that he was unable to recommend anything specific. "We urgently commend to our government a harder, bolder, more imaginative, more resourceful Rhodesian policy than that now in effect, one which we feel confident must have occurred to some US observers of the African scene, but which, until now, might have been deemed premature. Now is the time."[730]

Wilkins was probably suggesting that the US should call for comprehensive mandatory UN sanctions against Rhodesia. The need to toughen sanctions, and alarm at the prospect of talks between Wilson and Smith, also concerned the ACOA which believed that sanctions were making an impact and could be successful if properly enforced. In its May 1966 newsletter, the ACOA blamed South Africa and the West for enabling Smith to survive.

> The Rhodesian has been hurt by sanctions: Government receipts are down, expenditures up, consumer spending is down, unemployment is up, auto industry is in crisis, sugar production has been closed down, cotton industry is on a three-day week schedule. Yet many of the effects of sanctions are mitigated by outside financial interests, especially South African. France's Peugeot is negotiating to establish an auto assembly plant in Salisbury; Italy invited Rhodesians to exhibit at the Milan trade fair.

[729] Barbara, Lady Jackson to Wilkins, 4 Mar. 1966, *NAACP papers,* RAI
[730] Wilkins to LBJ, 4 May 1966, Gen Co 237, Box 65, LBJ

> American petroleum, mineral, and electrical firms continue to allow goods to be imported to Rhodesia and to operate affiliates and mines inside the country. Rather than splitting the white community, sanctions seem to have united it behind Smith.[731]

Even though the UN imposed mandatory sanctions on selected goods in December 1966, doubts remained about whether economic measures were sufficient to bring down the Smith regime. Nevertheless, Rhodesia's American opponents held back from advocating force. Rosenthal, in March 1967, issued a memorandum on behalf of the "Members of Congress for Peace Through Law" which unintentionally revealed the difficulties they faced over Rhodesia (and, incidentally, Rosenthal's shaky understanding of the Suez crisis). He told his readers that "Armed force has been used on two occasions, with complete success in the Suez and with limited success in the Congo. Thus, armed peacekeeping by the United Nations is a tested concept." But he did not explicitly advocate it in Rhodesia. All he could do was demand tougher enforcement of sanctions because "African nations (who have the greatest stake in seeing the United Nations succeed on Rhodesia) have for some time viewed economic sanctions as a poor excuse for not using armed force. It would be tragic if their suspicions were to be borne out because of inadequate enforcement". Rosenthal's memo also revealed that the conservatives were winning the propaganda war. "The Administration, finally, has taken a firm stand in support of the sanctions on Rhodesia, but is under attack from conservatives for having done so. Doubtless, there are many Members of Congress who back the United States' position. But little has been heard from them." As Rosenthal must have known, little was heard from the Government's Congressional supporters because, apart from tougher enforcement of sanctions, there was nothing more they could suggest. Rosenthal further underlined difficulty of strengthening US measures against Rhodesia by suggesting that, "It is also essential that the Administration be freed from the constraints of unsympathetic public opinion should further United Nations action on Rhodesia become necessary."[732]

As a result of these difficulties, African Americans and their allies increasingly concentrated their attention on US policy towards South Africa, which is why Rhodesia features less and less in the

[731] American Committee on Africa (ACOA); 'Rhodesia, For Your Information', July 1966, *ALUKA*
[732] Rosenthal, *Rhodesia and the United Nations*, 22 Mar. 1967, CFPF, Box 2448, NARA

records of the NACCP after 1966. They were aware that their government was at least supporting the sanctions policy, even if there were considerable worries about the extent to which some American firms were successfully circumventing them. Both the NACCP and the ACOA knew that South Africa was the cornerstone of white minority rule and believed that unless apartheid were overthrown, the regime in Rhodesia would survive. In December 1965, on Human Rights Day, Martin Luther King made a speech at a benefit dinner for the ACOA held at Hunter College in New York. He denounced South Africa as a country where "all opposition to white supremacy is condemned as Communism" and where "a mediaeval segregation is organized with twentieth-century efficiency and drive, a sophisticated form of slavery is imposed by a minority upon a majority who are kept in grinding poverty, the dignity of human personality is defiled and world opinion is arrogantly defied." He pointed out that American "trade and investments substantially stimulate their economy to greater heights" and denounced his government for its policy towards South Africa. "The shame of our nation is that it is objectively an ally of this monstrous government in its grim war with its own black people." King's proposed solution was what he called "a massive, international boycott"[733] of South Africa but, even as he spoke, he will have known that the chances of the US Government extending sanctions to South Africa were negligible.

To maintain as much pressure as possible on their Government's policy towards South Africa, African Americans believed that they had to stress the danger of racial war in Africa and beyond. The ACOA *Manifesto for Freedom in Southern Africa*, published in March 1966, issued a bold warning about entrenched white power.

> We see violence and bloodshed ahead as the white minority [in South Africa] attempts to extend its racist control, and the black majority deepens its resolve to resist. This will be no limited conflict. The whole of independent Africa will support the black majority in South Africa. The struggle against apartheid is international in scope. All peoples and nations will be engulfed in this struggle – unless measures are adopted to eliminate apartheid and to ensure full participation by all South Africans in government.[734]

[733] Quoted in Massie, pp. 193-94
[734] ACOA, 'Manifesto For Freedom In Southern Africa' 21 Mar. 1966, *ALUKA*

The African American press regularly predicted racial war in southern Africa if the Rhodesian, South African and Portuguese colonial regimes remained in place. In April 1967, the *Pittsburgh Courier* argued that, "If Rhodesia's Prime Minister Ian Smith continues to defy the warnings from London and Washington and enters instead into a pact with Portugal and South Africa, there is the probability of a clash that will rival the terrible days of the wanderings of Bantu tribes which left trails of human bones all over Southern Africa… Every day that the Rhodesian crisis remains unsettled increases the probability of an African race war of unparalleled ferocity."[735] This newspaper returned to the theme a year later and, in blaming Britain for not having used force to crush the Smith regime, concluded that "to allow the Rhodesian question to remain unresolved is to invite a civil war in Southern Africa – a war which may set aflame the whole black world".[736] In July 1967, speaking at an international seminar on apartheid, racial discrimination and colonialism in southern Africa, Hope R. Stevens, Vice-President of ACOA, warned the US Government that it risked being on the wrong side in a racial war in southern Africa, and that the country, "if her course is not soon changed, may yet find herself in the unenviable position of being actively aligned with the repressive States of Southern Africa allied in cold war pattern in gruesome heated warfare, the blood of Africa's patriots dripping from her hands".[737]

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that these dire forebodings were as much rhetorical as Johnson's May 1966 pledge to oppose "racial or political injustice anywhere in the world". Warnings in the black press and at conferences about the imminence of racial war were designed to rally the faithful and put some pressure on the government even though men such as George M. Houser, ACOA Executive Director, were – rightly – sceptical about likelihood of racial war in southern Africa or about the possibility of the US taking a firm stance against apartheid. Houser was correct when, in a 1967 conference paper, he observed that "the United States government would like to sweep the complex of the southern African issues under the rug, and preferably, to see them disappear

[735] *Pittsburgh Courier*, 29 Apr. 1967
[736] *Ibid.*, 6 Apr. 1968
[737] International Seminar on Apartheid, Racial Discrimination and Colonialism in Southern Africa, held in Kitwe, 24 July to 4 Aug. 1967, *ALUKA*

forever".[738] As historian Robert Massie has put it, "By the mid-1960s Houser and the other members of ACOA were more certain than ever that the US government would never press for changes in South Africa, and they watched with alarm as American investments rose rapidly."[739] Houser recognised the difficulty of confronting the entrenched power of the minority white regimes. "The colonialist and white minority governments have greatly strengthened and hardened themselves for the conflict. And the longer the minority governments are able to maintain their strength and apparent stability, the more likely they are to get significant support, especially by trade and investment, from the rest of the world, with specific emphasis upon western countries."[740]

The political realities of Africa also reduced the chances of a major race war. As Brenda Gayle Plummer has pointed out, black African states were just as guilty of rhetorical grandstanding, as likely as other nations to put self-interest above principle and used the threat of race war "to camouflage their weaknesses and dependency, amplify the threat of their possible defection to the eastern bloc, and extract more concessions from international institutions and donor countries."[741]

Given that the international climate was unpromising, that the US Government – preoccupied with the Vietnam War – was increasingly uninterested, and that domestic opinion (when not actively hostile) was either ignorant of, or indifferent towards, black Africa, it is perhaps not surprising that most protests against the white minority regimes during the 1960s were little more than gestures. Radicals mounted some small-scale protests. At the end of March 1966 four SNCC activists staged a brief sit-in at the South African Embassy in Washington.[742] This was followed in July by an attempted sit-in at the UN headquarters in New York by four members of CORE who demanded sanctions against South Africa and the withdrawal of black soldiers from Vietnam so they could fight for "black majority government in South Africa and Rhodesia". They were supported by a demonstration "sixty-five

[738] Houser, 'The Freedom Struggle', p. 6
[739] Massie, p. 192
[740] Houser, 'The Freedom Struggle', p. 3
[741] Plummer, *Rising Wind,* p. 321
[742] *Chicago Daily Defender*, 31 Mar. 1966

pickets" led by Stokely Carmichael.[743] The best-remembered gesture occurred at the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City when sprinters Tommie Smith and John Carlos, on the medal winners' podium by after the 200 metres final, raised gloved fists in the Black Power salute during the playing of the US national anthem. At a press conference after the event Smith said: "If I win I am an American, not a black American. But if I did something bad then they would say 'a Negro'. We are black and we are proud of being black… Black America will understand what we did tonight."[744] The gesture did much for radical black pride but aroused as much hostility as support in the USA and around the world.

Moderate African American activists felt constrained by circumstances. As George Houser somewhat ruefully admitted in 1967, "As an American organization, we can only respond to conditions we confront, and cannot take a leading role in the struggle. We can only support."[745] Nevertheless, there were some significant achievements. With a mailing list that reached 20,000 by the end of the decade, ACOA participated in the successful campaign to have South Africa excluded from the 1968 Olympic Games. Protest from African Americans and liberal Congressmen about the treatment of black US sailors visiting Cape Town in 1967 pressured the US Government into ending its practice of refuelling its ships at South African ports. The ACOA also initiated a campaign to discourage artists, writers and entertainers from visiting South Africa or allowing their works to be used there. This received high profile support from prominent figures in the cultural world, both black and white. Throughout the 1960s, ACOA provided funds for liberation groups, refugees from white rule and for propaganda. In 1968, with the help of funds from a number of black churches, a full-time office was established in Washington DC to liaise with sympathetic members of Congress. In 1969 Charles Diggs, a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and its Subcommittee on Africa since 1959, founded and chaired the Congressional Black Caucus. As chairman of the Africa Subcommittee in 1971 he led the unsuccessful attempt to block the Byrd Amendment which allowed the USA to ignore the UN sanction on the importation of Rhodesian chrome. In 1966, members of black churches and the ACOA began a campaign to stop the Chase Manhattan and other banks from investing in South

[743] *New York Times*, 23 July 1966
[744] http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/october/17/newsid_3535000/3535348.stm
[745] Houser, 'The Freedom Struggle', p. 3

Africa. A demonstration was held on 10 December and sympathetic investors withdrew $31m. Houser admitted that this was "a very small portion of the banks' resources" but pointed out that "the campaign worried their public relations department".[746] It was later widened to include large US corporations doing business in South Africa and, although achieving only modest success when it began, laid the essential groundwork for the campaigns of the 1980s that contributed to the downfall of the apartheid regime.

It is difficult to establish an exact causal link between African American protest against US links with South Africa and official government hostility to Rhodesia. However, as criticism at home and abroad against the Vietnam War intensified during 1967 and 1968, the Johnson Administration was keen to find allies and supporters wherever it could. Ostensibly, the Johnson Administration co-operated with mandatory UN sanctions on selected goods from January 1967 because, in the words of one official, "the problem posed by the attempt by a racial minority in Southern Rhodesia to seize power illegally and perpetuate its domination over the vast majority of Rhodesians constitutes a basic threat to stability in Africa". [747] But the reality of the government's position was expressed by Arthur Goldberg, the Ambassador to the UN, at a meeting of the NSC in January 1967: "We were obliged to vote in the UN as we did because to do otherwise would have caused us domestic racial difficulties and hurt our business interests in every African country. We have a strong political interest in keeping moderates in control of the problem."[748]

US support for UN sanctions against Rhodesia was loudly criticised by some highly articulate and influential voices. Several senators and congressmen, supported by their constituents and a propaganda drive funded by the Rhodesian Government, were critical of the UN's right to impose them and the President's right to enforce them without Congressional approval. These voices were louder, more numerous and wealthier than those wanting the Administration to continue its support

[746] Houser, 'Africa's Challenge', p. 23
[747] MacArthur to Congressman Gross (R-Iowa), 31 Jan. 1967; MacArthur, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, was obliged to write a series of such letters to congressmen opposed to the USA observing UN sanctions against Rhodesia; Countries EX, CO 1-1, Box 7, LBJ
[748] Summary Notes of 567th NSC Meeting, 25 Jan. 1967, NSC Meetings File, Box 2, LBJ

for sanctions. The Government, though anxious to see the Rhodesian crisis settled, was anxious not to alienate black Africa and further damage its international credibility – already severely tarnished by Vietnam. But domestic considerations also played their part. African Americans were a key Democratic constituency and their opposition to US involvement in South Africa could only be appeased by holding the line against Rhodesia, at least in public. Goldberg was referring to black African countries when he stressed the importance of "keeping moderates in control" but his remark applied just as forcefully to the moderate African Americans whose good will the Administration could not afford to lose.

Chapter Six: Rhodesia's George Washington

1: Why Rhodesia mattered to America's conservatives

"How the U.S. is helping to bring down Rhodesia's George Washington" – this was the cover-line beside a photograph of Ian Smith on the front of the 16 May 1967 edition of *National Review*. The influential right-wing journal devoted most of this issue to a report that offered a supposedly "objective assessment of the Rhodesian situation". It concluded that, by supporting the British and the United Nations, the policy of the Johnson Administration was "wrong, shamefully wrong".[749] The article – rehearsing several right-wing anxieties about America's overseas policies – demonstrates that, for the conservatives, the future of Rhodesia mattered because they believed it had become an important front in the battle to preserve civilisation. Although the report does not actually mention George Washington, it does include parallels with American history which the characteristic hyperbole of the front cover aimed to reinforce.

