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Delia A. Solomon March 29, 2013

Shattering the "Shell of Constraint" in Angola: U.S. Covert Collusion with Apartheid South Africa, 1974-1976

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Abstract

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This thesis explores the period from 1974 to 1976 when Angola gained its independence from Portugal but also became embroiled in a civil conflict among three rival liberation movements. Whereas previous historiography has focused on how different international actors, including the United States and the Soviet Union, came to support the three Angolan factions along the Cold War ideological divide, this thesis focuses on another little-discussed and highly sensitive development unfolding concurrently. This work examines the U.S. government's decision to covertly collude with the apartheid regime in Pretoria in encouraging and orchestrating a South African invasion of Angola. Ultimately, this military incursion failed, the U.S. Congress opted to terminate funding for its clandestine Angola program and South African troops were defeated at the hands of the Cuban-supported liberation movement. Tragically, such international interventions further exacerbated an Angolan conflict that would drag on, with brief interludes, until 2002. The U.S. government subsequently and vehemently denied it had ever played any role in encouraging South Africa's military intervention in Angola. Meanwhile, South African leaders evinced sentiments of betrayal and abandonment by the United States. This thesis will attempt to marshal recently declassified primary source materials and archival evidence to reach beyond what scholar Robin Hallett calls the "official smoke screen" of "stringent censorship, governmental denials and simple lies" about these developments. Holding both the South African and the U.S. sides of the relationship within the same frame of analysis, this thesis seeks to illuminate the internal architecture of covert collusion. The goal is to understand, as much as is currently possible, the structural and contingent factors and flaws that drove the United States and apartheid South Africa together into a joint, but ultimately unsuccessful, military venture in Angola; how did "the unthinkable come to emerge under the guise of wisdom and prudence?"

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Introduction, Historiography, and Argument

In 1975, Central Intelligence Agency Director William Colby appeared before the White House National Security Council with a flip chart of Africa in hand and an urgent objective in mind. Like a teacher intent on ensuring an entry-level class can orient itself to a new topic with relative ease, he preached: "gentlemen, this is a map of Africa. And here is Angola." He gestured to the map, indicating the territory located in Southern Africa bordering the Atlantic Ocean to its west, South African-occupied Namibia to its south, Zaire to its north, and Zambia to its east. Colby continued, "now, in Angola we have three factions: The National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), they are the Good Guys, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), they are the Bad Guys, led by the drunken psychotic poet... And then there's the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) and Jonas Savimbi, we don't know them too well."[1] This briefing, however overly simplistic in its portrayal of the Angolan civil conflict, served to introduce the "busy men" of the U.S. executive branch to Angola.[2] The presentation also punctuated a crucial break in U.S. policies that had, for the last fourteen years, largely ignored the civil conflict simmering in the Portuguese colony.[3]

From this point forward, the executive branch of the U.S. government aggressively seized the Angola issue, driving it from one relegated to oblivion on the list of U.S. Cold War priorities, to a conflict meriting a full-scale C.I.A. covert operation in support of two of the three rebel

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[1] John Stockwell, quoted in *Good Guys, Bad Guys*, produced by Martin Smith, performed by Jeremy Isaacs (Burbank, CA: Turner Original Productions, 1998), VHS.

[2] John Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies: A CIA Story* (New York: Norton, 1997), 48.

[3] John A. Marcum, "Lessons of Angola," *Foreign Affairs* (1976): 1-9, accessed September 16, 2012, http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/25574/john-a-marcum/lessons-of-angola.

groups fighting in the country.[4] The tragedy of such policies- that they would aggravate a conflict enduring twenty-seven years,[5] prove impervious to four separate attempts to broker a peaceful settlement, and claim the lives of over half a million people- is well documented.[6] That U.S. policies were dangerously misguided and fundamentally misaligned with the domestic dynamics of the Angolan conflict is also well established.[7] What current historiography omits, however, is an intensive exploration of the actual mechanisms by which misperceptions of the situation in Angola became transformed into policy decisions. How did such decisions come to appear rational, logical and, most dangerously, inevitable, to key policy makers on both sides of the partnership?

According to scholar Matthew Graham, the historiographical record on the Angolan Civil War "has focused primarily upon its Cold War dimension" and "the specter of the Cold War looms large, resulting in highly polarized literature" on the conflict.[8] On the one hand, Graham explains that the senior officials in the U.S. government who articulated America's foreign policy towards Angola continue to defend it, claiming it was a necessary response to an aggressive

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[4] Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 230.

[5] Scholar Adam Lockyer cites the Angolan Civil War as a classic case study in how "variations in the form of warfare correlated closely to the type, degree, and direction of foreign intervention given to each of the belligerents." Adam Lockyer, "Foreign Intervention and Warfare in Civil Wars," *Review of International Studies* 37 (2011): 2337, accessed December 12, 2012, http://journals.cambridge.org.proxy.library.emory.edu/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=8429796.
Along the same lines, scholar Fernando Guimarãe's argues that the Angolan nationalist groups were weak and heavily dependent on external assistance, catering to foreign power support from their inception. The externalization of the conflict resulted from "the purposeful efforts of the Angolan rivals to express the dispute in Angola as part-and-parcel of the global conflict and not just as a result of an internal struggle for power." Fernando Andresen Guimarães, *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War: Foreign Intervention and Domestic Political Conflict* (Basingstoke Macmillan, 2001), 198-200.

[6] Alex Vines, "Angola: Promises and Lies: Fragments of a Forgotten War," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 23, no. 4 (2000): 295-296, accessed November 9, 2012, SocINDEX with Full Text, EBSCOhost.

[7] Guimarães, *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War*, xvi.

[8] Matthew Graham, "Covert Collusion?: American and South African Relations in the Angolan Civil War, 1974–1976," *African Historical Review* 43, no. 1 (2011) America: History & Life: 28-47.

Soviet Union actively seeking footholds on the African continent.[9] On the other side of the historiographical divide, voices of criticism in the U.S. government, which emerged with increasing veracity, affirmed U.S. policies were "fundamentally flawed...exacerbating existing tensions and turning the Civil War into a major conflict."[10] Such voices of dissent included the C.I.A. Angolan Task Force Director, John Stockwell and Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Nathaniel Davis.[11] Both individuals would resign their positions in the U.S. government over the administration's handling of Angola and proceed to publish scathing criticisms of American foreign policy towards Southern Africa as a whole. Meanwhile, the prevailing line of scholarly thought, advanced by figures such as John Marcum, Gerald Bender, and Fernando Andresen Guimarães, to name a few, has also tended to be heavily critical of the U.S.'s Angola policies. These scholars have attacked U.S. officials for wearing Cold War blinders that overlooked or misunderstood the ethnic undercurrents and "tonal dichotomies" inherent in the "tripolar" Civil War.[12] Scholar John Marcum even questions the U.S. government's unit of analysis, arguing that "Angola is a Portuguese creation...the only national conscience rooted in the Province is not Angolan, it is Portuguese."[13] Meanwhile, scholar Piero Gleijeses has shown that much of the information and intelligence upon which the U.S. government based its

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[9] Chester A. Crocker, "South Africa: Strategy for Change*," Foreign Affairs* 59, no. 2 (1980): 1-14, accessed September 4, 2012, http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/34584/chester-a-crocker/south-africa-strategy-for-change.

[10] Matthew, *Covert Collusion*, 7.

[11] Nathaniel Davis, "The Angola Decision of 1975: A Personal Memoir," *Foreign Affairs* 57 (1978): 109-124, accessed September 11, 2012, http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/29932/nathaniel-davis/the-angola-decision-of-1975-a-personal-memoir; Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies*.

[12] J.A. Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution: Volume II : Exile Politics and Guerilla Warfare (1962-1976)* (Cambridge and London: MIT, 1978), 185; Gerald J. Bender, "The Eagle and the Bear in Angola,*" Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 489 (January 1, 1987): 123–132.*;* Guimarães, *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War*; Gerald J. Bender, *Angola Under the Portuguese: The Myth and the Reality* (Africa World Press, 2004)

[13] Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution*, 49.

decisions was "hazy" and obtained from unreliable or biased "second-hand sources."[14] Scholar Anna-Mart van Wyk substantiates this claim by finding that the State Department had failed to conduct a formal review or analysis of any of the Southern African liberation movements since the 1960s.[15] Such scholarly analyses of the Angolan Civil War contribute to a growing body of evidence indicating the shortcomings of U.S. policies, but they fail to explain the actual mechanisms by which certain policies were selected while others were rejected or silenced.

This thesis will thus seek to target the area of historical silence exposed by this systematic analysis of the policy articulation process. I am centrally interested in a development that "current historiography barely touches upon," the question of what can be known of South African and U.S. covert collusion in intervening in the Angolan Civil War.[16] According to scholar Robin Hallett, the nature of this clandestine partnership "is one of the last remaining unanswered questions concerning the (Angolan) conflict" as there "hung at the time-and to some extent there still hangs- an official smoke screen, a deliberately created miasma, the product

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[14] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 285.

[15] Anna-Mart Van Wyk, Myra Burton, and Steve McDonald, "Foreign Relations of the United States Series: Southern Africa, 1969-1976" (Conference, The Cold War International History Project, Wilson Center, Washington D.C. September 14, 2011).

[16] Interestingly, the archival series "South-African Angola Relations 1974-176" available at the South African Department of Foreign Affairs Archive in Pretoria, South Africa, bears the highest level of confidentiality classification and is accessible to visiting scholars and researchers only by approval from the South African Director-General. Documents from 1977, which detail what should supposedly represent similar content, i.e. South African Defense Force incursions into Angola as well as casualty, prisoner of war, mercenary recruitment and military engagement reports bear the lowest level classification and are thus available to the visiting researcher without prior approval. The distinction between the classification levels (located on the two extreme ends of the classification scale) remains unexplained but is still currently enforced at the archive. Given scholar Sue Onslow's assertion that, following declassification, the three levels of confidentiality that had previously separated documents were amalgamated, the fact that this grouping of documents remained separated is even more striking. Sue Onslow, "Research Report: Republic of South Africa Archives," *Cold War History* 5, no. 3 (2005): 369-375, DOI: 10.1080/14682740500222150

partly of a stringent censorship, partly of governmental denials or- to put the matter more bluntly and starkly, simple lies-" about the South African operation in Angola.[17]

The recent declassification of crucial government documents by relevant parties to the conflict has created a window of scholarly opportunity for a more correct reappraisal of this period. This archival evidence indicates that covert collusion did transpire between the South African and U.S. governments and that this clandestine cooperation was largely driven by senior elements of the U.S. executive branch- namely U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and the C.I.A.- who encouraged South Africa to intervene in Angola. Despite the emergence of this crucial evidence elucidating the nature of this partnership, little of the current historiography attempts to hold both the U.S. and South African sides of this equation within the same frame of analysis. Thus, this thesis will attempt to do just that, to account for and to understand the factors that drove these two countries together into a risky and ultimately unsuccessful joint military venture in Angola. I will argue that a number of contingent factors -the personal character, world view and leadership qualities of those in crucial decision-making positions- combined with a number of severe structural flaws -a perceived lack of workable alternatives and a decision-making process that allowed certain members to fully dominate discussions with little constructive criticism from their peers- to enable clandestine collusion to appear first imaginable, and finally necessary, to key figures on both the South African and U.S. sides of the relationship.

