

Minutes of the NSC Meeting on Southern Africa, December 17, 1970 ⁶⁹

- PARTICIPANTS:**
- The President
 - Vice President Agnew
 - Secretary of State Rogers
 - Secretary of Defense Laird
 - General George A. Lincoln, Director, OEP
 - Secretary of the Treasury Kennedy
 - Attorney General Mitchell
 - Acting Secretary of Commerce Rocco Siciliano
 - Deputy Secretary of Defense Packard
 - General Earle G. Wheeler, Chairman, JCS
 - Director of Central Intelligence Helms
 - Ambassador Charles W. Yost, US Rep. to the UN
 - Under Secretary of State Richardson
 - Lawrence A. Fox, Acting Assistant Secretary of Commerce
 - David D. Newsom, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs
 - Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President
 - William Watts, NSC
 - Roger Morris, NSC

[Redacted]

CIA 25X1

RN - This is a peripheral issue. But we need a frank discussion; we must cover the operational decisions. I will make no final decisions today. It is an important question, as there are moral and domestic political issues involved. Many people have been asking about this. We have put them off by saying that there was an NSC meeting coming up.

ROGERS - Many of us have worked on this subject for some time, particularly lawyers who have had clients in Southern Africa.

RN - Did all of you get to see Ambassador Rountree when he was here recently? He is a very balanced man, and he is sitting on a volcano.

NSC review(s) completed

State Department review completed

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HELMS - (oral briefing given by Helms is attached.)

KISSINGER - We have approached this policy question in two stages: to reach a decision on general posture, first, and then to deal with specific operational issues. The interdepartmental group has had a major job in pulling together this complex subject.

We face, Mr. President, three broad choices. First, there is the approach favored by Dean Acheson and others, to release restrictions on the white states and to avoid any involvement at all in the black-white rivalries. Second, there is a policy choice of some limited association with both sides. Third, there is the option to disengage from the white states and move toward the blacks.

(Kissinger then summarized the pro and con arguments and operational consequences of each of the six options, as outlined in the attached paper on issues for decision.)

RN - What is the total aid to the black states?

NEWSOM - About \$100 million.

RN - What is the attitude of the Congress?

NEWSOM - At the last go around, it was about the same.

RN - What about PL 480?

NEWSOM - Our money goes for a variety of things, capital development, assistance to regional projects and multi-donor aid. It is only modest.

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RN - What about trade? I understand that six percent of the people (the whites in South Africa) produce 40 percent of the GNP of the continent.

SICILIANO - We have \$1 billion invested in South Africa. That is just South Africa alone. We have a \$200 million favorable trade balance.

RN - How much do we have invested in black Africa?

NEWSOM - The investment in black Africa is about equal to the investment in South Africa.

RN - I think we have to be realistic on this question and straddle it. It is obvious that we have to avoid the colonialist label but we must analyze where our national interest lies and not worry too much about other peoples' domestic policies.

To what extent do the black states respond to overtures from the whites?

NEW SOM - With great reluctance. The Ivory Coast carries on some quiet trade. Malawi has diplomatic relations. But there is no other real exchange.

The IG asked the question what the US can and cannot do, and what is the extent of our influence. Economic forces will ultimately bring change, but our ability to exert influence is minimal.

ROGERS - There is the moral argument. If we could do anything then we would have a moral responsibility. But since we can't do anything, there is no responsibility.

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RN - Well, the whites can't go home. It is a practical problem we have come up against. They are there to stay.

RICHARDSON - I agree there is no real solution. A white minority ruled by a black majority will not work and a black majority ruled by a white minority does not work. There must be partition. The whites feel they have a right to be there, as we do in the U.S.

RN - What about the U.N.? Is this a hot issue?

YOST - There are operational problems all the time. There are 40 African members, 1/3 of the UN, increasingly frustrated and restive and resentful. They want forceful action. It is hard to apply any option which will satisfy them.

RN - How can we avoid UN votes on this question.

YOST - We can't. Sometimes it is a vote for human rights, sometimes it is an attack on Portugal.

RN - Can't we roll with the punch? That is the only useful thing to do. We don't accomplish a thing by isolating the Portuguese.

NEWSOM - It is a difference between New York and African governments. Very few African delegations have precise instructions. They may be extreme on one vote since that is the way it goes in the African caucus; but home governments would not have restricted them to go that way. We should generate greater communication between African capitals and New York.

YOST - Rhodesia and Southwest Africa are major problems.

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RN - Should we send the Secretary of State to Africa?

ROGERS - I agree with Newsom. The governments back home are concerned primarily with bilateral relations and not with the UN.

RN - That's what they raised with me when I was there.

ROGERS - There has been no real penetration by the Soviets.

NEWSOM - They are just as white as we are.

ROGERS - On the whole, our relations are pretty good with Africa.

YOST - Southwest Africa is a problem of a legal mandate. We are caught on this one. It would be helpful to disengage. Rhodesia also is pretty well stuck. It is a peculiar place, only 4% white.

KISSINGER - (Outlined the issue on South Africa arms embargo and port calls as contained in the paper on operational issues.)

LAIRD - You mean they only refuel, no liberty?

KISSINGER - These are the two military issues.

NEWSOM - There were four planned transits in 1970. Two can refuel from British tankers.

LINCOLN - There was a strong objection in the past to port calls, with no refueling.