The piece was written shortly after the UN had imposed selective mandatory sanctions on Rhodesia and President Johnson had issued an Executive Order obliging US citizens to comply with them. These sanctions, the authors concluded, demonstrated the inadequacy of the UN because they had been imposed "upon the unproved and bizarre theory that a peaceful Rhodesia is a threat to international peace" and, as a result, "the Security Council trampled upon the UN Charter and made a travesty of its own supreme law". Great Britain, too, came in for some stinging criticism. Prime Minister Wilson, in his dealings with Smith, had been "peremptory" and "brusque"; he had "berated Smith", demonstrated "rudeness" and demanded "absolute surrender". Furthermore, the authors argued that Great Britain was on the wrong side in the Cold War, trading with Cuba and refusing to assist in Vietnam, in contrast to "tiny Rhodesia" which "sturdily and persistently has pursued a policy of stout anti-Communism [and] has been a small but good friend to the United States".

[749] The report was written by Rene Wormser (a New York lawyer), Walter Darnell Jacobs (professor of political science at the University of Maryland) and James J. Kilpatrick (editor of the *Richmond News Leader* and a regular contributor to *National Review*). They had toured Rhodesia at the behest of the American-African Affairs Association earlier in the year to carry out what the magazine asserted was "an independent investigation". The authors bolstered their claim to objectivity by interviewing members of the moderate political opposition and the press, as well as leaders of the regime and its supporters. To demonstrate their proclaimed impartiality, the report made a number of mild criticisms of the Rhodesian regime; *National Review,* 16 May 1967, pp. 512-526

With their American audience in mind, the report's authors made much of the parallels they discerned between the histories of the United States and Rhodesia – both had unilaterally declared themselves independent of Great Britain and, in both, a white elite had imposed its will on indigenous people. As if to emphasise their objectivity, the authors reminded their readers of how long it had taken since the American Revolution for the United States to overcome prejudice and discrimination on its road to full democratic equality. "The English colonies that then declared themselves free and independent states were to adopt a Constitution in 1788 specifically permitting Negro slavery. Thereafter, the States were to establish an appalling record of treachery, genocide, and discrimination in their treatment of the Indian." They pointed out that American women did not get full voting rights until 1920 and they even appeared to endorse the civil rights movement: "In some areas of the American South, discrimination against the Negro voter exists so significantly, to this day, that federal examiners have had to be assigned in certain counties and parishes." The point of this criticism of two centuries of US history was to suggest that it was unjust to punish Rhodesia for its "failure in seventy years to attain a democratic society".

One of the themes of the report – mostly implicit, but occasionally made explicit – was that, in its racial policies, Rhodesia could be considered superior to the United States. The authors emphasised what they saw as Rhodesia's "tranquillity" and its "amazingly cordial relationship between the races". In contrast, they suggested, "Americans who are familiar with crime rates in the United States… may feel a sense of shame in proposing that our standards of morality and virtue be imposed upon Rhodesia." All that was needed, they claimed, was time for Rhodesia to evolve because "this is a young country, still emerging from the primitive past [where] as recently as 1939, a large percentage of Africans wore little but loincloths". So, the authors asked, "By what rights of divine ordination is it supposed that Western nations have a duty to impose their own political and social institutions by fiat upon a people still blinking from the darkness of the cave?" Left alone, the future would be bright, they maintained, in "an evolving multiracial society in which both races increasingly will share in the political, economic and social development of their pioneer land."

Many American conservatives, especially those who opposed the civil rights revolution, would have concurred wholeheartedly with the authors' judgement about the need for white leadership and slow change, and may well have concluded that this assessment applied as much to the USA as to Rhodesia.

> The African is learning, evolving, pushing forward toward his own place in the Rhodesian sun. Without the experience, the capital, the imagination, and the executive know-how of the white Rhodesian, this progress would be utterly reversed. It is toward this destructive end that Britain and the United Nations, in the premature and fetishistic name of "one-man, one-vote" have dedicated their course of action… Rhodesia's wise and thoughtful adherence to policies of evolutionary development can be of immense value to a world that is wrongly obsessed with the notion of instant achievement. It simply is not true that a largely primitive society can be transformed into a politically mature society in the fashion of instant coffee or instant rice. So complex and difficult an effort takes time above all else; time and patience and good will. This is what Rhodesia asks.[750]

The decision of the *National Review* editorial team to give such prominence to a report criticising US participation in UN sanctions against Rhodesia says much about the importance that right-wing circles in America accorded to US foreign policy in general, and the degree to which they identified with the white regimes of southern Africa, especially Rhodesia. By the mid-1960s *National Review* had become the intellectual standard-bearer of the renaissance of America's conservatism in the post-war era. Historians are agreed that the magazine was of seminal importance.[751] Godfrey Hodgson maintains that the magazine's founder and editor, William Buckley was "probably the most important single figure in the whole history of the revival of conservatism in late twentieth-century America" and that he did more than anyone else "to elaborate the conservative doctrine that made political victories possible".[752] Buckley's most recent biographer concurs. "The rise of modern conservatism as we know it today would never have happened without Buckley."[753]

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[750] *Ibid.* pp. 518-19, 526
[751] E.J. Dionne, p. 3; Critchlow and McLean, pp. 9-13; 127; Farber, pp. 40-41, 75-76
[752] Hodgson, p. 71. See also Foner, p. 310
[753] Bogus, p. ix; Buckley's profile was especially high in 1967 – he won a best columnist of the year award, was the presenter of a successful TV discussion programme and was the subject of special features in *The Wall Street Journal, Harper's* and *Time*. See Judis, p. 267; Bogus, p. 334

Founded in November 1955, *National Review* had made its iconoclastic, reactionary purpose abundantly clear at the outset. "National Review", its first edition asserted, "stands athwart history, yelling Stop, at a time when no one is inclined to do so, or to have much patience with those who urge it."[754] Rhodesia's UDI, exactly a decade later, was a similarly reactionary gesture: this was the only time in the post-war era that a colony breaking away from European rule did so under white minority rule. But, although both *National Review* and the Rhodesian Government were reactionary in hoping to halt and reverse historical trends they loathed and feared, and saw themselves as minority voices of sanity in a world dominated by their enemies, they also believed themselves to be radicals who could recapture the concept of freedom for conservatism. Buckley believed that he was simultaneously a radical and a reactionary because he aimed to destroy the New Deal consensus in the USA.[755] Both he and the Rhodesian leadership saw UDI as throwing down a revolutionary challenge to liberalism by establishing a paternalistic multi-racial society that avoided the dictatorship, chaos and injustice characteristic of the newly independent black regimes of Africa spawned by the liberal ideology of decolonisation. This was why the Rhodesian declaration was a deliberate pastiche of America's revolutionary 1776 document.[756] Using Jefferson's language was, Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith believed, more than an attempt to garner sympathy in the USA; it was to him a reminder to the world that "there was more freedom in Rhodesia than in any other country in Africa".[757] Smith maintained that Rhodesian policy "was one of gradualism in order to ensure that people fully understood the complicated democratic system… [It was] evolution in preference to revolution… With the introduction of Western democracy into sub-Saharan Africa we were experimenting with a system of government which was foreign to, and unknown in, those parts".[758] Buckley and Smith were natural allies.[759] Each regarded himself, and the other, as a sterling defender of Western freedom against a collectivist onslaught, driven by misguided liberals, that would destroy true freedom by

[754] *National Review*, 19 Nov. 1955, p. 5
[755] Judis, p. 97
[756] Armitage, pp. 243-45
[757] Ian Smith, p. 109
[758] *Ibid.,* p. 108
[759] Buckley visited Rhodesia in 1974 and described Smith as "a man of quite extraordinary personal valor". *National Review*, 12 Apr. 1974, p. 447

handing power over to ill-educated, unsophisticated people unable to handle it properly – a tragedy from which only the communist powers would emerge victorious.

The *National Review* report on Rhodesia would have reached a growing and influential readership. The magazine's circulation rose from 34,000 in 1960 to 90,000 by 1964.[760] Eschewing both right-wing extremism (what Buckley termed "crackpot alley"[761]) and mass-circulation populism, the magazine aimed to win over educated opinion-formers to its brand of radical conservatism as well as reflecting the views of articulate and influential conservatives about issues on which they felt strongly. The rapid decolonisation of Africa and its consequences were among the most important of these: in both 1967 and 1968, *National Review* carried more articles about African issues than about Communist China.[762] The magazine regarded African decolonisation as a strategic disaster from which only the communist powers would benefit. "If the Communists gain control of a good part of Africa, the West's strategic position will crumble: for Europe's front will be turned on its southern flank, and the Americas will be brought into close range from Africa's western bulge."[763] *National Review* also viewed the cause of white Africans in apocalyptic terms. James Burnham, the renegade Trotskyite who was the magazine's foreign affairs editor, had warned in March 1960 that "the fate of the white-cored communities in Algeria, Rhodesia and South Africa may well be decisive for the whole African continent in the struggle for the world".[764] Nine months later, Burnham had become apoplectic:

> The West's retreat from Africa is already a rout, and will soon be a catastrophe… What we see, if we are willing to look, is ourselves – us men of the West – fleeing headlong, beaten, panic-struck, fleeing as the defeated fled before Genghis, Alexander, Pompey, Caesar: fleeing in thousands, in tens and hundreds of thousands, our weapons spiked and abandoned, our homes looted, our property smashed or

[760] Judis, pp. 184, 221; Bogus puts the circulation at 100,000 in 1968, "a considerable number for a political journal of opinion". Bogus, p. 334; Buckley himself referred, perhaps with editorial hyperbole, to "our circulation explosion" in the edition of 9 Sept. 1961, p. 151. The May 1967 edition on Rhodesia would have reached a wider audience than the normal readership of *National Review* because the American-African Affairs Association subsequently reprinted the relevant pages and distributed them as a "Special Edition"
[761] Judis, p. 200
[762] Vietnam, naturally, was the dominant foreign policy issue in both years. The figures for 1967 articles were: Vietnam 54, China 30, South Africa 10, Rhodesia 8, Nigeria 7, Congo 4. The figures for 1968 were: Vietnam 67, China 15, South Africa 8, Rhodesia 9, Nigeria 5, Congo 7; See also Brennan, p. 155
[763] *National Review*, 25 Mar. 1961, p. 171
[764] *National Review*, 12 Mar. 1960, p. 164

> stolen, our women raped, our children brutalized: fleeing from Egypt, from Tunis and Morocco and the Congo, from Algeria, Kenya, Tanganyika, Uganda. Our giant warships turn and flee from the harbors; our superb warplanes flee from the great fields built by our talents and wealth; our intricate guns are pulled from their emplacements; our soldiers get their command: Retreat!"[765]

By the time Rhodesia made its declaration of independence in 1965 those on the American radical right were convinced that UN pressure for decolonisation had made the situation critical. They were appalled by the role the UN had played in the Congolese crisis and by its regular demands for action against Portuguese rule in Angola and South African apartheid. "The United Nations' spur has helped urge the anti-colonial steed at a rate too fast not only for American and Western interest – that is obvious to everyone – but for the advance of disinterested American ideals of genuine freedom and prosperity for all peoples." [766] Worse still, conservatives believed their government was actively colluding in the destruction of white civilisation in an attempt to pander to inferior races – further evidence, if any were needed, that Western liberalism was unwittingly serving the interests of international communism, which they regarded as only too eager to exploit the gullibility of non-white races. In addition, the Johnson Administration was, they maintained, doing violence to the US constitution in the process. The arguments used in the *National Review* piece – opposition to the UN, Anglophobia, anti-communism, support for Rhodesian sovereignty, the parallels with the history of the USA, Rhodesia's low crime rate, harmonious race relations and evolutionary development contrasted with the chaos of black-ruled states – were to be repeated by a range of American conservatives throughout the second half of the 1960s and beyond. These themes formed a substantial part of the bedrock of right-wing thinking as the radical conservatism espoused by contributors to *National Review* moved from the fringes of the US political spectrum to the mainstream.