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[17] Robin Hallett, "The South African Intervention in Angola, 1975-76," *Oxford Journals: African Affairs* (1978): 347-86.

Chapter I- Civil Conflict in Angola: The Context and Chronology for Covert Collusion

The year is 1974. The Portuguese colonial empire is crumbling after a coup d'état overthrows Prime Minister Marcelo Caetano's government, bringing a military junta to power in Portugal and accelerating the process of Portuguese decolonization across Africa.[18] Angola presents what a senior Portuguese officer calls "the most difficult case. It is "the Portuguese colony with the largest white population but also the weakest anti-colonial insurgency."[19] Soon, three parties: the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), led by Holden Roberto, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), led by Jonas Savimbi, and the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), led by Agostinho Neto, begin to vie for control of the territory.[20] The coup d'état in the Portuguese metropole catches both the U.S. and South African governments by surprise. The United States finds itself caught "with bad cards in Africa...a long-standing association with fallen dictatorship and virtual ignorance about the rebel movements in the Portuguese colony."[21] Meanwhile, for South Africa, the collapse of the Portuguese government represents "a disaster. It turned friends into foes and opened gaping holes in the buffer zone that protected (South Africa) from the hostile continent to its north." South African leaders increasingly believed their "defenses were crumbling."[22] The South

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[18] Guimarães, *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War*, 85.

[19] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 237

[20] Butler, S. R. "Into the Storm: American Covert Involvement in the Angolan Civil War, 1974-1975." Dissertation, The University of Arizona, 2008, 1.

[21] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 278.

[22] Ibid., 273.

African Consular-General in Luanda, E.M. Malone, wrote to Pretoria that, "as far as Angola is concerned, the year 1974 can be summarized in one word: that word is 'disastrous.'"[23]

On January 15, 1975, Portuguese officials and representatives of the three Angolan liberation movements met in Portugal to sign the Alvor Accords, an attempt to pave a peaceful path to Angolan independence. The agreement placed the Portuguese High Commissioner at the helm of a transitional government composed of representatives from each of the three liberation movements.[24] This transitional government was to rule until November 11, 1975, overseeing the removal of all Portuguese troops from Angola as well as the election of the country's first president, slated for October 31, 1975. However, by the time the transitional government's term commenced, the MPLA was already moving to transform its disorganized and feeble military force into a regular army, augmenting its external aid and cementing its foreign partnerships. Throughout the 1960s, the left-leaning movement had received incredibly meager Soviet Union and Soviet-bloc aid. Now it embarked on a serious ally-building initiative, forging connections along the Cold War ideological divide by targeting the Soviet Union and Cuba for support.[25]

Just weeks after the transitional government assumed power, the first skirmishes between rebel movements broke out in Angola's capital, Luanda, as "the hope of Alvor collapsed into the grim reality of civil war."[26] Against this backdrop of escalating tensions and repeated but failed Portuguese efforts to broker a cease-fire between rebel groups, scholar Piero Gleijeses posits that Cuba finally extended its financial support to the MPLA. Nonetheless, he affirms that, "contrary

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[23] "Annual Report for 1974: Angola," Report from the South African Consular-General in Luanda to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 12 February 1975, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa), 1/22/3, vol. 5.

[24] Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution,* 255.

[25] Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution*, 185.

[26] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 251.

to the widespread belief that Cuba had rushed to the aid of the MPLA, Havana responded slowly" and until "late August...no foreign instructors had set foot in Angola." Instead, the extent of the foreign training of Angolan rebel movements remained minimal. Only a handful of FNLA troops received tactical training from the Chinese in Zaire while only about 100 MPLA military officers received military instruction abroad in the Soviet Union.[27]

On July 18, however, U.S. President Gerald Ford drastically changed the course of events in Angola. What had been for "an American public saturated with news about the fall of Saigon just one more bush war in Africa of little international relevance" or, to some, "the only war to be found when the C.I.A sought to recoup its prestige after the Vietnam debacle," now turned into a serious Cold War competition.[28] The U.S. government, with the C.I.A. and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger at the helm, opted to approve covert aid to the two perceived pro-Western, anti-communist liberation movements: the FNLA and UNITA. Archival evidence increasingly supports the claim that, contrary to what the Ford Administration stated since 1975, the U.S. actually intervened in Angola weeks before the arrival of any formal Cuban military presence. Such revelations lend strength to a growing scholarly consensus that the United States, and not the Soviet Union, escalated the Angola conflict.[29] In line with these observations, scholar Piero Gleijeses argues that "when the U.S. decided to launch the covert intervention, in June and July of 1975, not only were there no Cubans in Angola, but the U.S. government and the C.I.A. were not even thinking about any Cuban presence in Angola."[30]

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[27] Ibid., 258.

[28] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 253; Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies,* 252.

[29] "How America Helped Savimbi and Apartheid South Africa," *New African* 408 no. 7 (2002): 7, accessed March 14, 2013, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost.

[30] "How America Helped Savimbi and Apartheid South Africa," *New African* 408 no. 7 (2002): 7, accessed March 14, 2013, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost. Quoting Gleijeses.

On August 9, 1975, in a decision still debated by scholars as a defensive action or as part of a grander military strategy, South African troops initiated a small-scale incursion into Angola to occupy the Calueque and Ruacana dams.[31] In the official telegram sent to the State Department, South African officials assured the U.S. government that there was "no aggression intended" and that the South African Defense Forces (SADF) had arrived to "protect water pumping stations,...making no territorial claims in Angola."[32] Meanwhile, despite Soviet objections that the effort would "offend most African countries" and was an overreaction to the situation, an eager Cuba opted to send its military instructors to Angola. This decision drew an initially reluctant Soviet Union further into the conflict.[33] U.S. policy makers, however, completely missed this internal friction between the Soviet Union and Cuba, perceiving only a monolithic threat of communism.[34]

Soon, with the injection of foreign aid and weapons into the conflict, the Civil War intensified, and the MPLA found itself locked in a stalemating battle with the FNLA for control of Luanda. The U.S. responded to the deadlock by channeling more weapons to Holden Roberto and his FNLA. As the November 11 independence date rapidly approached, Roberto verbally committed to taking Luanda, launching a serious military offensive to seize control of the capital

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[31] In a new study based on primary source material and personal interviews, scholar Jamie Miller visualizes the Calueque Dam incursion, not as a defensive South African maneuver, but as "pretext for a grand strategic design...to establish a South African-controlled, communist-free zone in southern Angola." Jamie Miller, "Into the Quagmire: Reassessing South Africa's Intervention in the Angolan Civil War, 1975," unpublished paper, 2012, 19, quoted in Hermann Giliomee, *The Last Afrikaner Leaders: A Supreme Test of Power* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2012), 125.

[32] Special Summary No.1: Telegraphic Summary, Secret, Cable 195193, August 16, 1975, 6, Item Number: SA00515, United States. Department of State, From: Sisco, Joseph J., To: United States Delegation. Secretary. The Digital National Security Archive. *http:nsarchive.chadwyck.com.proxy.library.emory.eduquickdisplayMultiItem.doMulti=yes&ResultsID=13CC60BEA1D&queryType=quick&QueryName=cat&ItemNumber=25.*

[33] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions,* 261.

[34] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 230.

city. Now, for the first time, Cuban soldiers were drawn directly into the fray, participating in military engagements alongside the MPLA. Holden's verbal commitment to this major military offensive aside, U.S. intelligence reports actually found the MPLA's position on the ground far more favorable. The Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the U.S. State Department reported that "the MPLA has achieved an almost unbroken series of military successes...It is in complete control of Luanda and surrounding areas."[35] The report also warned of additional territorial gains across Angola, including in the diamond-rich areas of the country. In reflecting on such military victories, the C.I.A. Station Chief in Luanda, Robert W. Hultslander, argues that, while many at the time may have attributed such MPLA military victories to Cuban support, in fact, they were likely the result of the simple fact that "MPLA leaders were more effective, better educated, better trained, and better motivated."[36] As Angola's independence day drew rapidly closer it was becoming increasingly clear that the C.I.A. covert operation was faltering and that the MPLA was gaining territory, troops and traction.

It was in the context of this gloomy news, on October 14, 1975 that South African troops invaded the interior of Angola, initiating the top-secret military invasion coined Operation Savannah. The challenge for scholars looking back at these developments is to attempt to unravel the delusions and realities under which U.S. and South African policies unfolded. How did policy makers on both sides of this clandestine partnership arrive at their respective appraisals of the situation and what contingent and structural flaws set the course of events that ultimately unfolded?

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[35] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 261.

[36] Robert W. Hultslander, fax to Gleijeses, Dec. 22, 1998, 3, quoted in Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 272.

Chapter II- Framing the U.S. Perspective: Structural and Contingent Factors and Flaws

A series of grave institutional flaws combined with a number of contingent factors to set the tone of American policy towards Angola from its earliest days. Such structural flaws permitted several key figures of the U.S. executive branch to dominate the Angola proceedings with little or no dissent or constructive criticism from their peers. In turn, these structural limitations in the decision-making process were further compounded by the contingent factors related to the specific personalities and the world view harbored by these individuals, saddled as they were, with a Cold War, anti-communist and racially-laden ideology.

The proceedings of the early executive branch meetings on Angola, conducted in the spring of 1975, are only accessible to the public through the accounts offered by John Stockwell following his resignation from the C.I.A. and through the transcripts of subsequent interviews conducted by scholars of the figures involved. What is clear from these sources is that the U.S. government's policy articulation process demonstrated many of its most troubling flaws from the earliest days. Such initial meetings were already largely dominated by C.I.A. leaders and by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who worked to set the tone of sensitivity and secrecy of the operation from the beginning.[37] These consultations proceeded under the dark cloud of the belief that the Soviet Union had commenced shipping arms to the MPLA, although scholars have since shown such claims were alarmist and exaggerated.[38] Such initial meetings soon generated the first C.I.A. funding proposal for operations in Angola, which was then sent to the 40 Committee for approval. [39] This funding proposal requested that Roberto and Savimbi receive $300,000 and

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[37] Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies,* 22.

[38] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 306.

[39] The 40 Committee is the division of the executive branch responsible for orchestrating and overseeing covert operations abroad. Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies*, 10.

$100,000, respectively, in nonmilitary aid from the United States. In the end, however, the 40 Committee mysteriously opted to provide the $300,000 for Roberto but none for Savimbi. In later interviews Edward Mulcahy, the then-Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of State, reflected that "they didn't explain why they cut out Savimbi." The only explanation Mulcahy could offer for the decision was that "Kissinger had heard of Roberto before but he had never heard of Savimbi."[40] In analyzing this initial decision to extend funding to Roberto, scholar Piero Gleijeses argues that, at this point, "the United States, had, as of yet, no Angola policy. The 40 Committee's decision to fund Roberto was an ad hoc move."[41] However, in reality, this decision, "ad-hoc" or not, mirrored a greater and enduring problem in the internal architecture of the U.S. policy articulation process. It set in motion the cogs of a fundamentally flawed decision-making approach that permitted the Secretary of State to dominate all subsequent proceedings with little or no oversight or constructive criticism from other participants. This trend, first evident during these initial discussions on Angola, would only compound as U.S. involvement deepened.