LAIRD - The arrangements for shore leave raised hackles with Congress. It became a domestic issue.

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NEWSOM - The paper says South Africa would not agree to refuelling stops without shore leaves. Rountree thinks that stops with shore leave might be possible. The real problem is to go beyond integrated shore leave to independent shore leave.

ROGERS - Anything we do is a problem.

RN - Particularly on timing. Not only in the UN is it a problem but also in the Congress. What about Arthur Ashe?

NEWSOM - It has not been decided yet. He applied but an election is coming up.

RN - After the election will Voerster move to liberalize?

NEWSOM - It depends on how the election comes out, and how strong Herzog shows.

KISSINGER - (Then described the issue of the Rhodesian Consulate and chrome imports as outlined in the attached paper on operational issues.

LINCOLN - Chrome is a major problem. The President of Foote Mineral claims a hardship case. I would not argue his cause on the basis of economic sanction, just on the basis of equity. Foote Mineral is suffering.

RN - Isn't Union Carbide Ken Rush's old firm?

LINCOLN - Union Carbide has put in its dollars and brought seven thousand tons to the surface. They have an additional grievance, the ferro-alloy problem.

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The only place to get chrome now is the USSR. We get 70% from the USSR. The price is up from \$35 to \$45 a ton and it will keep going up. If our purpose is to sanction, we should recognize that we have already put money into Rhodesia and they are selling elsewhere. These cases should be considered on equity not policy.

NEWSOM - Chrome is a symbolic issue. The lawyers in State are not satisfied with the Union Carbide case. The money may have been paid to a South African subsidiary, not to Rhodesia.

SICILIANO - In our view, there is no question of the facts.

ROGERS - We think they may have transferred it from one pocket to another.

NEWSOM - This requires added documentation. It is not clear where the money is.

LINCOLN - We have three years supply of chrome or chrome equivalents, and the Soviets will sell.

YOST - I have no comment on the chrome but I would like to close the Consulate.

RN - National Review and Human Events are all raising hell about chrome.

Are we kicking ourselves in a vital spot again?

ROGERS - We can make a decision on both at the same time.

RN - A double play?

ROGERS - Many Africans favor our closing. We could get some good out of it.

Every foreign minister raises it as an issue.

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RN - Maybe we could do some economic things.

ROGERS - If I go to Africa and the Consulate is not closed, my life is going to be miserable.

AGNEW - Will it offend the government if we close? If we go, it could upset the incumbent government in that upcoming election. (The Vice President has confused South Africa with Rhodesia.)

RN - If we go, many will follow.

NEWSOM - In January or February they will bring the new Constitution in.

ROGERS - Then we either recognize or get out.

LAIRD - That implies that recognition means approval. We don't want to be in that business. It opens up a whole new problem.

ROGERS - We may want to get to that, but not now. It would be a real breach with the UK and lose all the Africans. We have said the Rhodesian regime is illegal.

YOST - I am sympathetic to the general point of view that recognition should not imply moral approval. But this is a special case and the whole world would be against us.

KISSINGER - This must be the only case in which the world community supports the maintenance of colonialism.

LAIRD - This is first and foremost a political problem.

RN - I will have to cancel my subscription to Human Events.

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RICHARDSON - The chrome problem raises the prospect of a balancing move; that is, letting in the chrome leans to one side, pulling out the Consulate leans to another. On balance, we have to decide which way we are going. There are merits to each side and we have to look at the total package.

RN - For example, there is China, where we have moved on economic things, but not politically.

LINCOLN - Petalite is produced only in Rhodesia. Corning Glass uses it as a hardening material and they may have to close down one of their plants in West Virginia.

HELMS - I believe that over the long run we would gain little by closing the Consulate. We simply blind ourselves in an area of potential trouble. Two or three years from now we will have to ask if it bought anything. I don't think it will.

ROGERS - Yes, but this case is special. Everyone is against the Smith government.

AGNEW - I would like to ask a naive question. Why is the Rhodesian government any more illegal than we were when we declared independence?

YOST - Only 4% of the people are represented by the government.

AGNEW - Do the blacks strongly oppose that government?

YOST - There is no way of knowing.

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RN - Well, only a very small percent supported the American Revolution.

But the world has changed a lot since then.

ROGERS - There are factors of world opinion and our relations with the United Kingdom.

RN - Our relations with the British are the overwhelming thing.

ROGERS - How can we be hard-headed on economic matters but do symbolic things that black Africa will like? Why couldn't we help Botswana?

NEWSOM - (Summarized the issues on Southwest Africa, the Portuguese territories, Exim and aid, as outlined in the attached paper on operational issues.

ROGERS - Botswana has real promise. Its president gave a good toast at the UN and relations with South Africa are sensible.

RN - Is Botswana a potential bridge builder?

ROGERS - Yes.

NEWSOM - It is part of the mini-state problem. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has opposed sending ambassadors to those states.

ROGERS - We can overcome that.

YOST - The public members of our UN delegation have sent a memo to Secretary Rogers on Southwest Africa, proposing disengagement. We might have to cast our first veto on Southwest Africa.

RN - How soon?

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YOST - In the next few weeks.

ROGERS - We should move on Southwest Africa and the Consulate in Salisbury; these have the greatest visibility.

RN - Economics are the most important foreign influence on South Africa and Rhodesia. I think we should come down on the side of permitting more trade and investment.

SICILIANO - This can be done with low visibility.

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