Support for UDI was important to conservatives for three reasons. Firstly, they believed that their Government was backing the wrong side in the Rhodesian dispute, and was doing so to appease powers they despised and believed offered nothing to the United States: the United Nations, Great

[765] Burnham, 'The African Shambles', *National Review*, 28 Jan. 1961, p. 45; Burnham's reference to the rape of "our women" trades on one of the most common, stereotypical racial fears of whites and shows that for many conservatives, racial anxiety underpinned their anti-communism. Coverage of the Congolese civil war in the conservative press almost invariably included sensationalist references to the rape of white women; Meriwether, *Proudly,* pp. 222-24
[766] Burnham, 'The United States, the United Nations, and Africa', in Meyer, p. 250

Britain and the nations of black Africa – all part of a naive liberal surrender to international communism. Secondly, Rhodesia (and developments in Africa in general) enabled conservatives to continue their criticism of the civil rights revolution in the USA by proxy. They argued not only that the developments in newly-independent black Africa states provided a stark warning of what might occur in the USA if the civil rights revolution made further gains, but that Rhodesia showed what the segregated southern states of USA would have become if only the civil rights movement and the federal government had not interfered – societies in which benevolent white paternalism ensured that race relations were stable and well ordered. There is nothing new in suggesting that defending Rhodesia and South Africa enabled segregationist conservatives to voice racist views and make proxy attacks on civil rights. As long ago as 1967 a commentator in *Africa Today* observed that southern conservatives in Congress were using statements about developments in Africa as "an ideal opportunity to grind their racist axes under the guise of more 'respectable' arguments".[767] The same point has been made by historians since. As Joseph Lowndes has put it, "The displacement of racism onto other political issues had long been a staple of southern political discourse."[768] Thomas Noer agrees: "Segregationists used selected international issues largely to gain support for their major domestic goal of defeating the civil rights movement. Foreign policy was always supplementary to the larger issue of domestic racial relations."[769] However, these interpretations assume that such proxy attacks were largely the work of reactionary southern segregationists fighting a rearguard action against the civil rights movement who were using Africa as a proxy only because the explicit expression of racism in the domestic context was becoming increasingly unacceptable.[770]

[767] Quoted in Lerner, p. 583
[768] Lowndes, p. 36; *National Review*, following the Brown decision, accepted the South's displacement tactic at face value. "Support for the Southern position rests not at all on the question whether Negro and White children should, in fact, study geography side by side; but on whether a central or a local authority should make that decision." *National Review*, 29 Feb. 1956, p. 5. See also Judis, pp. 206-7
[769] Noer, 'Segregationists', in Plummer (ed.) *Window on Freedom,* p. 158
[770] In October 1965 Buckley devoted a special feature in *National Review* to attacking the John Birch Society because he believed its extremism was damaging the conservative cause. The aim of the articles was to distance his brand of conservatism from the "paranoid and unpatriotic drivel" of the JBS leader Robert Welch without alienating the members of the society, *National Review*, 19 Oct. 1965, pp. 914-28. See also Bogus, pp. 195-98. But even the John Birch Society itself decided to moderate its language and, in 1966, expelled one of its leaders, Revilo P. Oliver, for making overtly anti-Semitic and racist comments at a Birch Society rally: Berlet and Lyons, pp. 181-82; Oliver had also been a regular contributor to *National Review*

There was more to it than this. UDI provided a proxy for those on the right who rallied to Buckley and aimed to recapture the Republican Party for his brand of radical conservatism. They were aware that, by the 1960s, overt racism directed at African Americans was electorally damaging.[771] For Buckley and his supporters, Rhodesia was a model society because they believed it was neither racially integrated nor rigidly segregated. Commenting on South Africa, Buckley argued that "the mass of the population, black as well as white, does not want integration in practice, whatever some may say in theory". But he also condemned apartheid because he maintained that "the coercive factor is repellent".[772] Rhodesia was thus the ideal proxy for libertarians who were anxious to distance themselves from die-hard segregationists and overt racists while expressing their opposition to racial integration imposed by federal fiat. Such a position, they believed, allowed them to condemn populists such as George Wallace while winning the votes of southern whites. Buckley called Wallace a "shrewd mountebank" who, he believed, had exploited the fears of "decent, loyal, hard-working, and responsible citizens" for their votes in the 1968 presidential election.[773] For Buckley, whose views on race had mellowed, this shift was more than cynical political positioning. It provided a coherent electoral strategy for his brand of radical conservatism.

The third reason Rhodesia mattered was that it helped to unify otherwise divergent conservative factions. It provided a way of reconciling libertarianism with social traditionalism, as well as bringing neo-isolationists together with those who wanted to prosecute the struggle against communism more vigorously. This was because conservatives believed that Rhodesia should be left alone to continue not only its successful suppression of its indigenous left-wing nationalists but also its careful nurturing of its black population.

[771] Critchlow and McLean, p. 150; Brennan, p. 62; Stephanie Rolph has argued that Southern segregationists "realised in the immediate years of Brown's aftermath that, nationally speaking, the raw language of white supremacy had a shrinking audience outside of the South" and, in consequence, successfully articulated their views as protest against the federal government's attempt to destroy individual rights and property rights. Rolph, 'Courting Conservatism' in Gifford and Williams (eds.) pp. 21-39

[772] *National Review*, 22 Aug. 1967, p. 887

[773] *National Review*, 19 Nov. 1968, p. 1153

2: Rhodesia, Anti-Communism and the British

The American right felt that the USA, by accepting coexistence with the communist powers, was colluding with forces dedicated to the destruction of the Western world. They also believed that the end of white European rule in Africa was part of this naïve, woolly-minded liberal surrender whereas the white-ruled regimes of southern Africa were sturdy and successful allies in the worldwide battle to prevent the spread of communism. Those on the right were particularly scornful of what they saw as the liberal hypocrisy of criticising these countries without censuring the USSR in similar terms. The letter of a New Yorker to Senator Edward Brooke (R-Mass.) in May 1968 was typical of many in castigating Brooke for denouncing Rhodesia while ignoring "the Soviet regime for its record of fifty years of terrorism and mass genocide unparalleled in all history".[774]

As supporters of white rule in Africa, conservatives were angry with the token gestures of dissent that the Kennedy Administration had made about apartheid in South Africa and over Portuguese rule in Mozambique and Angola. One American conservative concluded that Kennedy's attempts to woo the Third World had been disastrously counter-productive. "Our systematic, unthinking anti-colonialism has plainly become the promoter of 'revolutionary socialism' and the neo-imperialism of petty potentates like Nasser, Castro, and Sukarno. In the process we win no friends; but our actions bewilder our allies, who feel betrayed and exposed by us to the international highway robbers' knife."[775] US policy towards Rhodesia was, in conservative eyes, an egregious example of this active destruction of a potential ally in Africa.[776] It confirmed conservative suspicions, harboured since 1945, that successive US administrations, and the East Coast establishment, were not tackling the threat of communism strenuously enough. Barry Goldwater, who was selected as Republican presidential candidate in 1964 as a deliberate rebuff to the party's liberal elite, was a supporter of Smith's regime because he valued its anti-communism. In December 1967 Goldwater took a two-

[774] Brooke Papers, Box 491, Library of Congress
[775] Molnar, p. 170
[776] An illustration of the importance of Rhodesia to American conservatives is provided by the archive of Senator William Fulbright (D-Ark.); his Africa file contains more letters on Rhodesia than on any other topic and there is not one supportive of UN sanctions. Fulbright was Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and had voted against federal civil rights legislation, making him an obvious person for those who felt strongly about Rhodesia to attempt to influence; Papers of J. William Fulbright Manuscript Collection, MS/F956/144-B, Series 48, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Sub-series 10, Africa 1960-74, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas

week tour of Rhodesia and South Africa and made it clear at a press conference in Salisbury that he opposed both UN sanctions against Rhodesia and the refusal of his government to sell arms to South Africa and Rhodesia because of what he saw as a growing communist threat in Africa.[777]

Goldwater agreed with Bill Buckley that the containment and co-existence policies of the Eisenhower Administration were tantamount to surrender, and they – and many other conservatives – accused the Johnson Administration of similar feebleness. In their view, the Vietnam War was not being prosecuted vigorously enough and Rhodesia provided further evidence of government pusillanimity. Smith's regime, they argued, was not only vigorously anti-communist but was clearly successful in dealing with communist threats to its existence. The *National Review* article claimed that the Rhodesian Government was dealing robustly with "thugs, arsonists, saboteurs and terrorists. Many undoubtedly have been Communist-influenced or trained and even financed".[778] Neo-isolationist conservatives who believed that the United States should base its foreign policy solely on a hard-headed assessment of its own needs, and not attempt to play the world's policeman, could agree with strident anti-communists that the US Government was allowing its attitude to Rhodesia to be determined by the fickle British and irresponsible black-ruled nations exercising too much power in the United Nations.

Conservative fears about US policy in Rhodesia were inseparable from hostility to Great Britain over the issue – "that pompous island sitting astride the English Channel", as one irate correspondent from Florida put it.[779] A Gallup poll of business executives taken in February 1967 suggested that UDI had considerable support in the USA: 43% replied that their sympathies were with Rhodesia and only 29% supported Britain.[780] Many conservatives regarded the British as devious, feckless and far too ready to sponge off the generosity of gullible American governments. "Britain seems now to have the USA a

[777] Transcript of Goldwater's press conference in Salisbury, 18 Dec. 1967, DO207/261, Kew
[778] *National Review,* 16 May 1967, p. 517; Burnham called the black Rhodesian nationalists " a gang of cutthroats", *National Review*, 17 Dec. 1968, p. 1257
[779] Russell, Series XVI, Box 24, Russell Library. For right-wing extremists, especially devotees of conspiracy theories in the John Birch Society or the Liberty Lobby, there was a racial element to their Anglophobia which was a proxy for Anti-Semitism: Berlet and Lyons, p. 193
[780] DO207/261, Kew; the remaining 28% were 'don't knows'; the poll may, of course, more reflect business hostility to UN sanctions than Anglophobia, especially as it was taken a month after Johnson ordered US compliance with those sanctions

colony once more," suggested someone writing to Senator Herman Talmadge (D-Ga.).[781] LBJ was advised by a supporter, "Believe me, Mr. President, the English have sly ways to gain their end."[782] One of Fulbright's constituents thought that "The British have been an anchor around our necks since World War 1 and would have gone bankrupt if we, the United States, had not bailed them out."[783] These attitudes were common to those conservatives who wanted the Western world to be more assertively anti-communist and those who felt that Rhodesia was simply none of America's business. Conservatives were also irritated by the fact that Britain had a Labour government. The letters of complaint about Rhodesia to conservative Senators and Congressmen are peppered with unflattering references to the "socialist" government of Harold Wilson. Strident American right-wingers regarded socialists as little different from communists, believing them to be either fellow-travellers or simple-minded dupes of the Kremlin or Beijing.[784]

Repeatedly conservatives stressed the apparent hypocrisy of the British – on the one hand demanding US support, while on the other continuing to trade with communist states and refusing to assist the US in Vietnam. As Congressman Durward G. Hall (R-Mo.) put it in a telegram to the White House, "No British sanctions were imposed against Red China during [the] Korean War, nor against Cuba, nor are any now imposed against our enemy, North Vietnam, yet we pump billions out to support the pound sterling."[785] To some conservatives, Britain's refusal to send troops to Vietnam made it virtually an enemy of the USA. Senator William Fulbright (D-Ark.) was asked by one of his constituents, "Why should we appease Great Britain in her demands for sanctions on Rhodesia? Isn't Great Britain trading with North Vietnam? This is something hard for the families of our boys and men who are fighting North Vietnam to understand, each day that goes by some of our boys lose their lives, yet we are favoring the ones that are helping to murder them, if we go along with sanctions that Great Britain wants."[786] British trade with communist countries was often contrasted with Smith's efforts to court

[781] Talmadge, Series V, Box 48, Russell Library
[782] Gen CO 237, Box 65, CO 250 Rhodesia, 1 June 1966, LBJ
[783] Fulbright Papers, *op. cit.*
[784] "What else is socialism but Communism with the claws retracted?" asked Whittaker Chambers in 1954. Quoted in Nash, p. 270
[785] Congressman Durward G. Hall to LBJ, 5 Jan. 1967, Countries EX CO 1-1, Box 7, LBJ
[786] Fulbright Papers, *op. cit.*

US support. Congressman Joe D. Waggonner (D-La.), in a speech to the House of Representatives in April 1966, made an exaggerated claim (frequently repeated by conservatives) that "Beleaguered though his government is, Ian Smith has offered the United States troops he can ill afford to spare us to aid us in Vietnam. Who, then, is our true friend? Great Britain who supplies the Communist enemy or Rhodesia who offers us troops to fight the Vietcong?"[787]

The Administration found these criticisms embarrassing as the State Department's defence of British actions in its response to one Congressional critic indicates.

> It is true that the United Kingdom as well as other countries have not agreed with our economic denial policy with regard to Cuba and continue to trade with that country. The British Government has, nevertheless, banned the export of strategic items to Cuba. With respect to North Vietnam, British trade is quite small and does not include any strategic items… The British Government has given valuable political support to our position in Vietnam. We naturally continue to be concerned that British policy does not fully accord with all aspects of US policy with regard both to Cuba and Vietnam. We have made, and will continue to make, representations to the United Kingdom on the various problems involved.[788]

This, unsurprisingly, did little to mollify the critics. Congressman H.R. Gross (R-Iowa)[789] was scornful of the distinction between strategic and non-strategic items and accused Britain of giving significant aid to Cuba. "There are no non-strategic items if they are in short supply in any country that is waging a war… Anything is strategic that is necessary to keep a country moving and fighting a war… Meanwhile, Britain is going into Cuba and investing $38 million in the construction of a fertilizer plant. I can think of nothing that will make a bigger contribution to the build-up of Castro and to the sustenance of his Cuban Communist Government than the building of a fertilizer plant."[790]

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[787] Congressional Record – House, 5 Apr. 1966, p. 7717. In messages to American supporters in California in February and March 1966, Smith had merely offered "tangible help" to the USA in return for "similar sympathy and understanding from the people of the US in the justice of our cause" in contrast to "the Socialist regime in Britain [which] has balked at the idea of committing troops to fight our common enemy in Viet-Nam". Rhodesia, Box 97, LBJ. See also Letter to LBJ, 3 Mar. 1966, CFPF, Box 2608, NARA. In May 1967, the Rhodesian Minister of Internal Affairs "expressed his personal view that the Rhodesian Government would be willing to allow Rhodesians to volunteer to help the American effort in Vietnam", Congressional Record – House, 10 Aug. 1967, p. 22346; right-wingers continued to believe that Rhodesia was offering help and, in May 1967, Senator Strom Thurmond said that the Rhodesian cabinet had offered 5,000 troops, a claim denied by the State Department, Department of State telegram to London and African embassies, 19 May 1967, CFPF, Box 2448, NARA

[788] Congressional Record – House, 1 Feb. 1967, p. 2168

[789] Gross was one of Rhodesia's most outspoken defenders and regularly attended functions organised by the American Southern Africa Council in support of Smith's regime

[790] Congressional Record – House, 1 Feb. 1967, p. 2177

Once UN sanctions were imposed, critics questioned why the USA, "formerly the principal customer of chrome from Rhodesia, has now switched and is buying from Russia… Why should we quit buying from a democratic country and buy from our known enemy?"[791]

It was not just Britain's apparent perfidy that angered US conservatives. UDI reminded them of the American Revolution. Not only had the Rhodesian declaration of independence consciously imitated the style and language of Jefferson's declaration but, to conservatives, it seemed that, once again, Britain was obstructing the progress of history. As the *National Review* article made clear, Smith's American supporters felt that the parallel with 1776 made irrelevant the fact that the Rhodesian whites were a minority ruling over a black majority. One of Fulbright's correspondents maintained that: "These United States took the unlawful, treasonable step back in 1776 and we too had illiterate and savage people, bondservants, and colored slaves who had no voice in government, but progress can be made even if it takes years." *Liberty Lowdown*, the newsletter of the racist, neo-Nazi organisation, Liberty Lobby, suggested in its December 1965 edition that "The Rhodesian experience exactly parallels the historical pattern of our own country: hardy white pioneer settlers founded a nation based upon Christianity and the rule of law, planted Western civilisation and industry in a wilderness, were betrayed and abused by the powers-that-be in London, and then declared their independence; asking only of the outside world that they not prejudge Rhodesia's case without getting all the facts."[792] The view that UDI was a modern version of 1776 was so common that it exasperated Robert C. Good, the US Ambassador to Zambia from 1965 to 1968. He claimed that he published his history of UDI in 1973 because "During an extensive speaking tour of the United States in 1967 while on leave from our African post, my family and I found… [that] if our audiences responded at all to the illegal seizure of independence in neighbouring Rhodesia or to the person of Mr. Ian Smith, it was generally favourably because they knew nothing of the circumstances except that Rhodesians had had a rebellion of sorts (as had we) against the British".[793]

[791] Tom Joseph, President of the Farmers State Bank of Round Rock, Texas, to LBJ, 14 Dec. 1967, Gen CO 237, Box 65, LBJ
[792] Fulbright Papers, *op. cit.*
[793] Good, p. 11

Hostility to Great Britain over Rhodesia brought together three disparate strands of conservative thinking about American foreign policy: neo-isolationists, those who felt that America's principal overseas focus should be the Pacific rather than NATO, and those who wanted anti-communism waged more energetically. This is perfectly illustrated by a letter to Talmadge from one of his constituents which expresses all three of these conservative points of view simultaneously. "Great Britain doesn't seem much interested in our efforts to save Asia for Democracy. Why should we be meddling in her dispute with Rhodesia? What business is it of the United States of America?"[794] Right-wing responses to Rhodesia did not shape such thinking, but America's alignment with Britain on the issue undoubtedly reinforced it.