In his memoirs of his time serving as the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Nathaniel Davis, newly appointed to the position at the time, indicates that he was informed of this Angola funding decision only after the 40 Committee had already approved the funds for disbursement. Davis states that the development "came as a surprise" as he "had not been aware that such programs were still being approved in the wake of the congressional investigations and interest in U.S. covert activities abroad." He nonetheless believed that there was no choice but to consider this extension of funding "water over the dam."[42] His early feeling

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[40] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 283.

[41] Ibid., 285.

[42] Davis, *The Angola Decision*, 110.

of detachment from the decision-making process was, in fact, only a harbinger of greater challenges to come.

On May 26, 1975, Kissinger indicated that the Ford administration was ready to more seriously consider the U.S.'s stake in Angola; he approached Davis asking for a detailed report on the U.S.'s policy options. In his memoirs, Kissinger asserts that Davis delayed sending the memo for nearly ten weeks "because he opposed the decision he feared I would make." In fact, based on archival evidence declassified using the Freedom of Information Act, scholar Piero Gleijeses has shown that "Davis submitted the report on June 13, two weeks after he had been given his charge and two weeks before the deadline Kissinger himself set." Thus, contrary to Kissinger's account, it seems the articulation of a U.S. policy towards Angola "was delayed not by Davis but by Kissinger's failure to focus" on the State Department memo.[43] Davis's proposal, submitted well ahead of the deadline and just after his May 5-19 visit to five countries in West Africa, outlined three options for the U.S. approach to Angola: 1) non-involvement, 2) covert involvement, and 3) diplomatic and political involvement. This third option, coined the Task Force, was favored by Davis and by many members of the State Department. It sought a "peaceful solution through diplomatic-political measures" to the Angola crisis.[44] The diplomatic plan "urged that the U.S. government privately approach the U.S.S.R. or build public pressure to induce the U.S.S.R. to reduce its support of the MPLA, or ultimately, to support or promote a United Nations or Organization of African Unity mediation effort."[45]

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[43] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 286.

[44] Davis, *The Angola Decision,* 112.

[45] Davis, *The Angola Decision,* 112.

With the knowledge that the 40 Committee would likely choose between the three options at its rapidly approaching July 12 meeting, Davis opted to send one additional memorandum to the State Department representative on the 40 Committee, Under-Secretary Joseph J. Sisco, as well as to Kissinger. This memo again underlined Davis's support for the diplomatic and political option. Davis also articulated his logical progression in reaching his position, stating that "covert intervention would not serve U.S. interests" and that "at present, the U.S. had no irrevocable commitment of U.S. power and prestige in Angola."[46] He now waited for the arrival of the decisive meeting where one of the three options would be selected.

It was against the backdrop of troubling news that "in recent fighting, the MPLA has bested its rival, the FNLA, in numerous clashes in Luanda, in northern Angola and in Cabinda," that the key executive branch members who had seized control of America's Angola policy met to again assess their options.[47] It remains impossible to know what exactly transpired during the meeting as "the minutes...have been very heavily sanitized, but some key points emerge: Ford knew nothing about Angola, Kissinger dominated; Ford followed Kissinger's lead."[48] Kissinger thus shepherded a President with little knowledge of foreign affairs and a reputation "of ineptness and lack of decisiveness" towards the decision to dismiss outright Davis's recommendations for neutrality and diplomacy.[49] Instead, the White House National Security Council opted to extend funding to two of the three rebel movements in Angola. With this decision, the elite group that now controlled the policy-making process launched the C.I.A.'s

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[46] Davis, *The Angola Decision*, 112.

[47] Henry Kissinger, quoted in Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions,* 290, Quoting Kissinger.

[48] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions,* 290.

[49] Thomas J. Noer, "International Credibility and Political Survival: The Ford Administration's Intervention in Angola," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (1993): 771. America: History & Life, EBSCOhost, accessed March 2, 2013.

covert operation, IAFEATURE, and irrevocably escalated the Angolan Civil War. The Pike Committee Hearings, part of a subsequent large-scale extension of congressional oversight on C.I.A. activity in Angola, would later conclude that "apparently, at the direction of National Security Council aides, the Task Force recommendation advanced by Davis was removed from the report." This left only "two alternatives...a hands-off policy or substantial military intervention" to be presented at the meeting.[50] Kissinger would later defend his decision to opt for covert, rather than overt, action by arguing "that overt aid could have led to an 'unmanageable' and 'open' confrontation with the Soviet Union."[51] As Kissinger wished, President Ford left this decisive meeting requesting that the C.I.A. submit an additional paper to the 40 Committee with the details of covert action, but asking for nothing further from the Davis Task Force. With the diplomatic option removed and the "action option" successfully selected, those voices of dissent in the State Department who opposed covert action now found themselves silenced.

The subsequent report issued to the 40 Committee, as per Ford's request, was simply "a blueprint, with a lot of blank spaces that Kissinger could fill in as he saw fit."[52] Perhaps the biggest blank space in the entire document was that, "apparently, the C.I.A. paper said nothing about South Africa even though Pretoria was obviously a major player in the region." This, of course, begs the question, as pondered by scholar Piero Gleijeses, "are we to assume then, that no one in Washington even wondered what Pretoria would do?"[53] The answer is, of course,

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[50] *The Village Voice* "published the text of the report without official authorization, having received it via Daniel Schorr, then of CBS." *The Village Voice*, February 16, 1976, quoted in Davis, *The Angola Decision,* 112.

[51] Stephen R. Weissman, "CIA Covert Action in Zaire and Angola: Patterns and Consequences," *Political Science Quarterly*, 94, No. 2 (1979); 263-286, accessed December 14, 2012, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2149851.

[52] This report has yet to be declassified. Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 291.

[53] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 292.

probably not.[54] What is clear by this point, however, is that the C.I.A. and Kissinger, now largely without the assistance or consultation with the State Department, were to oversee the rest of the operation in Angola. By July 1975, Kissinger simply reported to Ford that, "you must know we have a massive problem within the State Department. They are passionately opposed (to action in Angola) and it will leak."[55] Nonetheless, despite Ford and Kissinger's awareness of this dissent and their knowledge that it would likely become public, on July 17, the 40 Committee approved a program costing $14 million to provide arms and aid to Roberto and Savimbi.[56] By September, the program would dole out an additional $10.7 million and by mid-November $7 million more, bringing the grand total of the covert operation to $32 million by 1975.[57]

The three fundamental questions raised by an examination of the course of events that unfolded over these fateful months are thus: 1) What were the contingent factors affecting this story: how did the key executive branch members who dominated U.S. policy- the leaders of the C.I.A. and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger- see the world and Angola's place in it? 2) What were the structural factors affecting this story: what institutional constraints stifled the expression of meaningful alternatives and allowed certain individuals to capture the policy-making process? 3) How did these factors drive the U.S. to select an apartheid South African intervention in Angola as the best means of achieving its desired goals?

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[54] Ibid., 292.

[55] Memorandum of Conversation between Ford, Scowcroft and Kissinger, 7/17/1975, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, <http://www.ford.utexas.edu/>

[56] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 292.

[57] Weissman, *C.I.A. Covert Action in Zaire and Angola*, 284.

Political psychologist Raymond Birt highlights the importance of exploring the first of these questions when he argues that "states do not make decisions, individual people do...when people make decisions, their personalities play a role in the final outcome." To Birt "understanding when and how personality is of importance to explanations of state behavior is a necessary, though often neglected, part of political research."[58] In line with Birt's assertion, political psychologist Fred Greenstein proposes a framework for studying politics that distinguishes between "actor indispensability," whereby individuals in the policy-making process determine the policies selected, and "action dispensability," whereby the course of events mainly determines policies.[59] It seems that, in line with the observations offered by these scholars, a systematic examination of the U.S. decision to escalate involvement in Angola would be incomplete without an examination of the personality, leadership style, guiding ideology and world view of the actor most indispensable to these proceedings, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

Simultaneously touted as the "prince of realpolitik who put his remarkable insights to the service of a nation in deep trouble" but also "the immoral, power-hungry, and secretive bureaucratic schemer bent on self-aggrandizement," much has been written about the influence of Henry Kissinger on American foreign policy. Indeed, on the topic of Angola, as he did in

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[58] Raymond Birt, "Personality and Foreign Policy: The Case of Stalin," *Political Psychology* 14, No. 4 (1993): 607-625, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3791377.

[59] Fred I. Greenstein, "The Impact of Personality on Politics: An Attempt to Clear the Underbrush" *The American Political Science Review,* (Chicago: Marlham, 1969), 630, accessed November 5, 2012, < http://www.jstor.org/stable/1976084>.

many other instances, Kissinger would dominate U.S. discussions from the earliest days through the U.S. government's continued denial of any connection with South Africa's invasion.[60]

The Secretary of State saw himself as a "rare and unabashed disciple of the school of political thought known as 'realism.'"[61] This realist tradition "holds that power is paramount in international relations... A realist keeps his eye on national interests, rather than on some idealistic vision of morality or justice, and understands that they can be protected only by military credibility." Thus, realist Kissinger "view(ed) the goal of statecraft as stability, best achieved through unsentimental alliances, a carefully tended balance-of-power, and competing spheres of influence.[62] In Angola specifically this meant that "only a clear image of a resolute, militarized determination can prevent Soviet expansion."[63] Kissinger believed that American foreign policy ought to guard the balance-of-power in the global system, a crucial assignment that was best overseen by the White House through "secret links to elite figures abroad." Kissinger's world "would circumvent the public, Congress, and the basic government bureaucracy" to instead "work nimbly with...foreign counterparts through a web of 'back channels.'"[64] Any "failure to project American power successfully...could only corrode the nation's image as a great power and a sturdy friend, thus threatening the international balance-of-power and straining the productive and secret relations between government leaders."[65] In later

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[60] Jussi M. Hanhimaki, *The Flawed Architect: Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy* (London: Oxford University Press, 2004), xvi.

[61] Walter Isaacson, *Kissinger: A Biography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 653.

[62] Isaacson, *Kissinger,* 653-654.

[63] Henry Kissinger, *Years of Renewal: The Concluding Volume of His Memoirs* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999), 905.

[64] Jeremi Suri, *Henry Kissinger and the American Century* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007) 223.