3: Rhodesia as a proxy for opposition to US civil rights

Although conservatives were undoubtedly exercised by what they saw as a communist threat to southern Africa, Smith's repressive policies ensured that the black, nationalist groups who were assisted by the USSR and China posed little threat to the white minority government of Rhodesia during the 1960s. This meant that anti-communism featured less strongly in conservative denunciations of US policy than the issue of race. To right-wingers, Rhodesia was a model of how racial problems should be tackled. They could point out that segregation in Rhodesia was much less oppressive and rigid than in South Africa and the *National Review* article even implied that there was less racial segregation in Rhodesia than in the USA. "As a general proposition, housing is segregated in the cities of Rhodesia (as it is segregated in every city within the United States), but there are neighborhoods which are equally available to white and black buyers."[795] For southern segregationists, in particular, the Rhodesia of their imagination made it an ideal proxy for their opposition to US civil rights. Just a week after UDI the Southern States Industrial Council issued a press release urging US support for Rhodesian independence. It is not difficult to read between the lines to perceive that they were referring to the Voting Rights Act, signed by President Johnson just three months earlier, as much as events in southern Africa.

[794] Talmadge, Series V, Box 48, Russell Library
[795] *National Review,* 16 May 1967, p. 514

> [In Rhodesia] no one is denied the vote on account of race, but there are definite educational qualifications. Because the bulk of the population cannot meet acceptable levels, the white Rhodesians understandably and properly are in a position of leadership. If the uneducated and primitive were given the vote, the result would be dictatorship by those who ruthlessly manipulate the native masses… If they [the Communists] can plunge Rhodesia into chaos, and take hold of the reins of power, they will have taken a major step toward conquest of the African continent… In recent years, innumerable regimes have been spawned – regimes which are run by ignorant men or savages. The grand work of civilization, carried on in the Afro-Asian world in the last century and the first four decades of the 20th century, has been rapidly undone. Every time a soundly-led government is overcome by a combination of savages and revolutionaries, the critical situation of our own government is aggravated… Somewhere, at some point, the tide of savagery must be stopped. A good place to call a halt to the surging influence of backward peoples is Rhodesia. The way for the United States to help advance the cause of civilization in Africa, and freedom in the world, is by recognizing the free nation of Rhodesia forthwith.[796]

This press release is strikingly similar to a *National Review* editorial of August 1957 about the American civil rights movement. "The South does not want to deprive the Negro of a vote for the sake of depriving him of the vote… The central question that emerges… is whether the White community in the South is entitled to take such measures as are necessary to prevail, politically and culturally, in areas in which it does not predominate numerically? The sobering answer is *Yes* – the White community is so entitled because, for the time being, it is the advanced race… The problem in the South is not how to get the vote for the Negro, but how to equip the Negro – and a great many Whites – to cast an enlightened and responsible vote."[797] Although, by the mid-1960s, *National Review* had distanced itself from the overt and often violent racism of the American South, Buckley continued to believe that the vote was a privilege to be earned rather than an automatic right of adulthood. In an article of July 1964 on the murder of three civil rights workers taking part in the Mississippi Freedom Summer to register black voters, he criticised populist totalitarianism and urged that "the challenge, in a mature political society, is to lure to the polls those who will cast responsible votes". He pointed out that liberals complained about the standard of education given to Mississippi's blacks and asked rhetorically "what would they [the blacks] vote for, if they are not yet trained to vote deliberately?"[798]

[796] Russell, Series III, Box 69, Russell Library
[797] *National Review*, 24 Aug. 1957, pp. 148-9
[798] *National Review*, 14 July 1964, p. 574. See also Judis, pp. 138-39; 191-93; 216-17; 283-87

It was not just conservatives in the southern states of the USA who used Rhodesia as a way of criticising the pace of change in US civil rights. In January 1966 *Union Leader*, Manchester, New Hampshire's conservative newspaper, commented on the British opposition to UDI in an article which implied that the principle of 'one man, one vote' should not override the rights of property owners. "The mere fact that there are more of one color of people than there are of another doesn't entitle the more numerous color to the possessions of the white people. After all, there should be some credit given for accomplishment and creativity."[799] The defence of property rights was a theme dear to the hearts of those who had opposed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which, they believed, had trampled on the legitimate right of property owners (including those offering public services such as shopkeepers, hoteliers and restaurateurs) to choose to whom they sold their goods and services. Buckley's opposition to civil rights legislation was based on his libertarian views, which combined the defence of property rights while upholding the right to protest, demonstrating that his brand of conservatism was more subtle than the naked racism of southern segregationists. Commenting on the 1960 sit-in movement, he wrote, "Private property remains private… therefore a Negro does not have the right to enter a privately owned restaurant whose proprietors choose, for whatever reasons, to bar access to it to non-whites… The boycott the Negroes have instituted against business concerns which discriminate against Negroes in one quarter of their operations is a wholly defensible – we go so far as to say wholly commendable – form of protest; it is a form of social assertiveness which we must understand, and can sympathise with."[800]

The perceived "backwardness" of black Rhodesians and their debt to their white compatriots for civilising them allowed conservative southern Congressmen and Senators to use nakedly racist language to rail against black civil rights without too obviously criticising Americans. When Congressman Waggonner addressed the House of Representatives in April 1966 on the subject of US policy towards Rhodesia, it was clear that he believed that expanding civil rights would lead inexorably to communism.

[799] Fulbright Papers, *op. cit.*
[800] *National Review*, 26 Mar. 1960, p. 193

> Three generations ago, a group of resourceful white men went into the jungle of what is now Rhodesia and carved a civilised land by the sheer force of their brains and management ability. The lesson of history was crystal clear then as it is now: the natives were not capable of producing any semblance of what we call civilization. Now that the white man has led them out of savagery, the Socialist left-wing camp is up in arms to turn the country back to them. This is, of course, a not too subtle way of building a Socialist bridge from democracy to Communism… There can be no denying that the US policy is based, in the main, on racism in reverse and a determination that, no matter what he wants, the Negro shall have it.[801]

Congressman John Rarick (D-La.), in a speech to the House of Representatives in September 1967, took up one of the themes in the *National Review* report that white-ruled southern Africa was racially more harmonious than the United States. He contrasted the riots in American cities with what he claimed was the racial peace of South Africa and Rhodesia. "Rhodesia and South Africa have had no riots or wholesale disobedience – no Watts, Rochester, Trenton or Detroit. Law and order prevail."[802] Rhodesia continued to be a useful proxy for embittered white Southerners throughout the 1960s. Raymond Arsenault, writing in 1972 and analysing the Congressional support for Rhodesia in general, and the 1971 Byrd Amendment in particular,[803] concluded that "During the early and mid-sixties, Southern dialogue on the Rhodesian controversy was peppered with racist statements… The primary bond between Southerners and white Rhodesians has been, and continues to be, an empathy born of white racism… The Southerners viewed the [Rhodesian] situation primarily as a racial crisis – as another challenge to the cherished ethic of white supremacy. That the crises of Selma and Salisbury were inextricably related was obvious to all concerned."[804]

It is no surprise to find that the US citizens who felt moved to write to their political leaders about Rhodesia made the same connections and, because they were not making public statements, expressed themselves in unashamedly racist language. These letters are revealing because their authors' views

[801] Congressional Record – House, 5 Apr. 1966, pp. 7716-17
[802] Congressional Record – House, 28 Sept. 1967, p. 27266; Rarick was conveniently forgetting the Sharpeville Massacre of March 1960 in which South African police fired on a peaceful crowd protesting against apartheid pass laws, killing 69 and wounding over 200, an event which was widely condemned around the world
[803] The 1971 Byrd Amendment was a successful ploy to allow the USA to import chrome and other strategically important raw minerals from Rhodesia in defiance of UN mandatory sanctions. Senator Harry F. Byrd Jr. (a Virginia Democrat who successfully ran for re-election in 1970 as an Independent) proposed an amendment to the military procurement bill which prohibited any ban on the import of a strategic raw material that could legally be imported from a communist country. Since the USA was already importing chrome from the USSR, passage of the Byrd Amendment meant that the country could defy the UN sanction on importing Rhodesian chrome
[804] Arsenault, p. 55

were not repudiated by the Senators and Congressmen to whom they were addressed. Although the politicians' replies are invariably couched in moderate language, there is no suggestion that they disagree with their constituents' sentiments. One Mississippian, writing to Senator Richard Russell (D-Ga.) in November 1965 was typical of such correspondents in making explicit not just the connection between US civil rights and southern Africa but also the disenchantment of Southerners with the racial policies of their Democrat president. "Rhodesia and the Republic of South Africa are the only other two countries having our peculiar race problem and thus sympathetic with us and vice-versa… At the rate LBJ is going he'll give the entire world to the blacks."[805]

4: Rhodesia, the UN and the US Constitution

The United Nations provided American conservatives with another target. In its early days the UN, with just 51 members in 1945, could almost be seen as something of an extension of the US State Department. That, according to historian Gary Ostrower, was how Kennan, Marshall and Acheson regarded it.[806] However, as it grew in size it became much less malleable. By 1970, as the old European empires crumbled, membership had increased to 127. At the outset, there were only three African members, but of the 51 countries that joined between 1956 and 1970, no fewer than 38 were in Africa.[807] As a result, the focus of UN attention shifted from traditional Cold War and Eurocentric issues to matters that concerned the newly independent nations of the Third World. American conservatives were outraged that the United States should be dictated to by such countries; it seemed patently absurd that each small, impoverished, underdeveloped nation should have the same voting strength in the UN General Assembly as the United States. By the 1960s conservatives regarded the United Nations as corrosive; they believed that it not only rendered American foreign policy weak-kneed but that it was bent on promoting the chimeric goals of liberal internationalism and racial equality. In a December 1964 edition of *National Review*, James Burnham wailed: "Why in the name of minimal common sense does our government allow itself to be denounced, vilified and lied about day after day in the halls of the United Nations by a mob of terrorists, savages, revolutionaries,

[805] Russell, Series III, Box 69, Russell Library
[806] Ostrower, p. 65
[807] UN website

bankrupts, demagogues, voluptuaries and half-educated opportunists masquerading as representatives of new-born sovereign nations?"[808]

UN policy in Africa allowed conservatives to make racially charged criticisms such as this while lambasting US support for an organisation they regarded as hypocritical and anti-Western. In April 1962, John Tower (R-Tex.) denounced the Kennedy Administration in the Senate for failing to support Tshombe's secessionist regime in Katanga.

> Perhaps Tshombe naively felt that his friendship for the West would cause us to help him. He knows better now. He incurred the ill-will of the African-Asian bloc which dominated the UN. This bloc dictates not only to the UN but also to the United States. They wanted Tshombe whipped and, obediently, we helped to whip him. Invariably in Africa, when East and West clash, the United States takes sides against the West. We have done so time after time. So has the UN… We seem bent on the creation of power vacuums which the Communists rush in to fill.

In the same speech Tower lamented "our doctrinaire hostility to what we term colonialism".[809] Unsurprisingly, *National Review* columnists agreed with him. In September 1964 conservative sociologist Ernest van den Haag denounced UN policy in the Congo as incompetent and counter-productive, while suggesting that Belgian troops could quickly have restored order without UN interference. With heavy sarcasm, he castigated the State Department for its subservience to the UN.

> The UN, right or wrong, must be supported by the United States; 'left' disorder is better than 'right' order; left dictators are good (progressive); African politicians who are not leftists are stooges of colonialism; the UN should not intervene in the domestic affairs of any country unless it is anti-Communist or governed by whites; the way to prevent Communism from gaining a hold in Africa is to fight African anti-Communists and support pro-Communist dictators such as Nkrumah, Ben Bella and Patrice Lumumba (of blessed memory).[810]

George C. Wallace, Governor of Alabama, best known for his publicly outspoken defence of segregation, claimed in his memoir that hostility to the UN – and, by implication, the sanctions against Rhodesia – had become an important aspect of conservative thinking by the end of the 1960s.

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[808] Burnham, 'Why Do We Take It?', a reprint of his *National Review* article, 29 Dec. 1964, in Burnham, *The War,* p. 169
[809] Congressional Record – Senate, 4 Apr. 1962, p. 5908
[810] *National Review*, 8 Sept. 1964, p. 772

Referring to his unsuccessful presidential bid of 1968, he wrote, "Sincere conservatives wanted me to attack the United Nations. Americans who had long regarded the UN as a device for keeping the peace and building a better world were slowly waking up to the true nature of the world organisation."[811] Wallace's memoir is selective and self-serving but there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of his view that the UN, during the 1960s, increasingly became a focus of right-wing ire.

UN hostility to Rhodesian independence merely confirmed, to the American right, that the USA was allowing its policies to be shaped by irresponsible, left-wing black Africans. Barry Goldwater, during his 1967 visit to Rhodesia, criticised "the Afro-Asian bloc" for its influence on US policy but expressed his opinion in racially neutral language. "I do not think we should allow what is essentially a minority of the United Nations to effectively control the United Nations."[812] However, members of the public who felt sufficiently annoyed to write to Senators and Congressmen about the UN were often more explicitly racist than journals such as *National Review* or public figures such as Goldwater. One writer told Senator Talmadge in April 1966 following UNSC Resolution 221 which permitted Britain to use force, if necessary, to prevent oil reaching Rhodesia through the port of Beira in Mozambique – "It makes any decent American's blood boil to think that WHITE men would be guilty of this betrayal against a brave country like Rhodesia. Surely Congress is aware of the murder, rape, torture etc. that has been perpetrated… in the Congo, Katanga etc… WHY CAN'T WE GET OUT OF THE UN? With 40 wars since 1942, it does not give the impression of being a 'peace' organisation."[813] Another wrote in a similar vein, "The blacks there [in Rhodesia] simply are not capable or ready to govern themselves… And the United Nations is in drastic need of an overhaul – what is it accomplishing? How much longer will the United States foot the bill and tolerate the actions of the UN before doing something about it?"[814]

[811] Wallace, pp. 124-5
[812] Quoted in Lake, p. 118. These sentiments were not confined to the radical right. George Ball maintained in his memoirs that, decolonisation "shifted the UN center of gravity from experienced to immature governments and… distorted United Nations proceedings… The Afro-Asian bloc and its members reacted by conditioned reflex to almost every issue with anticolonialist rhetoric [and] many were seduced into serving Moscow's interests". *Pattern*, p. 224
[813] Talmadge, Series VIII, Box 380, Russell Library; the emphasis is in the original
[814] *Ibid.*

However, as with opposition to civil rights, such nakedly racist sentiments were not often expressed publicly. Instead, the UN became another proxy by which such views could be respectably aired. Criticism of the UN was a particularly powerful weapon for the right because it could be underpinned by constitutional fundamentalism, an issue that not only gave a respectable gloss to racism, but also enabled radical conservatives to reach out to a wider constituency. For the US to follow the dictates of the UN, critics argued, was to surrender its sovereignty to a supranational organisation. Furthermore, they maintained, when the President used executive authority to implement those dictates he violated the constitutional powers vested in Congress. These concerns were not new. Articulate opposition to US involvement in supranational organisations dates back at least to the Senate rejection of the League of Nations and, arguably, beyond. Many who opposed the League had argued that membership would involve an unacceptable loss of sovereignty, which would damage the US Constitution and violate Washington's 1797 stricture that the US should avoid permanent foreign entanglement. But these views also had a racist core, as Senator Henry Cabot Lodge's arguments for rejecting the League made clear.

> Suppose the Asiatic powers demand the free admission of their labor to the United States, and we resist, and the decision of the League goes against us, are we going to accept it? Is it possible that anyone who wishes to preserve our standards of life and labor can be drawn into a scheme veiled by glittering and glancing generalities, which would take from us our sovereign right to decide alone and for ourselves the vital question of the exclusion of Mongolian and Asiatic labor? These are not fanciful cases drawn from the region of the imagination. They are actual, living questions of the utmost vitality and peril today. In them is involved that deepest human instinct which seeks not only to prevent an impossible competition in labor but to maintain the purity of the race.[815]

Although Henry Cabot Lodge, a northern Republican, had personal and political motives for opposing the League of Nations because it was Woodrow Wilson's brainchild,[816] his remarks also reveal his opposition to, and fear of, the new immigrants whom he saw as ignorant and lacking cultural and linguistic affinity with America. But his reservations about the League covenant, and Article X in

[815] Quoted in Koo, p. 8
[816] Lodge admitted that: "I never thought I could hate a man as much as I hate Wilson." Quoted in Gary Gerstle, 'War and Society, 1914-1920' in Gary Gerstle, et. al., *Liberty, Equality, Power, A History of the American People,* Fort Worth, 1999, p. 789

particular (by which members of the League agreed to take military action against aggressor nations), were also cogent. Lodge was not an isolationist, but he, and his supporters, regarded Article X as a threat to US national sovereignty and a potential violation of the US Constitution which vested war-making powers solely with Congress. They were also worried that the US might find itself obliged to fight in disputes where no material American interests were at stake. Elihu Root, one of Lodge's allies, claimed that Article X would "commit Americans to enter into foreign wars in faraway places where they would almost certainly not want to fight".[817] It may be that, in the words of historian George C. Herring, these fears were expressed at the time in "overblown rhetoric"[818] but these apprehensions echo like a leitmotiv through conservative thinking about the relationship between the USA and supranational organisations, and were a central chord in the chorus of disapproval of UN sanctions against Rhodesia.

It is, then, not surprising that these arguments resurfaced when the US ratified the UN Charter in 1945. The majority of Americans initially accepted US membership of the UN because the trauma of World War Two and the widespread conviction that US isolationism between the world wars had contributed to its outbreak seemed to justify the creation of a stronger peace-keeping body than the League of Nations had been. They continued to do so as long as it appeared to be little more than another instrument for the implementation of US foreign policy objectives. Nevertheless, there were articulate conservative critics who argued from the outset that membership of the UN would reduce US sovereignty and upset the constitutional balance between executive and legislature over treaty-making. Some of the UN's principal American advocates admitted that membership of this new supranational organisation had implications for US sovereignty. Senator William Fulbright, extolling the UN Charter to the Senate as ranking "in importance alongside the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the League of Nations", pointed out that "The ultimate objective of international co-operation and peace necessarily involves the development of rules of conduct universally accepted and enforceable. Any rules or laws

[817] Quoted in Graubard, p. 197
[818] Herring, p. 428

universally accepted and enforceable are inconsistent with the absolute sovereignty of present-day nations."[819]

The views of John P. Humphrey, the Canadian Director of the Human Rights Division of the UN, were similarly alarming to conservatives because he admitted that an effective UN would challenge the domestic control of civil rights. "What the United Nations is trying to do is revolutionary in character. Human rights are largely a matter of relationships between the state and individuals, and therefore a matter which has been traditionally regarded as being within the domestic jurisdiction of states. What is now being proposed is, in effect, the creation of some kind of supranational supervision of this relationship between the state and its citizens."[820]

Humphrey's article galvanised Frank E. Holman, President of the American Bar Association, into mobilising support among lawyers against US ratification of the Declaration on Human Rights. Holman agreed with Fulbright and Humphrey that the Declaration was revolutionary but he echoed the fears of Lodge about the potential threat to US sovereignty. Observing that the Declaration did not contain an endorsement of the right to own property, he called it "a proposal for world-wide socialism to be imposed through the United Nations on the United States and on every other member nation." This was because he feared that the Declaration contradicted the UN Charter, which explicitly forbade UN intervention in domestic matters. "Is the violation of this principle to be brought about through the back door?... In order to enforce the provisions of a bill of rights, the United Nations will have to interfere continually and minutely in the internal affairs of member nations. [The Declaration will] impose so-called economic and social duties upon government, the fulfilment of which will require a planned economy and a control by government of individual action. This program, if adopted and approved by the member nations, will promote state socialism, if not communism, throughout the world." Holman also believed that the Declaration threatened US constitutional tradition by giving the executive too much power. "This is a dangerous, far-reaching and revolutionary change in the

[819] Congressional Record – Senate, 23 July 1945, pp. 8095-96
[820] Humphrey, p. 21

processes of constitutional government [because] in the United States the President could accept the Declaration without any action by the Congress as a whole, or even by the Senate."[821] Although Holman's articles did not mention race explicitly, the themes he stressed – property, constitutional purity, supranational control of domestic issues and the spectre of communism – were the stock-in-trade of southern segregationists. Because the extreme right-wing opposition to the UN in its early days was explicitly anti-Semitic, Holman's views seemed measured and moderate by comparison. A liberal pamphleteer, troubled by extremist attacks on the UN, wrote a booklet denouncing those responsible for them, but exonerated "the critical opposition of such groups as the distinguished American Bar Association" on the grounds that "constructive criticism from responsible quarters strengthens rather than impairs".[822]

The ABA's arguments surfaced again in the controversy of the early 1950s over the Bricker Amendment. In January 1953 Senator John Bricker (R-Ohio), strongly influenced by Frank Holman, introduced Senate Joint Resolution 1 with the support of more than 60 Senators, including all but three fellow Republicans. This was an attempt to secure a constitutional amendment to limit executive control over the making of US foreign policy. Bricker's amendment would require Congressional approval for executive foreign policy agreements and support from both houses of Congress for any treaty, and would make inoperative any treaty provision that contravened the US constitution. Historian Gary Ostrower has shown that a number of conservative fears coalesced in the Bricker Amendment. It "drew much of its strength from anti-communists who believed that FDR and Truman had sold out US interests to Stalin at Yalta and Potsdam. But it fed equally on anti-UN sentiment... [Bricker] argued that UN economic programs would turn the United States into a 'socialistic state'. He also aimed his guns at the Declaration of Human Rights and a companion agreement, the 1948 Genocide Convention, drafted to outlaw state-sponsored mass slaughter falling outside the legal framework of law. Southern segregationists led the campaign for the Bricker Amendment as a way to

[821] Holman, 'International Bill of Rights', pp. 984-86, 1078-81
[822] Hall, p. 6

protect the system of white supremacy".[823] This explains why Bricker's proposals were supported by a widespread spectrum of conservative opinion in the country at large. According to Robert Caro, "In the American heartlands… it touched a deep chord. The American Legion, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Chicago Tribune, the Committee for Constitutional Government, all leapt to support it. A newly formed organisation, Vigilant Women for the Bricker Amendment, quickly obtained more than half a million signatures on petitions, mail running nine to one in its favour was pouring into Congress."[824] LBJ aide George Reedy (later White House press secretary) described the strength of feeling aroused by the Bricker Amendment on Capitol Hill. "An incredible momentum built up behind the amendment… In all the years that I've been around the Congress… I don't know of any other single legislative issue that has aroused such emotion… No one could vote against the Bricker Amendment with impunity, and very few could vote against it and survive at all – at least, so they thought."[825]

Despite this, the Amendment was eventually defeated in Congress by a combination of staunch opposition from President Eisenhower and skilful manipulation of the Senate by Lyndon Johnson. However, the depth of support for Bricker was indicative of widespread conservative suspicion, firstly, of the direction of post-war US foreign policy and, secondly, of presidential support for the United Nations. It also demonstrates that attitudes to foreign policy played an important part in the post-war revival of conservatism. Those who, just over a decade later, voiced their opposition to US support for sanctions against Rhodesia did so in language reminiscent of the Bricker Amendment.

When Ian Smith's white minority regime made its unilateral declaration of independence from Britain in November 1965, it immediately elicited the support of American conservatives. As early as January 1966, George Ball told British officials that "at least four Congressmen had with considerable heat" asked him why the USA was supporting Britain over Rhodesia while Britain continued to trade with

[823] Ostrower, p. 71; See also Tananbaum, pp. 69-70
[824] Caro, *Master of the Senate*, p. 528
[825] Quoted in Caro, *op. cit*., p. 529; also in Woods, *LBJ,* p. 316; and Dallek, *Lone Star Rising,* p. 435

Cuba and North Vietnam.[826] But it was the imposition of mandatory UN sanctions against Rhodesia in December 1966 that provoked an even stronger and more significant response. Unsurprisingly, Gallup's February 1967 poll of businessmen found 58% opposed to sanctions and just 24% in favour.[827] Within days of Johnson's Executive Order 11322 requiring Americans to comply, Congressman J. Arthur Younger (R-Cal.) complained to the House of Representatives about the constitutional implications of the President's order. "We have abdicated our sovereignty to the UN because the President must do what the Council dictates whether [or not] the action is in the public interest or meets with popular approval… The President's Executive Order… seems to overlook Article 1, Section 8, Paragraph 3 of our Constitution, which defines the powers of Congress as follows: 'To regulate Commerce with foreign nations and among the several States and with the Indian Tribes'."[828] Talmadge was urged by one of his constituents, using similar arguments, to support Congressman James B. Utt (R-Cal.) in an attempt to overturn Johnson's Executive Order. "It is unthinkable that the United Nations or any other organization, regardless of their intent, could transcend the authority of the United States Congress, the duly elected representatives of the people. Any erosion of the Constitution by the Executive Branch must be openly debated and rejected by the Congress and the people."[829] Fulbright, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, came under similar pressure when he received a letter in March 1967, with over 30 signatures, from members of an organisation calling itself "The Constitutional Study Group". Its letter, without mentioning race, repeats a number of conservative proxy issues.