[65] Ibid., 223.

congressional oversight hearings about the Angolan affair, Kissinger would still vigorously assert that American "efforts (in Angola) have been founded upon one fundamental reality: Peace requires...equilibrium. That equilibrium is impossible unless the United States remains both strong and determined to use its strength when required."[66] In reflecting on such comments offered by Kissinger about his world view, scholars have observed that his politics "is rooted in his personality" producing a "power-oriented realpolitik" characterized by "secretive diplomatic maneuvering" that sought to imitate Kissinger's idol, statesman Klemens von Metternich.[67] In Angola, such realities fit well with Stockwell's assertion that high-ranking U.S. executive branch members seemed committed to making "the working group sessions on Angola so dull that non-C.I.A. members would be discouraged in their supervision of 'our' war." In this regard, Stockwell concludes, they "succeeded brilliantly."[68]

It is impossible to know with the information available at this time whether Kissinger used a back channel in his dealings with the apartheid government.[69] What we do know, however, is that by the time U.S. officials engaged in contact with South Africa, Kissinger had largely succeeded in crafting the political landscape on the U.S. side to match the conditions he favored when conducting foreign affairs. He had already removed State Department and Congressional influence and oversight from his operations and had succeeded in selecting covert

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[66] "The Pike Papers: House Intelligence Committee Report" (January 1976), Testimony of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. http://congressional.proquest.com.proxy.library.emory.edu/congressional/result/pqpresultpage.gispdfhitspanel.pdflink/http%3A$2f$2fprod.cosmos.dc4.bowker- dmz.com$2fapp-bin$2fgis-hearing$2fe$2f8$2f1$2fa$2fhrg-1976-for-0013_from_1_to_216.pdf/entitlementkeys=1234.

[67] Ironically, scholar Harvey Starr points out that many of Kissinger's criticisms of his idol, Metternich, can also be found in contemporary and scholarly criticism of the Secretary of State's own policies. Harvey Starr, "The Kissinger Years: Studying Individuals and Foreign Policy," *International Studies Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (1980): 491, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2600286>.

[68] Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies,* 21.

[69] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 299.

action and secret diplomacy as the preferred means of achieving U.S. goals in Southern Africa. It was in this environment that Kissingerism, which sees the world as a "bipolar system in which everything was decided and calculated on the basis of the effect on the U.S.-Soviet competition," could thrive.[70] In short, Kissinger could now simplify a complicated world to the "understandable" and "coherent."[71] His world view, and by extension, his perception of the situation in Angola, was premised on the simple belief that "any event should be judged first and foremost by whether it represented a gain for the Soviets or for the West in the overall global balance."[72]

Scholars of the Cold War International History Project, a collaborative effort to study U.S. and Soviet decisions within the same historical frame, have also found value in examining the intersection between Kissinger's world view and the larger Cold War landscape. The project's scholars have advanced three possible explanations to account for the fact that, in Nixon's words, Kissinger could pull diplomatic "rabbits out of a hat" but could not build lasting "structures of peace" in the Third World. Not surprisingly, each of the three arguments fits well with the situation that unfolded in Angola; one seems especially worthy of closer scrutiny.[73] This model portrays Kissinger's failures in the Third World as stemming from his continued obsession with connecting all developments around the world with Soviet aggression. According to Project

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[70] Mario Del Pero, *The Eccentric Realist: Henry Kissinger and the Shaping of American Foreign Policy*, (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2010), 88.

[71] Starr, *The Kissinger Years,* 493.

[72] Isaacson, *Kissinger,* 656.

[73] The other two explanations advanced by the Project are also supported by the Angolan case study. The first, that Kissinger's secretive operating style resulted in irreconcilable differences between his diplomatic decisions and the fundamental character of American politics. The second, that Kissinger was a poor statesmen, making no efforts to defend his policies to the American public. Anna-Mart Van Wyk, Myra Burton, and Steve McDonald, "Foreign Relations of the United States Series: Southern Africa, 1969-1976" (Conference, The Cold War International History Project, Wilson Center, Washington D.C. September 14, 2011).

scholar Jussi Hanhimaki, Kissinger's policies stumbled on their tendency to see overpowering linkages between relatively small, disparate conflicts and the looming shadow of the Soviet Union. Such thinking also undergirds Hanhimaki's argument that the Middle East conflict represents the only regional conflict Kissinger handled successfully precisely because, for once, he did not wear his Cold War "spectacles" in approaching this localized conflict.[74]

An additional and crucial component of the Kissinger world view that would come to be applied to Angola was a restless tendency towards engagement born of an obsession with securing U.S. prestige and credibility as demanded by a realist balance-of-power appraisal of the global system. This tendency towards action was also born of Kissinger's desire to restore American confidence in the greatness of the Empire of Liberty, to revive American connections with nations across the globe, and to reengage the U.S. as a strong adversary against Soviet influence.[75] Thus, in many ways, the debate over Angola fits into a larger conversation about the future direction of U.S. foreign policy that was ignited by the end of the Vietnam War. Described by Senator Frank Church as "an opportune time for some reflection on America's role in the world" the end of the Vietnam War marked an existential crisis for American foreign policy makers.[76]

By 1974, twenty-seven years had elapsed since President Harry Truman, speaking before a joint session of the U.S. Congress in 1947, first publicly espoused his vision of the U.S. as the

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[74] Jussi Hanhimaki, "Triangular Diplomacy and Regional Conflict: Re-evaluating the Kissinger Years," (paper presented at the Cold War International History Project, The Wilson Center, Washington D.C., April 15, 2003), http://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/triangular-diplomacy-and-regional-conflict-re-evaluating-the-kissinger-years.

[75] Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*. First ed. Cambridge University Press, 2007, 1.

[76] David F. Schmitz, "Senator Frank Church, the Ford Administration, and the Challenges of Post-Vietnam Foreign Policy." *Peace & Change* 21, no. 4 (1996): 438, accessed February 27, 2013, World History Collection, EBSCOhost.

unfailing bastion of global democracy for the duration of the "long twilight struggle" known as the Cold War.[77] This so-called Truman Doctrine fully committed the U.S. to the ambitious and controversial policy of supplying, supporting and assisting the "free peoples" of the world in "resisting subjugation by armed minorities," a commitment the U.S. would renew on multiple occasions with extreme conviction and public visibility. Yet, Truman's simplistic black-and-white portrayal of the world had, in reality, proven exceedingly problematic for U.S. policy makers to implement. Subsequent administrations soon found themselves confronting unexpected difficulties, inconsistencies, and even, hypocrisies in their attempts to realize such goals. Indeed, the Vietnam War had exposed a vastly different America from the one Truman had espoused, a country now battling feelings of circumscribed limitation, a fear of engagement abroad, and a crisis of confidence following the quagmire of the Vietnam War coined "Vietnam Syndrome."[78] Scholar David F. Schmitz shows how the subsequent post-Vietnam debates over American projections of power abroad proved "protracted, painful, and decisive." Ultimately, individuals such as Senator Frank Church, a critic of the Vietnam War "long frustrated by what he saw as the persistent exaggeration of the Soviet threat in the Third World and the consequent character of American intervention abroad," lost to Kissinger and Ford's efforts to "retain the old verities of executive control over foreign policy." What triumphed instead was a powerful executive practicing and preaching a "diplomacy of containment and credibility that condoned covert activity and global intervention."[79] Both Kissinger and Ford thus came to power ascribing

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[77] Harry S. Truman "Truman's March 12, 1947 Speech Before the Joint Session of Congress" (speech, Joint Session of Congress, Washington D.C., March 12, 1947).; John F. Kennedy, "Inaugural Address" (address, Capitol, Washington D.C., January 20, 1961).

[78] J.E. Davies, *"Constructive Engagement?: Chester Crocker and American Policy in South Africa, Namibia and Angola," 1981-8* (Oxford: Ohio University Press, 2007), 28.

[79] Schmitz, "Senator Frank Church, the Ford Administration," 438.

to the belief that "the ghost of Vietnam could be exorcised by a display of American power."[80] Kissinger's unwavering confidence in his abilities to put the U.S. back on the path towards strength and prestige would surface at multiple instances in his dealings with other foreign governments. He once stated to South African officials "I think it is fair to say that my own estimate of myself may be at variance with that of some of my critics. But then again, I can't expect my critics to be right one hundred percent of the time."[81]

Fittingly, in light of such debates, not all scholars have seen Kissinger's complicated legacy in favorable terms. Journalist and author Christopher Hitchens advances the most extreme critique of Kissinger's behavior and leadership in his monograph premised on the conclusion that Kissinger should be tried for war crimes and crimes against humanity. Hitchens describes Kissinger's operating style as a disturbing brand of "depraved realpolitik" that reared its head in a variety of regional situations from his "recruitment and betrayal of the Iraqi Kurds to his orchestration of political, military and diplomatic cover for apartheid in South Africa and the South African destabilization of Angola."[82] While, ultimately, Hitchens confines his investigation of Kissinger's "crimes" to those that "can be placed on the proper bill of indictment," the far-reaching implications of his assertions about Kissinger's behavior in Angola ring out powerfully.[83]

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[80] White House Memo and Conversation Between Ford, Kissinger, and Scowcroft, Oct. 25, 1975, FOIA. The Ford Presidential Library, http://www.ford.utexas.edu/, 2.

[81] *V.S.A. Beleid Tenoor Suid-En Suidelike Afrika,* The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive, (Pretoria, South Africa), 16 October, 1974.

[82] Christopher Hitchens, *The Trial of Henry Kissinger* (London: Verso, 2001), x.

[83] Ibid., x.

What becomes clear is that, on multiple occasions, in disparate conflicts across the world, Kissinger found himself caught in "the big game of triangular diplomacy" even as the "complex regional and local causes of these conflicts" undermined his efforts to channel and control them in his balance-of-power calculus.[84] As attempts by Kissinger and the C.I.A. to manipulate the situation in such local conflicts were increasingly frustrated, openings increased for some of the darker forces that have guided U.S. policy to begin to assert themselves.

The power of the situation in Angola to awaken some of the deepest insecurities harbored by U.S. policy makers is also deeply rooted in the pervasive, though often unspoken, influence of racial hierarchical thinking in framing U.S. policy creation. In his influential work *Ideology and American Foreign Policy,* Michael Hunt argues the American foreign policy may be defined by three long-standing paradigms, among them the pervasive influence of racial hierarchical thinking in informing and framing the American world view.[85] In the case of dealing with a Southern Africa in transition, racial hierarchical thinking could assist policy makers in simplifying a complicated situation to digestible racial truisms, providing familiar moorings to which U.S. policy makers could cling. Scholar Michael Krenn takes this line of thinking to its logical extreme, arguing that pure racism is the central defining factor in how U.S. policy makers construed and interpreted America's actual and perceived interests at all times. Racism, he asserts, "demonstrated remarkable adaptability to the needs of American diplomacy, incredible resiliency in the face of challenges, and undeniable power, which, on occasion, has actually

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[84] Hanhimaki, *The Flawed Architect,* xvi.

[85] Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U. S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2009), 46.

overridden the needs of U.S. foreign policy itself."[86] Indeed, many scholars have highlighted Kissinger's "disdain" for African nationalist leaders, citing his "blistering arrogance towards the black African states"[87] and his insistence on modeling his policies on the premise that, across Southern Africa, "the white's are here to stay."[88]

In 1972, for example, following reports of widespread violence in Uganda, Kissinger spoke of Africans as "really a murdering bunch of characters."[89] He once also described the leader of Uganda as "an ape without an education" and agreed with Nixon's statement that "he's a prehistoric monster."[90] When Secretary of State William P. Rogers returned from his tour of Africa to highly favorable press coverage, President Nixon allegedly comforted Kissinger's "jealous fit" by telling him, "Henry, let's leave the niggers to Bill and we'll take care of the rest of the world."[91] Roger Morris, an aide to Kissinger and a member of the National Security

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[86] Michael L. Krenn, *The Adaptable Power of Racism* (Boston: Wadsworth Cenage Learning, 2009), quoted in Thomas G. Paterson and Dennis Merrill, *Major Problems in American Foreign Relations* (Boston: Massachusetts, 2010), 17.

[87] Anna-Mart Van Wyk, Myra Burton, and Steve McDonald, "Foreign Relations of the United States Series: Southern Africa, 1969-1976" (Conference, The Cold War International History Project, Wilson Center, Washington D.C. September 14, 2011).

[88] Kissinger's first espousal of this approach to southern Africa came in his "Study in Response to National Security Study Memorandum 39: Southern Africa" in which he stated that "the whites are here to stay and the only way that constructive change can come about it through them." Infamously nicknamed the "Tar-Baby Option" this statement became the basis for U.S. dealings with southern Africa. National Security Council Interdepartmental Group for Africa; Cohen, Barry; El-Khawas, Mohamed A., "NSSM 39: The Kissinger study on Southern Africa, 1975, http://www.aluka.org/action/showMetadata?doi=10.5555/AL.SFF.DOCUMENT.crp2b20022.

[89] Conversation between Nixon and the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs Henry Kissinger, September 21, 1972, 7:42-7:43 p.m., *Foreign Relations of the United States*, E-5, quoted in Aaron Dowdall, "The Birth and Death of a 'Tar Baby:'" Henry Kissinger and Southern Africa." Masters Thesis, The University of Missouri, 2009, 38.

[90] Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, September 24, 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, E-5, quoted in Dowdall, "The Birth and Death of a 'Tar Baby,'" 39.

[91] O'Reilly, *Nixon's Piano*, 292, quoted in Dowdall, "The Birth and Death of a 'Tar Baby,'" 292.

Council staff, once reported that "you couldn't find subjects...more the objects of ridicule (to Kissinger) than African affairs."[92]

In concert with such observations, Matthew Connelly's influential article "Taking Off the Cold War Lens: Visions of North-South Conflict During the Algerian War for Independence" has applied this new scholarly thinking on the intersection of racial hierarchical thinking and policy-formulation to the Cold War context. Connelly seeks to complicate the long-standing belief among diplomatic historians that "an East-West, Cold War dichotomy" entirely dominated U.S. perceptions of the Third World. Rather, as Secretary of State John Foster Dulles once identified, U.S. policy makers may have centrally, though often silently, feared "an expanding and escalating conflict with the 'great mass of mankind which is non-white and non-European' whether in league with the Soviets or independent of them."[93] This expanding body of historiographical work explaining how racial anxieties overlaid Cold War concerns assists in elucidating how high ranking executive branch members came to see cooperation with South Africa as a perceived or actual interest for the United States. A lens ground from racial anxieties" and a fear of "the West against the rest" made a clandestine partnership with South Africa seem imaginable and ultimately necessary.[94]

An additional consideration framing how the United States understood and approached the Angola conflict relates to the ideological heuristics both U.S. and Soviet policy makers brought to their efforts to understand and to mould the Third World. In his work *The Global*

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[92] Kenneth O'Reilly, *Nixon's Piano: Presidents and Racial Politics from Washington to Clinton* (New York: Free, 1995), 292, quoted in Dowdall, "The Birth and Death of a 'Tar Baby,'" 38.

[93] Matthew Connelly, "Taking Off the Cold War Lens: Visions of North-South Conflict During the Algerian War for Independence," *The American Historical Review* 105, no. 3 (2000): 739–769, accessed September 24, 2012, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2651808, quoting John Foster Dulles.

[94] Ibid., 741.

Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times, scholar Odd Arne Westad explains that "the United States and the Soviet Union were driven to intervene in the Third World by the ideologies inherent in their politics."[95] To Westad, "Washington and Moscow needed to change the world in order to prove the applicability of their ideologies...Both saw a specific mission in and for the Third World that only their own state could carry out and which, without their involvement, would flounder."[96] The Third World thus represented the crucial battleground unfolding between the Empire of Liberty, the United States, and the Empire of Justice, the Soviet Union. Both superpowers visualized themselves as the rightful inheritors of the mantle of "modernity and progress." Westad's claims about the ideological underpinnings of the Cold War allow him to advance his argument that "the most important aspects of the Cold War were neither military nor strategic, nor Europe-centered, but connected to political and social development in the Third World."[97] For Westad, the great "tragedy of Cold War history, both as far as the Third World and the superpowers themselves were concerned, was that two historical projects that were genuinely anti-colonial in their origins became part of a much older pattern of domination...their founding concepts of social justice or individual liberty long atrophied into self-referential ideologies."[98] The Angola story is thus central to Westad's narrative in which two superpowers saddled with long-standing and heavily burdensome ideological baggage and pervasive anxieties stemming from these ideologies inevitably collide in the Third World.

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[95] Westad, *The Global Cold War*, 4.

[96] Westad, *The Global Cold War*, 5.

[97] Ibid., 364.

[98] Ibid., 397.

Thus, with this understanding of the world view, anxieties and ideologies harbored by those who dominated the Angola policy-making process, the second question of why dissent from the State Department was ignored and silenced can now be addressed. Indeed, the fundamental crux of Davis's argument launched him on a collision course with Kissinger largely as a result of these ideological underpinnings. The Secretary of State's restless desire to exert American influence abroad could never accept the sort of accomodationist outcome Davis seemed to propose in his Task Force recommendation. Kissinger likely perceived the suggestions offered by Davis as exhibiting unacceptable weakness in the face of a Soviet challenge. In his testimony before Congressional oversight committees on the entire Angolan affair he would later state "do we really want the world to conclude that if the Soviet Union chooses to intervene in a massive way...the United States will not be able to muster the unity or resolve to provide even financial assistance...Do we want our potential adversaries to conclude that in the event of future challenges America's internal divisions are likely to deprive us of even minimal leverage over developments of global significance?"[99] Furthermore, Kissinger's Cold War, racially-based world view held "no belief whatsoever in the efficacy" of the multilateral organizations with which the Task Force proposed collaboration, namely the Organization of African Unity. Such multilateral organizations were comprised of the very people, non-whites, he held in such contempt.[100]

A greater obstacle to Davis's efforts to challenge Kissinger's interventionist arguments was the fact that Davis largely accepted the parameters of Kissinger's world view and framed his

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[99] "The Pike Papers" (House Intelligence Committee Report, January 1976), Testimony of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger). http://congressional.proquest.com.proxy.library.emory.edu/congressional/result/pqpresultpage.gispdfhitspanel.pdflink/http%3A$2f$2fprod.cosmos.dc4.bowker- dmz.com$2fapp-bin$2fgis-hearing$2fe$2f8$2f1$2fa$2fhrg-1976-for-0013_from_1_to_216.pdf/entitlementkeys=1234.

[100] O'Reilly, *Nixon's Piano*, 292, quoted in Dowdall, "The Birth and Death of a 'Tar Baby,'" 292.

dissent within them, instead of encouraging a reappraisal of the situation. By stating that "in world balance-of-power terms, the worst possible outcome would be a test of will and strength in which we lost" and "if we are to have a test of strength with the Soviets, we should find a more advantageous place" Davis put his argument on losing ground. Once the Angola conflict was framed as a "test" of U.S. commitment against the Soviet Union, Kissinger's Cold War blinders would be firmly in place and Kissingerism would dominate. Davis's dissent memo also criticized the C.I.A. covert operation largely on the basis of the "risks of disclosure," echoing C.I.A. Angolan Task Force Director John Stockwell's "doubt that the operation could be kept a secret."[101] Unfortunately for Davis and his State Department supporters, Kissinger cared little about such risks, and had proven himself to be a master in secretive diplomacy, "the expert at flattery" and "the supreme spin doctor."[102] He was unlikely to fear Davis's warnings that the covert operation would be publicly exposed. Davis's dissenting memo thus raised a number of objections about the C.I.A. operation but did not suggest workable alternatives acceptable to Kissinger. Kissinger and Davis's relationship would never recover, and, in his memoirs, Kissinger portrays Davis as having "no stomach for covert operations." Instead he accuses him of "resorting to every trick in the book to delay his boss's efforts to do the right thing."[103]

The additional compounding problem with the State Department's dissent was that criticism abounded but workable policy alternatives did not. Objectors "did not speak with a common voice," and, more problematically, their acceptance of the parameters of Kissinger's world view silenced their ability to advance meaningful alternatives that could be accepted by

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[101] Davis, *The Angola Decision,* 112.; Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies*, 53.

[102] Hanhimaki, *The Flawed Architect,* 7.

[103] Henry Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 801, quoted in Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 357.

the Secretary of State.[104] By ascribing to the parameters of a Kissinger world view, the State Department resigned itself to fighting an uphill losing battle. This obstacle was made all the more insurmountable by Kissinger's leadership style and his reputation for avoidance of engagement with foreign service officers whenever possible.

Indeed, when State Department officials received their postings in the Africa desk, many thought they had "hit political backwater"[105] largely left to their own devices by a Kissinger once "notorious for his lack of interest in Africa."[106] As the Angola situation intensified, however, the Africa Desk officials moved from the periphery to the forefront in terms of importance to the Secretary of State. The Africa Bureau soon passed through a series of personnel changes pursued by Kissinger in hopes of making the Department more amenable to his policies. Steve McDonald, who served as a diplomat in the Africa Bureau at the time, explains that his bosses "were fired one after the other because they weren't quite doing what Kissinger wanted them to do...the African Bureau may have set a record in a short period of time for the number of (Assistant) Secretaries of State (for African Affairs) I worked for."[107]

The criticism offered by these replaced State Department officials, was, in fact, significant given the political and diplomatic backgrounds of these individuals.[108] Many of these

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[104] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 238.

[105] Steve McDonald, "Foreign Relations of the United States Series: Southern Africa, 1969-1976" (Conference, The Cold War International History Project, Wilson Center, Washington D.C. September 14, 2011).

[106] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 391.

[107] Anna-Mart Van Wyk, Myra Burton, and Steve McDonald, "Foreign Relations of the United States Series: Southern Africa, 1969-1976" (Conference, The Cold War International History Project, Wilson Center, Washington D.C. September 14, 2011).