> We were terribly alarmed when we read of the President's actions against Christian, anti-communist Rhodesia. It made us feel better when Representative James B. Utt of California introduced his Joint Resolution which would instruct the Federal Government to notify the United Nations that the United States will not honor United Nations sanctions against Rhodesia. The Resolution would also nullify Executive Order 11322. We are glad this brave man is fighting against this unconstitutional action of our Chief Executive. We urge you to stand with Representative Utt. We want the power to regulate trade solely in the hands of Congress as stated in our

[826] Memorandum of a Conversation, 12 Jan. 1966, CFPF, Box 2609, NARA
[827] DO207/261, Kew, the remaining 18% had no opinion
[828] Congressional Record – House, 1 Feb. 1967, p. 2169
[829] Talmadge, Series V, Box 48, Russell Library

> Constitution. We want no part in crushing the nation of Rhodesia; we feel we have made too many mistakes in foreign policy already without adding this wrong.[830]

James Utt not only challenged the constitutionality of the Executive Order but claimed that a Security Council resolution was invalid unless all the permanent members had voted for it.[831] Some conservatives went even further, arguing (as Elihu Root had done in 1919) that upholding UN sanctions ran the risk of dragging the USA into an African war. Congressman Maston O'Neal (D-Ga.) told one of his friends in April 1967, "You may be sure that I share your concern over the possibility of a military confrontation between the United States and the white-ruled countries of South Africa. It is my feeling that the Administration embarked on a dangerous and foolish course by imposing through Executive Order the economic sanctions requested by the United Nations. Such action cannot be justified legally or morally. At best it can only lead to embarrassment for all concerned." O'Neal went on to express what many on the right felt about the United Nations and Rhodesia – that there was a risk of the USA allowing itself "to be used as a tool of the United Nations" and becoming "engaged in a so-called peace-keeping mission against peace-loving countries".[832] The Security Council resolutions that declared Rhodesia a threat to international peace and security were, to the conservatives, manifestly absurd. Even *The Washington Post,* which argued in an article about mandatory sanctions that "The US Government ought to register its opposition to Rhodesia's unprincipled stand and do nothing to sustain or encourage it", nevertheless observed that "The white minority's transgressions have occurred within the boundaries of one country, and there is no question of aggression."[833] This article prompted former Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, to write to the editor. Despite his otherwise liberal credentials, Acheson became Rhodesia's most prominent American apologist because he shared the conservatives' view that Rhodesia was a model of how racial problems should be tackled. His letter to *The Washington Post* was the start, according to his biographer, of "a singularly strident crusade to gain popular support for his pro-Ian Smith views. He

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[830] Fulbright Papers, *op cit.* Many of the letters to Senators and Congressmen supportive of Rhodesia mention Christianity as an issue, but most do so merely in passing, and (like this letter) link it to anti-communism. It is not mentioned at all by the May 1967 *National Review* article on Rhodesia. US Christians appear to have been evenly divided between supporters and opponents of UDI, reflecting similar divisions over domestic civil rights

[831] Utt to Macomber, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, 13 Mar. 1967, CFPF, Box 2448, NARA

[832] Maston O'Neal Papers, Box III.18, Russell Library

[833] 'Sanctions?', *The Washington Post,* 9 Dec. 1966

also worked frenetically behind the scenes trying to undo the administration's UN policy."[834] Acheson's letter rehearsed a favourite argument of the conservatives that the UN Charter explicitly ruled out intervention "in matters which are within the internal jurisdiction of any state". He pointed out that "The British government has conceded since 1923 that Rhodesia is not only self-governing but responsible for its own defence and security. Therefore to assert *de jure* as well as *de facto* independence is not a transgression."[835] Acheson was even more outspoken and blunt in a speech he gave to the American Bar Association on 24 May 1968 in which he asserted that "The United States is engaged in an international conspiracy, instigated by Britain, and blessed by the United Nations, to overthrow the government of a country that has done us no harm and threatens no one. This is barefaced aggression, unprovoked and unjustified by a single legal or moral principle."[836]

The Administration, naturally, did not agree that the United Nations had no right to interfere in Rhodesia. Douglas MacArthur II, the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, was given the job of responding to Congressional critics. His letter of January 1967 to Congressman H.R. Gross (R-Iowa), who had urged the President not to issue Executive Order 11322, outlined the Government's position.

> Let me emphasise first that we are not dealing here with a case of interference in the internal affairs of a state. Southern Rhodesia is not recognised as an independent state by a single country. The sovereign authority over Southern Rhodesia resides with the United Kingdom. It was the UK which recognised in the first instance the threat to the peace and turned to the Security Council for help in securing international assistance that would assure to the population of Southern Rhodesia its fundamental right of self-determination. The Security Council's decision, then, was not an intervention in the affairs of a state, but action taken in response to a request for assistance by the legitimate authority having sovereignty over the territory concerned.[837]

Conservatives challenged the accuracy of the Administration's interpretation of Rhodesia's status. In 1967, Professor Charles Burton Marshall, a former State Department associate of Dean Acheson, published an extended essay under the auspices of the Washington Center of Foreign Policy Research,

[834] Brinkley, p. 318
[835] 'Acheson on Rhodesia', *The Washington Post*, 11 Dec. 1966
[836] Acheson, 'Arrogance', p. 593
[837] Countries EX, CO 1-1, Box 7, LBJ

which aimed to show that Rhodesia was, indeed, an independent state, and that the only threat to peace in southern Africa came from those anxious to topple Smith's regime. Marshall pointed out that in 1962 and 1963 the British government had itself denied the authority of the UN to intervene in Rhodesian internal affairs in response to General Assembly resolutions demanding that the Rhodesian franchise be based on "one man, one vote".

> Before the General Assembly as a whole, Britain's spokesman disputed the body's warrant to interfere… On repeated subsequent occasions before the General Assembly and its committees, British spokesmen explained Britain's lack of legal and operative powers [over Rhodesian affairs] to take the actions being demanded. Before the Security Council in 1963 Britain explained in detail Southern Rhodesia's self-governing character and challenged the propriety of United Nations interposition in view of the ban in paragraph 7 of Article 2 of the [UN] Charter against intervention in matters essentially within a state's domestic jurisdiction… What the British government was being called on to do was not to exercise powers in its possession but to presume powers beyond its possession. Implicitly but no less clearly, it was being pressed to denounce and to destroy the legitimacy vested in the existing Southern Rhodesian government, to override its existence, and radically to transform relationships by subjugating Southern Rhodesia. Such action would entail application of powers never before exercised by Great Britain over Southern Rhodesia.[838]

Given the apparent shift in Britain's position on Rhodesia's constitutional status, the claim that Rhodesia's sovereignty ought to be recognised by the international community was the conservatives' strongest argument in defence of UDI. But defending the legality of Rhodesia's claim to independence was not the main reason that Smith's American supporters stood up for him; it was the very *illegality* of UDI, with its parallels with 1776 that appealed to them, as their hostility to Britain demonstrates. Acheson's campaign was motivated by his belief that, by the 1960s, the UN was being run in the interests of "the international juvenile delinquents of the Third World".[839] That Rhodesia provided an excellent proxy for radical conservative fears about the threat they perceived from blacks – at home and abroad – is clear from a letter written by Senator Richard Russell (D-Ga.) in June 1968 to one of his constituents who had complained to him about America's co-operation with UNSC Resolution 253, extending mandatory sanctions against Rhodesia to all products. Russell indicates his

[838] Marshall, pp. 40-41; Marshall was also a contributor to *National Review*
[839] Quoted in Brinkley, p. 318; Ostrower maintains that Acheson had "less sympathy for the UN than any other secretary of state between 1945 and 1998". Ostrower, p. 47

hostility not just to the UN and what he believed was the misuse of executive authority but also, tellingly, to the judicial decisions of the Warren Court.

> American foreign policy has reached a new low now that we have approved in the United Nations a defenceless claim that Rhodesia constitutes a threat to the peace of the world, and accordingly have gone along with economic sanctions against this peaceful, independent country. This is one of the most blatant examples of political expediency that I have ever observed and the Executive Branch and the Department of State are well aware of my views on this subject. You, of course, know of the contempt which I have for the pathetic body now passing as our Supreme Court and that I have supported every piece of legislation to curb its influence, and to otherwise restrict its unwarranted assumption of executive and legislative powers… I hope and pray that the American people will send more men to Congress who are willing to stand up and vote for a return to common sense in our policies and Constitutional Government.[840]

5: Rhodesia and conservative ideology

When William Buckley established *National Review* in 1955 to attack the dominant New Deal consensus he deliberately aimed to bring together the two principal competing visions of radical conservatism: libertarianism and traditionalism. Libertarians, by emphasising individual liberty and rejecting social hierarchies, saw themselves as disciples of John Locke, James Madison, John Stuart Mill and Friedrich von Hayek in upholding the rights of property owners and arguing for minimal government. In the words of one of their leading exponents, they offered "a much-needed and healthy reaction to the New Deal, that revolution… which aimed at the radical transformation of the role of the State in American life and whose goal was the aggrandizement of government power at the expense of the individual… [Libertarianism] was a call for free enterprise as against the Socialist tendencies of the State; in foreign affairs, it stood for peace, neutrality, and isolationism as opposed to the Rooseveltian drive towards collective security, foreign entanglements, and war".[841] This atomistic view of society was, however, severely at odds with the traditionalism of conservatives such as Richard Weaver and Russell Kirk. Both wrote influential books emphasising the importance of absolute values grounded in religious faith. Kirk's book, *The Conservative Mind*, published in 1953, stressed the organic nature of society, the need for social order and the leadership of traditional elites.

[840] Russell, Series XVI, Box 24, Russell Library
[841] Ronald Hamowy writing in 1961, quoted in Critchlow and McLean, p. 62

Kirk argued that "a divine intent rules society as well as conscience, forging an eternal chain of right and duty which links great and obscure, living and dead". Taking aim at libertarians, Kirk emphasised "the proliferating variety and mystery of traditional life, as distinguished from the narrowing uniformity and equalitarianism and utilitarian aims of most radical systems" and claimed that "civilized society requires orders and classes. The only true equality is moral equality; all other attempts at levelling lead to despair… Society longs for leadership, and if a people destroy natural distinctions among men, presently Buonaparte fills the vacuum".[842]

Buckley's attempt to link these two ideologies became known as "fusionism" and was articulated in his celebrated Sharon Statement of September 1960.[843] This stressed the importance of religious faith by maintaining that the "foremost" of "the transcendent values" to which conservatives were committed was "the individual's use of his God-given free will". It went on to state that "the market economy, allocating resources by the free play of supply and demand, is the single economic system compatible with the requirements of personal freedom and constitutional government, and that it is at the same time the most productive supplier of human needs".[844] But the emphasis on religion did not resolve conservative contradictions because, firstly, by insisting on religious faith Buckley was imposing a restriction on personal freedom. Secondly, in his 1954 book defending Joseph McCarthy, Buckley had declared that "it is characteristic of society that it uses sanctions in support of its folklore and mores, and that in doing so it urges conformity".[845] But this was hardly consistent with unfettered capitalism which, in the post-war Western world, was fundamentally altering, rather than upholding, the values of traditional society.[846] Not surprisingly, liberal commentators have been scornful of fusionism. One has called it a "rickety structure… [because] the theologians and theoreticians of the different strands of conservatism really did mistrust each other."[847]

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[842] Kirk, pp. 17-18; Richard Weaver's book, *Ideas Have Consequences*, was published in 1948

[843] The Sharon Statement derives its name from Buckley's home in Sharon, Connecticut, where in September 1960, he had founded the conservative organisation, Young Americans for Freedom, and drawn up its statement of its principles

[844] Sharon Statement: www2.fiu.edu/~yaf/sharon.html

[845] Buckley, *McCarthy and his Enemies*, quoted in Farber, pp. 57-8

[846] Conservative denunciations of communism as destructive of tradition, custom and established institutions while promoting internationalism and secularism could apply equally forcefully to capitalism

[847] Dionne, p. 4; See also Foner, p. 310. Godfrey Hodgson, however, argues that fusionism, by stressing that individual liberty was based on immutable moral values as well as anti-communism, "was a real intellectual achievement. It did bring into existence a new American conservative consensus". Hodgson, p. 90

Most analysts argue that what, in practice, kept the conservative factions together was their mutual loathing of domestic liberalism and international communism.[848] The very first issue of *National Review* had declared that "the century's most blatant force of satanic utopianism is communism. We consider 'co-existence' with communism neither desirable nor possible, nor honorable; we find ourselves irrevocably at war with communism and shall oppose any substitute for victory."[849] E. J. Dionne has suggested that Buckley's coalition could only remain united "as long as the right had a clear and powerful enemy (communism, a dominant New Deal, or Great Society liberalism)".[850] This is true as far as it goes; clearly, both strands of conservatism believed that each of these three enemies, by increasing the reach of the state into aspects of life where it had no rightful business, threatened the rights of property ownership. However, it is an insufficient explanation because anti-communism was not going to give the conservatives a distinctive voice since liberals were no less outspoken in their hostility to communism. Trying to ferret out communist subversives within the establishment would line conservatives up with devotees of the extremist John Birch Society from whom Buckley was anxious to distance his movement.[851] As long as the post-war New Deal consensus prevailed, the conservative charge that liberals were tools of communism appeared risible to anyone outside the core of ultra-conservative true believers.[852]

It was the issue of race that energised conservative attacks on domestic liberalism and made the radical conservative coalition both distinctive and increasingly popular from the mid-1960s. The urban riots undermined faith in the efficacy of Keynesian demand management, and the strident demands of Black Power frightened many middle-class whites. The argument that the segregationists had used against the Civil Rights Act – that it attacked the rights of property-owners – gained traction among white voters who felt that the riots were the inevitable consequence of the indulgence shown to the black community by the federal government. Conservatives also blamed the riots on the so-called

[848] Nash, pp. 253-273; Critchlow, p. 26
[849] *National Review*, 19 Nov. 1955, p. 6
[850] Dionne, p. 3
[851] Robert Welch, founder of the John Birch Society, was widely ridiculed for proclaiming in a book he circulated among his supporters in 1958, "My firm belief that Dwight Eisenhower is a dedicated, conscious agent of the Communist conspiracy is based on an accumulation of detailed evidence so extensive and palpable that it seems to put this conviction beyond any reasonable doubt." Quoted in Judis, p. 193. See also Berlet and Lyons, p. 180; Farber, p. 71 and Hodgson, p. 61
[852] This did not stop James Burnham, Buckley's *National Review* colleague, from blaming liberalism for the collapse of Western civilisation in the face of Communist advances; James Burnham, *Suicide*

liberal media – the unwitting dupes of communism – for encouraging a sense of frustrated black entitlement.[853] When Buckley, commenting on the rioting in 1967, asserted in *National Review* that "The obvious goal of the present movement is to stir the Negro people, whom the Communists consider the most ductile, and (quite justifiably) the most generally discontent, into violent protests of whatever kind,"[854] he was demonstrating that the anti-communism of his conservative coalition was underpinned by racial anxiety.

Race also helped to conceal the fault-lines in right-wing attitudes to international communism. The problem of confronting communism abroad was potentially divisive for conservatives for two reasons. Firstly, the domestic infrastructure needed to recruit, train, equip and maintain the armed forces necessary to roll back communism would substantially enlarge the scale and reach of state power which was hardly consistent with the limited government conservatives demanded. Secondly, the neo-isolationism of some libertarians differed radically from the views of aggressive Cold War warriors. Attitudes to the Vietnam War, in particular, sharpened this divergence: some conservatives opposed it while others wanted it prosecuted more strongly.[855] Former Minnesota Congressman Walter Judd suggested to Barry Goldwater during the 1964 election campaign that the US should "help the Vietnamese people win their own struggle… without taking command and without substantially enlarging the area of armed conflict". Goldwater, however, publicly maintained that the US was not fighting the war aggressively enough.[856] Buckley himself experienced this dissention at first hand. In August 1969 his appearance at the annual convention of the Young Americans for Freedom (the organisation he had helped to found in September 1960) was disrupted by libertarians wanting American withdrawal from Vietnam.[857] There was disagreement even among those who believed that the USA should be challenging international communism; some thought that Vietnam was a

[853] Rolph, pp. 31-35
[854] *National Review*, 2 May 1967, p. 470
[855] Robert Welch initially opposed US military involvement in Vietnam on typically eccentric grounds. The 1965 "JBS Scoreboard" concluded that "the present degree of Communist influence or control over the economic and political affairs" of the USA was "60-80 per cent", so the decisions of its government must be furthering the cause of international communism. "Communists have been doing everything to advance the theme that it is our patriotic duty to 'stand firm' in Vietnam." Quoted in *National Review*, 19 Oct. 1965, pp. 925-6. See also Diamond, p. 147
[856] Offenbach, 'Defending Freedom' in Gifford and Williams (eds.) pp. 208-09, 211
[857] Bogus, pp. 219-20. The libertarians on this occasion were led by Karl Hess, Goldwater's chief speechwriter in the 1964 campaign and a former contributor to *National Review*. Vietnam also caused a painful personal and professional rift between Buckley and one of his *National Review* writers, Garry Wills. See Judis, pp. 322-26

distraction from dealing with the Soviet arms build-up or from tackling the real enemy in the Far East – Communist China. Historian Thomas Noer has shown that George Wallace's presidential campaigns threatened to expose the divisiveness of the Vietnam War for the right. "Many of Wallace's supporters were isolationist but strongly pro-military. In a 1968 survey 64% of those who voted for the Alabama governor felt the United States should have 'stayed out of Vietnam', but 67% thought the nation should take a 'stronger stance' to win the war. Segregationists were deeply divided on Vietnam. Many saw the conflict as a prime example of the folly of internationalism and reliance on establishment 'experts'."[858] If Vietnam was potentially divisive for conservatives, support for Rhodesia and the other white minority regimes of southern Africa was much less so. By combining two central right-wing obsessions – anti-communism and the maintenance of white supremacy – Rhodesia and South Africa together played an important symbolic role in helping to maintain radical conservative unity.[859]

Russell Kirk, in a passage of his book indicative of his debt to Edmund Burke, had urged that "change and reform are not identical, and… innovation is a devouring conflagration more often than it is a torch of progress. Society must alter, for slow change is the means of its conservation, like the human body's perpetual renewal; but Providence is the proper instrument for change, and the test of a statesman is his cognizance of the real tendency of Providential social forces".[860] Traditional conservatives believed that this applied to the decolonisation in Africa and argued that liberal enthusiasm for the rapid creation of one-man, one-vote democracies in newly independent states ignored the customs and culture of tribal societies. This scepticism about the wisdom of rapid decolonisation, although it had a racist core, was more than mere atavistic prejudice. Conservative

[858] Noer, 'Segregationists and the World', in Plummer (ed.) *Window on Freedom,* p. 155. Most historians, however, agree that the right was much less divided over the war than the left, and that the majority of conservatives supported the war, even if they disliked Johnson's handling of it. And the more vociferous the opposition from the left, the more the right was prepared to back American involvement

[859] Attitudes to race also had the potential to divide conservatives. Their view that black Africans needed the benevolence of minority white governments contradicted the libertarianism that conservatives espoused for African Americans. Buckley had maintained during his unsuccessful bid to be elected mayor of New York in 1965 that "The principal problems that are faced by Negroes today… are not solved by government. They are solved by the leadership of their own people." Quoted in Judis, p. 246

[860] Kirk, p. 18

reservations about the pace of change in Africa were based on genuine anxiety about the transferability of Western democratic values and methods.[861]

This thinking clearly resonated with conservative politicians such as Richard Russell. His biographer, Jeff Woods, while acknowledging Russell's racist views, nevertheless credits him with a sincerely held suspicion of liberal optimism about the pace of progress in the Third World.[862] Russell also believed that the USA should not allow itself to be dragged into the problems of southern Africa. In his notes for a speech in the Senate in October 1966 he wrote, "There is no doubt in my mind that if we pursue our foolish course of assuming the responsibility of conforming to the wishes and enforcing the views of other nations in Africa, it will not be long until we will have considerable numbers of our troops deployed in another area at the end of a long and tenuous line of communications, extremely expensive to maintain."[863] This attitude owed as much to libertarian conservatism as to Russell Kirk. Senator Russell had initially opposed American involvement in South East Asia on similar libertarian, neo-isolationist grounds (though he later backed the Vietnam War, believing that, once his country was committed to a conflict, it was his patriotic duty to support it).[864] What unified Russell's mixture of traditional scepticism about rapid social change and his neo-isolationism was his view that Africans and Asians were not deserving of Western largesse – they should be left alone to develop at their own pace without the interference of the USA. This was why, like many fellow conservatives, he believed that US foreign policy should pursue American interests, not endeavour to solve the world's problems. In Russell's archive is an article he has enthusiastically underlined from the Jackson, Mississippi *Clarion-Ledger* of 17 November 1965, which quotes extensively from the conservative newspaper *Chicago Tribune,* arguing that "the question of [Rhodesian] independence lies strictly between Britain and Rhodesia and is none of Mr. Johnson's business".[865] Russell felt the same; and his remarks to the Senate on 1 March 1966, although about

[861] Staniland, p. 262
[862] Woods, *Richard B. Russell,* p. xvii
[863] Russell, Series III, Box 3, Russell Library
[864] Woods, *Richard B. Russell,* pp. 117, 142
[865] Russell, Series III, Box 69, Russell Library

Vietnam, also expressed his feelings, and those of many of his constituents, about US involvement with southern Africa.

> I am not now in favour of intervention throughout the entire world. By instinct and inclination, I must confess that I am an isolationist. I do not believe that the might and power of the United States can bring about the millennium. I do not believe that any number of treaties, however solemnly drafted, however well-intentioned, will absolutely clear up all the strife among the peoples of the world, of different nationalities, different races, and different creeds. There is nothing in all history to suggest that they will… As a realist, I am not in favour of contributing American money and American blood in unlimited quantities for a goal that I do not believe is attainable.[866]

This demonstrates that the racial underpinning of attitudes to foreign policy in general, and the Third World in particular, was a highly successful way of reconciling the otherwise competing conservative views: libertarians and traditionalists could agree that backward societies should be left alone to develop the sophisticated political infrastructure of the advanced Western world in their own good time. In the meantime, conservatives believed, these societies needed the wise leadership of their white elites, especially in preventing their black populations from being seduced by communism.

There was, though, much more to the emergent conservatism of the 1960s than racism, even in the South. Mary Brennan has pointed out that "many southerners who joined the GOP [in the 1950s and 1960s] embraced the classical liberal ideals embodied in the Republican Party's opposition to high taxes, federal spending, and government centralization. Hooverian 'rugged individualists', they were often 'neobourbons' who clung to their rural values while practicing corporate capitalism. Southern culture revolved around dedication to family, God, and country – values that echoed northern right-wing ideals".[867] None of these attitudes was incompatible with racism, but it was possible to hold any or all of these views without being a racist. However, these conservative themes, and those that had featured so prominently in the *National Review* article about Rhodesia, instead of masking the uglier aspects of right-wing ideology, had the opposite effect of allowing liberals to brand all conservatives as extremists. For example, Lyndon Johnson believed that William Fulbright, probably his leading

[866] Congressional Record – Senate, 1 Mar. 1966, p. 4370
[867] Brennan, p. 43

Congressional critic, was a racist because he had opposed both civil rights legislation and the President's foreign policy positions. One observer recalled Johnson's response to a conversation the President had had with Fulbright. "The President… had asked Fulbright why he was so against Vietnam. Fulbright just said to him, 'they are not our kind of people' and then with real vehemence the President said that means what Fulbright is really saying is 'nigger, nigger, nigger'."[868] This was probably unfair, though the President was correct to suggest that Fulbright applied the same principles to both domestic and foreign issues. Randall Woods, Fulbright's biographer, argues that he had opposed federal civil rights legislation because he "continued to believe that the South had a right to decide its own destiny" and that, in thinking about overseas policy, "he continued to be highly sensitive to the perceived issue of cultural imperialism… the object of American foreign policy should be to make the world safe for diversity, not remake it in the American image".[869] This nuanced position made Fulbright sympathetic to Rhodesian independence, but vulnerable to the charge of racism.

Barry Goldwater's image was damaged, in part, for the same reason, even though race did not feature heavily in the 1964 presidential campaign.[870] Most commentators, even those who are not obviously conservative, absolve Goldwater of the charge of racism.[871] But, in opposing the 1954 Brown decision and the 1964 Civil Rights Act on libertarian grounds, he used language that made him seemingly indistinguishable from the segregationists. He told the Senate in June 1964 that he intended to vote against the Civil Rights Bill because it "would embark the Federal Government on a regulatory course of action with regard to private enterprise in the area of so-called public accommodations and in the area of employment".[872] During the 1964 election campaign he declared that the aim of American society "is neither to establish a segregated society nor to establish an integrated society as such. It is

[868] Quoted in Woods, *LBJ,* p. 727
[869] Woods, *Fulbright,* p. 332
[870] Johnson and Goldwater publicly agreed not to make race an issue in the campaign: Dallek, *Flawed Giant,* p. 134-35; Patterson, *Grand Expectations*, p. 557; Goldberg, *Barry Goldwater,* p. 215-16; Goldwater also vetoed as racist a television commercial devised by his supporters which used black rioters to illustrate the decadence of the country; Goldberg, p. 231
[871] Critchlow, p. 26; Critchlow and MacLean, p. 145; Lowndes, p. 74; Miles, p. 289; Brennan, p. 83; Farber, p. 91; Goldberg points out that "he was one of the first Phoenix merchants to employ blacks, and he had integrated the Arizona Air National Guard. Barry was also a member of the Tucson chapter of the NAACP". Goldberg, p. 89
[872] Congressional Record – Senate, 18 June 1964, p. 14319

to preserve a *free* society".[873] His willingness to court the votes of southern segregationists – by (in his own words) "hunting where the ducks are"[874] – made the charge of racism almost impossible to avoid. On his visit to Rhodesia in 1967 Goldwater echoed *National Review* by insisting at his Salisbury press conference that desegregation was a matter of evolution. "I don't believe that law can bring about the desired changes. I think it's a process that will take time."[875] Nor did he oppose apartheid. He told his listeners that "our country might not be so good [an] example of how far you can go with legislation in this field… the problem in my country can't be compared with the problem in these two countries over here, or any of these countries over here. It's entirely different."[876] The examples of Fulbright and Goldwater demonstrate that conservatism and racism were not necessarily synonymous, but the use of proxies to disguise the racism of radical conservatives made it easy to assume they were. They also help to explain why it took until the 1970s, when faith in the liberal optimism of the 1960s had been badly shaken, for Buckleyite conservatism to make significant electoral progress.

However, conservative scepticism about the wisdom of expecting underdeveloped societies to rapidly develop democratic values and institutions was neither simply an expression of racism nor the exclusive preserve of America's radical right. There were also liberals who expressed disquiet about the assumptions that Western values could easily be transplanted to Third World countries and that it was America's business to do so.[877] Robert Shaplen, Far East correspondent of the *New Yorker* magazine, writing in 1966, attributed US difficulties in Vietnam in large part to a failure to understand the deep cultural differences between the two societies. He blamed "the whole tragic overlay of history, of colonialism and 'neo-colonialism,' of white men versus yellow men, and of the sort of deep miscomprehension that could only be resolved – perhaps – in time of peace, but surely not in

[873] Goldberg, p. 230; the emphasis is in the original
[874] Quoted in Lowndes, p. 61
[875] Transcript of Goldwater's press conference, *op. cit.,* Unsurprisingly, Goldwater failed to convince the nationalists in Rhodesia that he was not a racist. ZANU's newsletter of 23 Dec. 1967, itself betraying a touch of racism, declared that "Goldwater, the millionaire descendant of a Russo-Jewish immigrant family, is the victim of extreme Negrophobia" and is now "on a 'private' tour of Southern Africa sponsored by the anti-Negro American Southern Africa Council… where he had nothing but loud praise for South African Apartheid and Rhodesian settler gangsterism". CFPF, Box 2447, NARA
[876] Transcript of Goldwater's press conference, *op. cit.* After visiting South Africa in 1967, Goldwater wrote to his son, "I feel very strongly about this apartheid thing, not that I am 100 per cent in favour of it or that I think it should be extended into eternity, but I do think the United States is making a dreadful mistake in not allowing the thing to be tested [in South Africa]." Quoted in Goldberg, p. 248
[877] Some liberals were also concerned about the judicial activism of the Warren Court which appeared to be expanding its constitutional role into making, rather than merely arbitrating, matters of public policy

time of war".[878] According to historian Eric Bergerud, even the Vietcong endorsed this verdict. Analysing NLF attitudes, Bergerud writes, "An urban, westernised, and largely Catholic elite, the Party maintained, could never create a just society – or one viewed as just by the peasantry – in a poor, rural, Asian country."[879] With regard to Africa, Herbert Spiro warned in 1960 that "the constitutional techniques, traditions, and standards of the Old World are largely irrelevant to the novel problems of the New Africa". He suggested that "it is conceivable and perhaps likely that many Africans value some other goals more highly than those served by the Western institutions" and argued that, if Africans "are deliberately designing their new political forms in pursuit of identical goals [to Westerners], their chances of success would be low if they tried to copy mechanically from more mature constitutional systems".[880] The theologian, Reinhold Niebuhr, whom major figures on both the right and left of America's political spectrum have claimed as an influence, argued in 1960 that, "Western-style democracy is not immediately relevant to non-European cultures. They lack the standards of literacy, political skill, and social equilibria which would make viable political freedom as we have come to know it."[881]

Smith's American supporters could marshal a wide range of arguments in defence of white Rhodesia – arguments that helped to reconcile disparate strands of conservative ideology. But, because these arguments also appealed to a widespread concern about the pace of change in Africa which was not confined to the political right, they helped to move radical conservative thinking into the political mainstream and widen its electoral appeal. Anxieties about the direction of post-colonial Africa became especially powerful from the mid-1960s on, at the very time that Rhodesia declared itself independent.