[108] Scholar Piero Gleijeses has argued that although the press touted Davis as the "Allende Man" his actual role in the Chilean coup is likely overstated. Nonetheless, Gleijeses does not contest that Kissinger selected Davis because he believed his policies would more closely adhere to the Secretary of State's agenda in southern Africa. Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions,* 282.

foreign service diplomats had served the U.S. government in other sensitive areas in the midst of C.I.A. covert operations including in the Congo Crisis, in the Vietnam War, and in the overthrow of Salvador Allende in Chile.[109] Furthermore, these diplomats were, in theory, hand selected by Kissinger because they met his desired profile of "young, innovative, unorthodox, Foreign Service Officers." Donald Easum, one of the three Assistant Secretaries of State appointed and then replaced by Kissinger during this tumultuous period, explained that "Kissinger felt the Foreign Service was filled with a bunch of effete intellectual non-hard-hitting, non-pragmatic, idealistic, missionary zealots...he just had no patience with the Foreign Service, and he wanted to just run it himself with new type thinking."[110] Nathaniel Davis, Donald Easum's successor, explains he was initially "reluctant to assume the new position" of Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs largely because he was uncomfortable with replacing Easum. His doubts stemmed from the fact that, as Davis pointed out to Kissinger, he "had sympathy for a number of Mr. Easum's views...and was not confident that I could satisfy him (Kissinger) where Easum apparently had not." Despite his telegraph that "the African Bureau was not a responsibility he would seek under the circumstances," Kissinger nonetheless approved Davis' nomination, launching his short stint as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs.[111]

In his memoir, Davis admits that much of his problem centered on his "struggle...for some impact on the Secretary's mind." Looking back, the Secretary of State for African Affairs admits that "the mechanisms of the U.S. government that allowed Kissinger to so thoroughly

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[109] Ibid., 480.

[110] "Interview with Donald B. Easum," *The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training*. The Library of Congress: American Memory, January 17, 1990, http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammemmfdip:@field(DOCID+mfdip2004eas01).

[111] Davis, *The Angola Decision*, 126.

dominate proceedings" rendered the "machinery and policy-making process... flawed.'"[112] Largely ostracized from the decision-making process following Kissinger's rejection of his diplomatic Task Force solution, Davis was left to speculate from afar about South Africa's involvement. He stated "I doubt we overlooked them...There was an inhibition about being explicit about cooperating with South Africa...I'm sure a lot was discussed without me because they knew what my position was."[113]

Thus, the structural flaws characteristic of the U.S. policy process silenced dissent and allowed Kissinger to again evade constructive criticism. A confident Secretary of State Henry in partnership with the C.I.A. began to spearhead efforts to work outside of the traditional institutional constraints in crafting America's Angola policy. Kissinger and the C.I.A. were unwilling to opt for inaction but saw Angola a potential worst-case scenario where the darkest anxieties of U.S. policy makers might intersect with the looming shadow of Soviet interests. "The flawed architect" and his senior executive branch members found an unlikely friend in an isolated apartheid South Africa desperate to demonstrate not only its anti-communist credentials but also its centrality in maintaining the balance-of-power Kissinger's world view so demanded.[114] Unfazed and perhaps even expecting confusion and upheaval within his own ranks, Kissinger refused to pass up an opportunity to test U.S. resolve against the Soviets. Ironically, he even accepted Davis' comment that "nothing short of a full effort dedicated to Angola could succeed." Instead of dissuading the Secretary of State from action, however, such dissent likely only drove Kissinger closer to South Africa, which represented his best hopes of

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[112] Graham, *Covert Collusion?,* 42.

[113] Davis, *The Angola Decision*, 126.

[114] Jussi M. Hanhimaki, *The Flawed Architect*, i.

achieving these objectives. Looking back, Davis ponders whether "America's choices were impossible ones. I cannot assert with any easy confidence in the likely success of the course of action favored by most of our Task Force on Angola...But I think we would have done better at least to have tried that other course." Perhaps he was right, but, his dissent, framed within the Cold War constraints of Kissinger's world view, launched Davis on a collision course with the Secretary of State.[115] Indeed, Kissinger would even state that "it seemed to me no accident that most great statesmen had been locked in a permanent struggle with experts in their foreign offices."[116]

As I have shown, by this point in 1975, most of the operational factors and structural considerations, as well as the ideological guiding heuristics that would govern U.S. policies for the duration of the covert operation were already in motion. The U.S. discussions about Angola "began very late and ended very quickly."[117] All it would take to accelerate the forces already in motion were the military realities on the ground in the summer and fall of 1975. Despite the escalation in U.S. funding and commitment to the FNLA and UNITA, U.S. officials were now forced to confront troubling realities. The MPLA was, in fact, gaining in numerous clashes around the capital of Luanda and in northern Angola.

At this point, in the old account of what had transpired in Angola (available in sources published as late as the 1990s), South African military advisors, mysteriously and miraculously for the U.S. government, arrived in Angola, changing the calculus of U.S. military estimates and

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[115] Davis, *The Angola Decision*, 124.

[116] Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 39.

[117] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions,* 356.

bolstering the C.I.A.'s allies.[118] The current official account of the Angolan Crisis offered by the U.S. State Department's Office of the Historian now admits, however, that "the U.S. government...encouraged the South African intervention, but preferred to downplay its connection with the apartheid regime."[119] It was within this environment of secrecy and U.S. government infighting over how to address the situation in Angola, that the "fuzzy relationship" between the U.S. and South Africa first began to unfold.[120] U.S. officials were cautious and evasive of discussions about Pretoria's involvement, making only passing and indirect references to this emerging relationship. C.I.A. Operative Coots stated the importance of ensuring that the U.S. "keeps South Africa in the game," while National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft indicated his agreement that "we do not want to discourage them (the South Africans)."[121]

In a speech given before the foreign press, Henry Kissinger once claimed that "allies can be tiresome necessities," and indeed, the U.S. relationship with South Africa seemed to directly substantiate his claims.[122] An examination of the history of relations between the two countries shows that South Africa had always presented a paradox that vexed American policy makers to the supreme.[123] On the one hand, the South African government could easily be cast as an ideal partner for the United States, a strong, stable, and fully functioning state with

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[118] Weissman, *C.I.A. Covert Action in Zaire and Angola*, 285.

[119] "The Angola Crisis 1974-75," *U.S. Department of State*, *Office of the Historian*. Accessed January 12, 2013, http://history.state.gov/milestones/1969-1976/Angola.

[120] Davis, *The Angola Decision,* 109.

[121] United States Department of State, and Edward C Keefer. *Foreign Relations of the United States. 1969/76, 28, Southern Africa*, Washington: U.S. Government, 2011, 248. http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve05p1.

[122] Starr, *The Kissinger Years,* 488.

[123] Alex Thomson, *U.S. Foreign Policy towards Apartheid South Africa, 1948-1994: Conflict of Interests*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 8.

enduring historical and cultural ties to the West. Yet, on the other hand, South Africa, governed since 1948 by the white minority government and an apartheid system could never truly achieve full status as an equal partner in an American vision of a free world so long as it continued to embrace racist policies in blatant antithesis of core U.S. values. The word apartheid, derived from the Afrikaans word meaning "separateness," referred to the institutionalized and legally enforced system of segregation of races in all aspects of South African political, social and economic life, turning "20 million people into second-class citizens."[124] Instituted by the National Party upon its narrow electoral victory in 1948, the policy of apartheid "split the country along ethnic lines and allowed the European minority of around 13 percent to control the economy, the military, education, and politics" of South Africa.[125] Africans, numbering around 75 percent of the population were subject to segregated facilities- petty apartheid- and also to a larger scheme- grand apartheid- that sought the forcible return and removal of Africans to their "tribal homelands" with the goal of eventually making these areas separate from white-ruled South Africa.[126]

A recently declassified C.I.A. document describes the conundrum faced by U.S. policy makers in confronting South Africa explaining, "at stake are declared American principles as well as U.S. objectives in preventing racial instability in South Africa from jeopardizing U.S. economic and strategic interests and from creating openings for the Soviets throughout the region."[127] Luckily for American policy makers, efforts to confront the hypocrisy posed by the

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[124] "A Short History." *Apartheid Museum*. Accessed October 14, 2012. http://www.apartheidmuseum.org/.

[125] Westad, *The Global Cold War,* 208.

[126] Clifton Crais. "The Making of South Africa" (lecture, Emory University, Atlanta, GA, February 29, 2013).

[127] The Central Intelligence Agency, "South Africa: The Politics of Racial Reform," January, 1981, http://www.foia.cia.gov/docs/DOC_0000568199/DOC_0000568199.pdf.

South African state could easily be delayed and deflected by the white minority government's willingness to partner with the American government in its efforts to contain communism. Strategically located and economically blessed, South Africa's "staunch anticommunist credentials, its excellent ports, and the fact that it unilaterally monitored traffic rounding the Cape of Good Hope" set a precedent for cooperation with regard to U.S.-South African relations.[128] Furthermore, South Africa's reputation as the "Persian Gulf of non-fuel minerals" meant that the government uniquely controlled four valuable minerals ironically only found in vast quantities in one other country on Earth: the Soviet Union.[129] One Soviet Major General stated the centrality of the natural resource question arguing that "Western economies could be seriously disrupted if denied the nation's (South Africa's) vast mineral resources."[130] The South African government's commitment to preserving a facade of law and order that masked the currents of unrest swirling within South African society meant the continuity of stable and profitable investment platforms for U.S. business ventures in the country.[131]

American policy makers recognized that South Africa, though increasingly an internationally isolated pariah, represented a strong regional power, and, according to the C.I.A., a "lone ally in a region vulnerable to Soviet interest."[132] In his memoirs, Kissinger asserts that his desire to reassert American power abroad often required that any "altruistic principle" take a

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[128] Thomson, *U.S. Foreign Policy towards Apartheid South Africa,* 8.

[129] Ibid., 9.

[130] Alex Thomson, "Balancing Interests beyond the Water's Edge: Identifying the Key Interests That Determined US Foreign Policy towards Apartheid South Africa," *Politiko* 32. no. 1 (2003): 123-137.

[131] Thomson, *U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Apartheid South Africa,* 8.

[132] "South Africa: The Making of U.S. Policy, 1962-1989." The Digital National Security Archive, http://nsarchive.chadwyck.com.proxy.library.emory.edu/collections/content/SA/intro.jsp.

backseat to a "practical and basically strategic approach in Africa."[133] For Kissinger, as had been the case for U.S. leaders before him, this "practical and strategic approach" allowed him to stomach supporting an apartheid regime which could never achieve full status as an equal partner in the American vision of the free world. It is difficult to rectify Kissinger's simultaneous assertion that "we embarked with conviction and determination on the evolution to majority rule" with his affirmation that "a policy towards South Africa cannot succeed unless it adheres to the convictions of those whom it is seeking to persuade."[134] The disconnect between these two quotes offered by Kissinger evinces the fundamental stumbling block of the South Africa-U.S. relationship. It also calls into question Kissinger commitment to majority rule in South Africa. Indeed, Kissinger himself would likely prefer to remove discussions of morality from his dealings with the apartheid government entirely, choosing instead to ascribe greater relative importance to strategic and anti-communist considerations.

By 1976, scholars such as Thomas Borstelmann, have even argued it was possible to call the United States "apartheid's reluctant uncle,"[135] Kissinger supposedly even assured South African officials "that the U.S. could...more firmly shelter South Africa from indiscriminate pressures by the non-aligned states, the OAU and the United Nations."[136] Meanwhile, in its Angola efforts the United States emerged as the leader of a coalition that included Zaire, South Africa, England and France and that sought to support and assist UNITA and the FNLA.[137] The

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[133] Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 903.

[134] Ibid., 904.

[135] Thomas Borstelmann, *Apartheid's Reluctant Uncle: The United States and Southern Africa in the Early Cold War* (New York: Replica Books, 2001), 1.

[136]"Meeting between Kissinger and Vorster," Bureau for State Security, 23 August, 1976, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa), 1/33/3.

[137] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 293.

Chinese government also sent a few military instructors to assist the FNLA and, although they were "welcomed by U.S. officials, there was no consultation or coordination between the two governments."[138] Interestingly, however, even in the midst of Kissinger's delicate overtures to China, as part of his concurrent triangular diplomacy efforts, the Secretary of State took the time to defend South Africa to China's leaders. Although he agreed with Chairman Mao's assertion that "South Africa does not have a very good reputation" he underscored the strategic components of the relationship by stating "they are fighting to keep the Soviet Union from expanding (in Angola), and we think that's admirable."[139] His attempts to discuss South Africa with the Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China, Ch'iao Kuan-hua, were also markedly unsuccessful and the leader "warned Kissinger against enlisting 'the help of South Africa'" stating "this is short-sighted.'"[140]

Despite the warnings issued by other international leaders, cooperation between the U.S. C.I.A. and South Africa burgeoned. In Angola, South African and U.S. planes flew side by side, jointly contracting all deliveries made on behalf of UNITA and the FNLA.[141] South Africa and the U.S. had embarked on the next joint chapter of their complicated but long-standing relationship. South African troops were mere months away from initiating Operation Zulu, the South African military incursion into Angola, which commenced on October 14, 1975.[142]

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[138] Ibid., 294.

[139] Meeting Between Gerald Ford and Mao Zedong, Chairman Mao's residence, Peking, December 2, 1975. The Digital National Security Archive.

[140] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 294. Quoting White House MemoCov (Kissinger, Ch'iao Kuan-hua, et al.), New York, Sept. 28, 1975, pg. 21, MF 00355, *NSA*.

[141] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 297.

[142] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 298.

Chapter III: Framing the South African Perspective: Isolation in an Increasingly Hostile World

By the 1970s, the South African apartheid government was forced to admit that it was more isolated than ever, alone in a world that seemed increasingly in transition towards a future unfavorable to South African interests. South Africa "was barred from most United Nations' activities, the world ecumenical movement and most international sport."[143] Worse still for South Africa's apartheid leaders was the reality that Southern Africa, and specifically Angola, seemed to be the focal point of this world in transition. South African leaders watched with apprehension as "Mozambique swung to the left, Angola descended into civil war, and the instability in Rhodesia and Namibia (South-West Africa) assumed a more ominous and urgent hue."[144] By 1973, the *Washington Post* reported, "never have white South Africans felt so isolated or South Africa seemed so alone in Africa and in the world community."[145] Indeed, the departure of colonial governments and the rise of black nationalist and liberation movements across Africa left apartheid South Africa with fewer allies, more enemies, and a general feeling of besiegement by hostile forces. In Angola specifically, the departing Portuguese colonial government had long maintained cordial diplomatic relations with South Africa, sharing intelligence data and permitting South Africa to conduct search-and-destroy missions against the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), a liberation movement fighting for

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[143] Giliomee, *The Last Afrikaner Leaders*, 117.

[144] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 273.

[145] David Ottaway, "South Africa Clings to Detente Bid," *The Washington Post*, 16 April 1973, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa), 1/33/6 , vol. 35.

Namibian independence from its current South African occupation.[146] Now, the South African government was forced to devise new methods for dealing with a rapidly changing Southern Africa without its long-standing colonial connections.

Initially, Pretoria was relatively successful in using its economic clout, through monetary aid and trade concessions, to placate its newly independent neighbors, launching its own détente with southern Africa. In Angola, however, this plan hit a stumbling block as the Angolan economy was far less dependent on South Africa than were the economies of its other frontline neighbors.[147] The South African government began to move towards "unorthodox methods, bordering on the irregular and illegal" in an attempt to control and to shape the forces of change sweeping across Southern Africa.[148] Most relevant to South Africa's pending involvement in Angola was the rise of a special secret committee, the so-called "cabinet within a cabinet," that oversaw South Africa's irregular projects. This top-secret committee was composed of South African Prime Minster B.J. Vorster, along with the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Information, and the Head of the Secret Service (BOSS).[149] Like the U.S. government in its handling of Angola, the South African government seemed to be moving in a more secretive direction, placing the policy articulation process in the hands of fewer individuals with less oversight from their peers.

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[146] In 1971, the International Court of Justice (I.C.J.) determined that South Africa was illegally occupying Namibia, or South-West Africa, and ordered its withdrawal from the territory. Meanwhile, as international opposition to South African presence in Namibia grew, domestic resistance within Namibia was also building as the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) accelerated its guerilla movement against South African occupation starting in 1966. Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 273.

[147] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 274.

[148] Giliomee, *The Last Afrikaner Leaders,* 117.

[149] Giliomee, *The Last Afrikaner Leaders,* 118.

In late May 1975, Vorster requested a report on the Angolan situation from the South African Defense Force (SADF) and from South Africa's Bureau of State Security (BOSS). The report concluded that Angola was inevitably drifting towards Civil War and that the MPLA would win in league with the Soviets; such a disastrous result could only be forestalled by South African assistance to a united FNLA-UNITA front.[150] With this dire analysis of the situation ringing in his head, Vorster took his first tentative steps to address the situation. He "decided to sound out the Ford administration about collaboration in Angola."[151] Nonetheless, as late as April of that year, Vorster continued to decline Savimbi's petitions asking for South African assistance to UNITA.[152] The Prime Minister, described by scholars as "cautious and slow-moving," clearly needed additional impetus to gird South Africa into action in Angola.[153]

Vorster would soon find this additional encouragement in the form of communication with the United States, a turn of events that invited him to imagine a different appraisal of the Angolan conflict. The "cautious" Vorster would also soon face hawkish sentiments from his own ranks, especially from the Minister of Defence, P.W. Botha, who favored a more aggressive South African stance towards Angola and towards Southern Africa as a whole. South African scholar Hermann Giliomee later conducted interviews with Pik Botha, the Minister for Foreign Affairs at the time with the goal of understanding the internal dynamics unfolding within the South African government during these crucial months. In these interviews, Pik Botha claimed that the decisive factor in pushing Vorster to partner with the U.S. in an Angola program was, in

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[150] Sophia du Preez, *Avontuur in Angola. Die verhaal van Suid-Afrika se soldate in Angola 1975-1976*, 32, 63, 86 and F. J. du Toit Spies, *Operasie Savannah. Angola 1975-1976*, 93-101, quoted in Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions,* 80.

[151] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions,* 276.

[152] Westad, *The Global Cold War,* 230.

[153] Giliomee, *The Last Afrikaner Leaders,* 121.

fact, Hendrik van den Bergh, the head of BOSS and a member of Vorster's tight-knit special secret committee. He further stated that he believed that it was direct communication with the C.I.A and Kissinger that pushed van den Bergh in this direction.[154] However, interestingly, scholar Piero Gleijeses states that van den Bergh was opposed to the military intervention.[155] Such disparities indicate the difficulties still inherent in unraveling what occurred on the South African side of this partnership and underscore the depth of information that remains to be divulged by the South African government.[156] Even Stockwell "was not in a position to know what James Potts (the head of the C.I.A. in Africa)...who played his cards very close to his chest, told van den Bergh."[157] Nonetheless, it seems that it was the United States and specifically Henry Kissinger and the C.I.A., that played the decisive role in shepherding these key members of the Vorster administration towards their change in heart on the Angola situation.

The South African government was increasingly placing the policy-making process in the hands of a smaller group of like-minded leaders with less oversight from other officials. By 1971, for example, the South African Consulate in Luanda contacted the South African Department of Foreign Affairs asking for permission to cease publishing the previously required "Annual Report" on Angola. In explaining his reasoning, E.M. Malone, the Consular-General in Luanda, states "as the Department is aware, a large proportion of information transmitted to

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[154] Pik Botha, email communication, May 18, 2011, quoted in Giliomee, *The Last Afrikaner Leaders*, 128.

[155] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 276.

[156] Even an internal timeline circulated within the South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs is remarkably unspecific about the U.S.'s role in Angola. The timeline, entitled "Developments in U.S./S.A. Relations spans 1966-1976, and shows that on 5 October 1973 there was a meeting between Dr. Kissinger and the Minister in the U.S., and in November 1974, Mr. Donald Easum (Assistant Sec. State of State for African Affairs) visited South Africa. From July to November 1974 the timeline simply states, without elaboration, "U.S. role in Angolan Civil War," leaving the specifics of this "role" unexplained. *Timeline of Developments in U.S./S.A. Relations, 1976*, Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive, (Pretoria, South Africa). 1/33/6 , vol. 35.

[157] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions,* 298.

Pretoria by this Mission, is under present circumstances, necessarily of a highly secret nature. No annual review, unless it consists of mere generalities, could omit references to highly classified matter, which obviously could not be disseminated to other Missions without risk of leakage being considerably increased. Rather than draw up annual review with so much information left out for security reasons...I am personally of the opinion that this formality should be dispensed with for the time being."[158] Such developments also significantly decreased the ability of Vorster's small insular policy-making committee to hear a range of options and thus to step outside of the world view U.S. officials were inviting South Africa's leaders to imagine. Vorster's "committee within a committee" now faced a diminished ability to gather correct military intelligence and to make informed decisions about the Angola effort.

The once cautious leaders of South Africa were coming to see Angola as an opportunity to demonstrate that South Africa was not only a reliable and staunchly anti-communist ally but also a key link in the maintenance of the balance-of-power Kissinger's world view so desperately coveted. Angola represented seemed to offer apartheid's leaders the chance to conquer the obstacles impeding South Africa's achievement of its twin goals: Western approval and anti-communist action.[159] Although South African Prime Minister B.J. Vorster had come to power "strongly opposed to South African interventions outside its own borders" and wishing to focus on "reform" at home, he ultimately acquiesced to U.S. pressures and caved to his anxieties about

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[158] "Annual Report: Angola," Report from the South African Consular-General in Luanda to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 11 February 1971, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa).

[159] Meeting with Dr. Carol Anderson. Personal Interview. March 20, 2013.