[878] Quoted in Herring, 'Peoples Quite Apart', pp. 2-3
[879] Quoted in Gary R. Hess, *Vietnam: Explaining America's Lost War*, Oxford, 2009, p. 129. One of Johnson's biographers also claims that US failure in Vietnam can be attributed, in part, to the President's assumption that American mores were exportable: "Outside of traditional village communalism, democracy was a foreign concept south of the seventeenth parallel. Nor did there exist the institutions – legislative bodies, quasi-independent federal agencies, and a federal court system – by which Americans had traditionally sought political empowerment and socioeconomic justice." Woods, *LBJ,* p. 729
[880] Spiro, pp. 76, 71
[881] Quoted in Staniland, p. 87, n. 91

6: The political impact of conservative support for Rhodesia

The conservatives' case – "leave Rhodesia alone" – was much less complicated than that of their opponents who, as sanctions failed to undermine Smith, had little else to recommend; liberals and African Americans could hardly demand a war for black African liberation when the nation was already embroiled in a controversial conflict in South-East Asia. This helps to explain why the size and influence of right-wing American support for Rhodesia far outweighed that of the regime's critics. Conservative efforts were assisted by the establishment in Washington, in February 1966, of the Rhodesian Information Office, which published propaganda on behalf of the Smith regime and by the establishment of citizens' groups dedicated to lobbying for Rhodesian independence. One historian has estimated that the national umbrella organisation for these groups, the Friends of Rhodesia, had approximately 25,000 members, organised into 122 branches, in 1967.[882] In Congress, Rhodesia was supported by a persistent faction. Their activities included petitioning the State Department for Ian Smith to be permitted to visit the USA to plead Rhodesia's cause himself.[883] They were supported by the American-Southern Africa Council, which raised money from prominent individuals and large corporations to sponsor the visit of nine Congressmen to Rhodesia in 1967. The impact of the Congressional Rhodesia lobby was summed up by Robert Owen, an official at the British Embassy in Washington, in a November 1967 memo to the Foreign Office. "Rhodesia is still very much a live issue on Capitol Hill… Something like 20 resolutions have now been introduced designed to nullify sanctions. All of them are in committee and are perhaps unlikely to come to a vote in the House. Their existence nevertheless constitutes a reminder to the Administration that they must expect strong opposition in the present contumacious Congress to any move by the US Government to increase the pressure on Rhodesia. Resolutions calling for an end to sanctions have also been passed by a number of state legislatures, including those of Louisiana, Alabama, Oklahoma and Arizona."[884]

[882] Mlambo, p. 301, n. 15. Some of these organisations had wonderfully bizarre names, for example, HISTORY – Hooray for Ian Smith, Titan of Rhodesian Yearning. Rhodesia also welcomed, and trumpeted in its newspapers, the numbers of American tourists who visited after UDI; see Gebelt to State, 23 Oct. 1967, CFPF, Box 2446, NARA

[883] The Congressional lobby pushing for Smith to be allowed to visit included Congressmen Donald Rumsfeld, Jack Edwards and H.R. Gross and Senators Harry F. Byrd, William Fulbright, Thomas Dodd, William Spong Jr., and Paul Fannin (who had won Goldwater's Arizona seat in 1964). Fannin's letter to Rusk of 2 Feb.1967 repeated the claim that Rhodesia had offered military aid to the US in Vietnam, CFPF, Box 2448, NARA

[884] Owen to the Foreign Office, 17 Nov. 1967; DO207/261, Kew

This raises the question of why the conservatives were not more successful in persuading the Johnson Administration to amend its policy. There are four reasons for this. Firstly, maintaining sanctions against Rhodesia was, for the government, a way of demonstrating its anti-racist credentials to black voters at relatively low political cost. Fulbright perceived this when he told a friend in December 1969: "You ask for a reason for our actions with regard to Rhodesia, and I confess that I can find no more justification for that than I can for many of our other attitudes other than domestic, political considerations… What we have done in Rhodesia stems primarily from domestic civil rights issues and only incidentally to help Great Britain."[885] Secondly, the maintenance of sanctions helped the Administration retain its credibility with black Africa in the United Nations. Thirdly, Congressional hostility to sanctions gave the Administration an invaluable smokescreen behind which to hide whenever the British asked for more help. Four days before UDI George Ball had warned the British Foreign Secretary, "From the United States point of view, there were very few practical measures which could be taken without special legislation, and such legislation would be very controversial in Congress because of its relationship to the civil rights question in the United States."[886] Ball's tactic was still in use in November 1967, as Robert Owen perceived: "Their fear of Congressional reactions… will probably apply to any other ideas we may put to the Americans for extending sanctions."[887]

Finally, despite the frequency and passion with which Smith's American supporters raised the issue of Rhodesia's status in Congress and in the media, they lacked substantial political clout in Washington. Of the conservative Congressional critics of US policy only Richard Russell and William Fulbright could be described as major political figures.[888] Although Johnson regarded Russell as his friend and political mentor, the two clashed over policy too often for Russell to exercise much influence. Russell had voted against the civil rights legislation and he had joined Fulbright in opposing Johnson's decision to send three US transport planes to help Mobutu crush a revolt in the Congo in June 1967,

[885] Fulbright Papers, *op. cit.* Although Fulbright's letter was written when Nixon was President, Washington's policy towards Rhodesia had not changed by then
[886] Record of discussion, 11 Oct. 1965, FO371/181893, Kew
[887] Owen to the Foreign Office, *op. cit.*
[888] Goldwater, having resigned his Arizona seat to run for President in 1964, did not return to Congress until 1969

calling it "an ill-advised abuse of executive power".[889] He fell out irretrievably with Johnson in 1968 over the president's attempt to have Abe Fortas nominated as chief justice of the Supreme Court. Russell's biographer concludes that "Russell was less able to guide policy in the Johnson administration than in any other after World War II… Russell had been to some degree written off by the White House as a conservative isolationist who did not care about 'coloured people'."[890]

Fulbright, as Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, might have been able to exercise more influence than Russell, but he had destroyed his relationship with Johnson as early as September 1965 by what Randall Woods calls "a devastating indictment" in the Senate of the US intervention in the Dominican Republic.[891] Thereafter, Fulbright's incessant and very public criticism of the Vietnam War further poisoned the relationship between the two men. But the main reason that Fulbright did not speak out forcefully against the Administration's Rhodesia policy was because he was ambivalent about it. Fulbright's attitude to foreign affairs was, according to historian Joseph Fry, a mixture of "traditional southern empathy for self-rule, cultural autonomy and anti-imperialism".[892] As a result, Rhodesia presented him with a difficult dilemma: whether to support the United Nations or the principle of non-intervention. On the one hand, Fulbright (in the words of one scholar) "believed that the United Nations had to be a strong instrument of international peace, not merely a forum for debate rendered impotent by selfish state sovereignty"[893] and he worked hard in 1971 in an unsuccessful bid to prevent passage of the Byrd Amendment. But he was also reluctant to meddle in other countries' affairs. He had told the Senate in March 1964, "In so far as a nation is content to practice its doctrines within its own frontiers, that nation, however repugnant its ideology, is one with which we have no proper quarrel."[894] Although he was speaking about the USSR on that occasion, he felt that the principle should also apply to Rhodesia. Furthermore, as his tireless criticism of the Vietnam War made clear, he was also highly critical of what he saw as growing executive control of foreign policy to the exclusion of Congress. He even introduced into the Senate in July 1967 a resolution reminiscent

[889] Congressional Record – Senate, 10 July 1967, p. 18096
[890] Woods, *Russell*, pp. 113-14
[891] Woods, *Fulbright,* p. 385
[892] Fry, p. 292
[893] Gunn, p. 419
[894] Congressional Record – Senate, 25 Mar. 1964, p. 6228

of the Bricker Amendment. According to Randall Woods, "It was, he told his colleagues, a simple reaffirmation of the constitutional truth that a national commitment could be made only through formal executive and legislative action… No one noted the irony of the fact that the sponsor of the national commitments resolution was the same person who had proved instrumental in defeating the Bricker Amendment more than a decade earlier."[895]

The Africa file in Fulbright's archive does not make his views on race relations in Rhodesia explicit, but his replies to his constituents indicate his unease about how he should respond to their criticisms of US policy. He avoided endorsing or condemning Smith, contenting himself in his 1965-66 replies by observing, "Our government is certainly taking a secondary role, and is only following the policies of the British Government which… is pursuing its constitutional rights." By 1967, once the US was committed to UN mandatory sanctions, Fulbright's responses showed that he was beginning to see Rhodesia in the same way as he saw Vietnam – as an example of overweening presidential power. He told his correspondents, "As you probably know, the President acted under the authority of the existing law, and the Congress was not consulted in any way. I am sure that the Congress will be giving a great deal of attention to this matter during the coming months."[896] He was less comfortable with conservative claims that the US had no business endorsing the UN Charter. In February 1967, he received an article by a lawyer named John B. Gest who claimed that "Our acceptance of obligations under the UN Charter was beyond our treaty-making power. The obligations imposed are of unpredictable character and unlimited scope, and to assume obligations imposed by the Security Council was a betrayal of the rights of our citizens. The UN Participation Act imposes punitive measures on our citizens for breach of any orders that might at any time be imposed by our President in exercising powers which really belong to Congress. Government by Executive Order is of the very nature of totalitarianism." Because Fulbright cherished US membership of the UN but disliked Johnson's use of Executive Orders to conduct foreign policy (especially a policy designed to impose

[895] Woods, *Fulbright,* p. 458
[896] Fulbright Papers, *op. cit.*

Western values on an African country) it is perhaps not surprising that there is a hand-written note attached to his copy of the article, saying, "Senator did not want to reply to this."[897]

Insofar as the Johnson Administration, by claiming to be merely following the lead of Britain and the United Nations over Rhodesia, was successful in distancing itself from responsibility for the anti-Smith sanctions, it contributed to the growing opposition to the United Nations among right-wing circles in the USA. This hostility was sufficiently strong in Congress by 1971 to result in the successful passage of the Byrd Amendment by which the USA unilaterally subverted mandatory economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations. The *New York Times* was not wrong to identify racism at the heart of the Byrd Amendment, attributing its success "to a well-financed Rhodesian lobby which has exploited shrewdly the racism of Southern Senators and Congressmen, the anti-Communist sentiment on Capitol Hill… and the wrath of importers forced to pay inflated prices for Soviet chrome. It was no accident that the Senate champion of white minority rule in Rhodesia was Harry F. Byrd Jr., a relic of the diehard fight for the preservation of white domination in Virginia".[898] The successful passage of the Byrd Amendment demonstrated that the attitude to Rhodesia that *National Review* had demanded was beginning to gain traction in Washington.

[897] *Ibid.*
[898] 'US Against the Charter', *The New York Times,* 21 Nov. 1971

Conclusion

Rhodesia deserves a more prominent place in the history of the USA in the 1960s than it has yet received. At stake in Rhodesia, and mirroring developments within the United States, were most of the defining issues of the decade – black liberation, the nature of democracy, America's role in the world, confronting communism – and these all aroused powerful emotions. The future of white minority rule in Rhodesia concerned Americans across the political spectrum. Radical conservatives saw it as part of their armoury with which to capture the Republican Party and destroy the New Deal consensus. It mattered to civil rights activists anxious to ensure that the optimism which had accompanied the decolonisation of black Africa in the late 1950s and early 1960s did not confront an impenetrable barrier at the Zambezi river. The Administration, too, realised its importance as demonstrated by its efforts to influence the British, while appearing not to do so. Rhodesian UDI sharpened the power struggle within the State Department over the degree to which the USA should be involved in African issues during the 1960s.

Perhaps most important of all, it exposed the dilemma of American policy in southern Africa – arguably not finally resolved until the fall of apartheid in the 1990s – over how to reconcile a professed commitment to black liberty and decolonisation with the pragmatic realities of Cold War power politics. The need to appease the white minority regimes in Portugal and South Africa for economic and strategic reasons while simultaneously condemning their racial policies in order to avoid alienating black Africa was a dilemma shared with the British. As a result, the Rhodesian crisis roped the Johnson Administration and the British Government together in an uneasy embrace. The only way of defeating Smith would have been to line up with the black Africans and use force to end his rebellion. But the Americans, already embroiled in a major conflict in South East Asia, were as anxious as the British to avoid the use of force for fear of being dragged in themselves. Furthermore, they believed an invasion of Rhodesia risked a major racial conflagration in southern Africa. Both governments knew that economic sanctions would not be sufficient to bring down Smith unless Portugal and South Africa co-operated with them, and both governments shied away from a confrontation with these two Cold War allies. Nor was disengagement an option for the US

Administration, especially once UDI had occurred and the British Government had involved the United Nations. For both London and Washington the only escape appeared to be a discreditable surrender to Smith, which is why US officials hoped that Wilson's negotiations would succeed. Smith's intransigence twice spared both the American and British Governments the embarrassment of explaining why they had reneged on their public commitments to black liberation and acquiesced in the independence of an illegal white minority regime. But the failure of the British Labour Government, backed by its American ally, to resolve the issue left an international problem to fester for another decade.

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