South Africa's isolation in a hostile world.[160] It is also likely that Vorster was keenly aware of the prevailing public opinion amongst members of his target voting constituency, the white elite that supported him. A 1975 poll conducted amongst this demographic indicated that, to this subsection of the South African population, Western approval was not only important, but paramount. In response to the question "which of the following factors do you consider the greatest threat to South Africa?" more than 84% of those polled selected "lack of understanding in the West." Fittingly, 73% of those polled selected "international communism." Only 9% opted for "black nationalism within the Republic." Such polls indicate that, at least to the South Africans who mattered to Vorster, Western misunderstanding or disapproval was troubling, if not directly threatening.[161] Despite such espoused concerns over South Africa's public image in the West, even South African leaders were forced to admit that, by the 1970s, "conventional methods of propaganda were ill-suited to selling apartheid to a...hostile world."[162] The Vorster government clearly needed a new approach. In the end, for the Vorster administration, "which had campaigned on an anti-communist platform, the opportunity of working with President Ford and Kissinger in combating the spread of Marxism in Angola was too tempting to resist."[163]

Although it remains impossible to know what exactly was communicated by the U.S. to South Africa and to whom exactly it was communicated, what is clear, is that, by 1974, the

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[160] The apartheid government's domestic "reforms" involved a sustained campaign of social engineering on a massive scale that sought to forcibly remove black South Africans from white South Africa and to return them to their designated tribal Homelands. This policy became known as territorial segregation. Westad, *The Global Cold War,* 228.

[161] Giliomee quoting Heribert Adam, "The South African Power-Elite," H. Adam (ed.), *South Africa: Sociological Perspective* (London: Oxford Press, 1971) p. 91.

[162] Giliomee, *The Last Afrikaner Leaders,* 118.

[163] Giliomee, *The Last Afrikaner Leaders*, 118.

C.I.A. and BOSS had been cooperating for decades.[164] According to scholars, "that there was collusion on an informal level between the C.I.A. and BOSS, who regularly worked together, seems beyond dispute."[165] Even the international press could recognize the partnership. An article published in *Africa News* in August 1977, concluded that there had been an "increase in recent years in military contacts between South Africa and the U.S."[166] Similarly, the British *Guardian* noted "the C.I.A. had made arrangements with the South African Secret Services whereby they cooperate closely."[167] Meanwhile, C.I.A. Angolan Task Force Director John Stockwell corroborates this reality by stating that the Agency was "by nature more comfortable with the South African secret service than with the black liberation movements."[168] Indeed, the U.S.'s automatic knee-jerk rejection of any form of cooperation with many black liberation movements and its natural comfort with BOSS might also be explained by the influence of racial hierarchical thinking in informing how American policy makers construed the world.

Documentary evidence also confirms that the relationship between South Africa and the U.S. ran far deeper than was publicly admitted or freely discussed. Sources also demonstrate that the U.S. government remained highly sensitive to public exposure or press discussions of this relationship. Perhaps no document is more indicative of the general tone of the relationship unfolding between the U.S. and South Africa than a report by Pik Botha, which summarizes remarks made by the U.S. Ambassador to South Africa at the United Nations. The report

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[164] Graham, *Covert Collusion?*, 35.

[165] Hallett, *The South African Intervention in Angola,* 44.

[166] *Africa News,* June 26, 1976, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa), 1/33/3. 6 , vol. 35.

[167] *The Guardian*, 19 December, 1975, quoted in Graham, *Covert Collusion?*, 34.

[168] John Stockwell, "Call for Openness as an Antidote to the C.I.A.'s Secrecy ('Poison'), *The New York Times,* May 17, 1978, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa)

describes the Ambassador's speech in which he claimed that, "Washington has not collaborated with South Africa on military or naval matters for over a decade and has no intention of beginning such cooperation in the future." Meanwhile, Botha wrote on his personal copy of these remarks, "it seems to me that military contact between our two countries will have to continue to be conducted off-stage."[169] U.S.- South African relations were coming to exhibit a troubling double standard in which the U.S. government spoke two different languages to South Africa: a public one and a confidential one. An episode from 1975 substantiates this claim. At the event, a luncheon held at the exact time Kissinger and the C.I.A. would have been in the middle of their confidential and crucial communications with Vorster's subcommittee, Kay K. Katzen of the U.S. Mission to the U.N. told South African officials that they would "be out of their minds if they involved themselves in Angola."[170] Clearly, what the U.S. government was saying publicly and through its formal diplomatic channels simply did not align with what South African leaders felt the U.S. and the C.I.A. had communicated to those highest up in the South African government in confidence. Apartheid's leaders chose, or were convinced to choose, the version of events offered by Kissinger and his C.I.A. colleagues.

By the fall of 1975, South African officials seemed to genuinely believe that they had captured the U.S.'s support and even, perhaps, its elusive understanding. Internal memos circulating within the South African Department of Foreign Affairs noted that "a commitment by the United States to South Africa has been publicly made. The already existing dialogue

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[169] Report by the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, October 31, 1974, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa), 1/33/3. vol. 29.

[170] "Luncheon with Mr. Katzen," (U.S. Mission), 1975, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa), 1/33/6. vol. 35.

between Prime Minister Vorster and State Department policy makers is now above-board and clear-cut."[171]

South Africa's appraisal of the situation in Angola was likely also bolstered by the close relationship the SADF and BOSS continued to retain with other North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) powers. The depth of this relationship, like that of the U.S.-South African one, far exceeded the depth and scope admitted by both sides to the public and to the press. For example, a copious trail of correspondence between South African Department of Foreign Affairs officials traces the planning of a trip in 1973 for two high level NATO members to South Africa to inspect naval defense sites. Ultimately, however, after these plans were exposed to the international press, the trip was cancelled -despite the existence of purchased itineraries, plane tickets, and car services. NATO leaders cited "political impossibility" and "embarrassment" as the cause of the last-minute cancellation.[172] Nonetheless, this isolated incident proved symbolic of the general state of South African relations with the West, a complicated balancing act between strategic necessity and public embarrassment. In this case, however, it proved so publicly risky for NATO to be seen fraternizing with apartheid South Africa, that NATO leaders chose to prioritize public image concerns over the supposed strategic objectives of the trip.

By early summer, 1975, South Africa nonetheless perceived support from Western allies and hoped to demonstrate its centrality as a bastion for maintaining the balance-of-power in Southern Africa. It was within this context that the plans for South Africa's military incursion

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[171] "Betoging Teen Suid-Afrika Oor Angola," Telegram from Embassy of South Africa to Department of Foreign Affairs, May 25, 1976, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa), 1/33/3.

[172] Letter from the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, "Courtesy Visas: Admiral and Mrs. G Koudijs- Tour File," 23 January 1973, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa), B 21/3/72 Vol. 9/53.

into Angola were forged. In turn, South African officials seemed to believe that Kissinger was more willing to work with the Vorster administration than he had been its predecessors. The South African Department of Foreign Affairs quoted Kissinger as stating that "whereas his predecessors, especially (former Prime Minister) Henrik Verwoerd could be loosely defined as Nazis, Vorster is definitely not one." Instead, Kissinger allegedly saw Vorster as more receptive to adopting a policy "more acceptable to the U.S. and the U.K. in the context of countering Soviet influence in Africa."[173] Pretoria saw for the U.S. a crucial role not only in resolving the Angola issue but also in helping to elevate South Africa's status as a member of the global community. For an isolated South Africa, "it was good... to be cooperating with a big force like the U.S. even though it was clandestine."[174]

The decision to launch the new military initiative, like most of the South African government's decisions over the coming years, would be made by a small subcommittee under Vorster's leadership. The committee included van den Bergh (head of BOSS) and P.W. Botha, Minister of Defense. This small committee, like its U.S. counterpart, made a number of early and serious intelligence failures. Hermann Giliomee explains that, "strangely enough, both Vorster's sub-committee and the C.I.A. rarely consulted the South African military on South Africa's strategic objectives and the means of obtaining them." General Constand Viljoen reported that "only once" was the actual military consulted for "strategic advice and information on ways in which we could succeed in a joint operation."[175] Such claims support the argument

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[173] "Secret Report: Recent Developments in U.S. S.A. Relations," October 5, 1973, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa), 1/33/3. vol. 31.

[174] General Constand Viljoen quoted in *Good Guys, Bad Guys*, produced by Martin Smith, performed by Jeremy Isaacs (Burbank, CA: Turner Original Productions, 1998), VHS.

[175] General Constand Viljoen, fax message, May 18, 2011 quoted in Giliomee *The Last Afrikaner Leaders,* 127.

initially made by General Viljoen (the Commander of the South African forces in Angola) that, "for the Vorster government, the fighting in Angola was never a military war in the traditional sense of the word. Its military objectives were always subordinate to political objectives."[176] In retrospect, it seems that Viljoen's arguments were largely substantiated and that it was the United States that played the central role in inviting South Africa to imagine the political dimensions afforded by intervention in Angola. Scholar Giliomee underscores this assertion when he states that the Angolan affairs exposed "the weaknesses of the Vorster government's decision-making process" allowing "unconventional diplomacy to fatally disrupt the flow of dependable intelligence and analyses."[177] The evidence suggests that the Vorster administration made its Angola decisions based not on military intelligence, but based on pressure and encouragement from Kissinger and the C.I.A.

In line with scholarly arguments that South African leaders construed war in Angola as first and foremost a political exercise, the archival evidence supports the claim that Vorster's regime placed an enormous premium on its relationship with the United States. A South African Foreign Ministry policy evaluation from 1973 stated that South Africa's "relations with the U.S. are of considerable importance to us" because "the U.S. believes in 'communication' with us in a world which increasingly seeks our isolation."[178] In considering their policy options, South African officials recognized that "one of our strategic options, and indeed the one we have traditionally selected, is to follow our natural instincts and align ourselves unreservedly with the West, on the side of democracy against communism. Inherently, because of our history and

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[176] Giliomee, *The Last Afrikaner Leaders*, 132.

[177] Giliomee *The Last Afrikaner Leaders,* 133.

[178] "RSA Se Strategiese Opsies" 1975, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa), 3/33/3 vol. 30.

institutions, we cannot help adopting this kind of attitude."[179] Along the same lines, a policy statement by the South African Department of Foreign Affairs noted that "South Africa has always sought to maintain the friendliest ties with the U.S." The document explained that South Africans officials "cherish(ed) the long history of friendly association, value(d) the traditional and historical links, and have always acknowledged, and supported U.S. leadership of the free world." In turn, South African officials felt their country had "given generous support to the U.S. not only in its leadership of Western defense but also where the security of the U.S. itself was at issue."[180] It is tempting to read Angola directly into this statement, but the document does not further elaborate on South Africa's direct contributions to assisting the U.S. in the military and defense realms.

By August, 1975, the first shipments of arms from Pretoria began to arrive in Angola. Weeks later, South African special forces arrived in the country to offer training and logistical support to FNLA troops. Relations between South Africa and Jonas Savimbi and his UNITA movement soon blossomed after Generals van den Bergh, Breytenbach, and Viljoen met the revolutionary leader in Kinshasa for the first time in September. Breytenbach, leader of the South African special forces, left the meeting describing Savimbi as "the new star in the sky," a figure who understood "Pretoria's need to smash SWAPO" and who emphasized "an anti-communist bloc that would include South Africa, Angola, Zaire, and Zambia."[181] In the following weeks military instructors from both the C.I.A. and South Africa arrived in Angola in

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[179] "RSA Se Strategiese Opsies" 1975, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa), 3/33/3 vol. 30.

[180] "V.S.A.-S.A. Verhoudings," April 5, 1976, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa), 1/33/3. vol. 33.

[181] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 295.

increasingly numbers. Scholar Piero Gleijeses explains that "the parallelism between Pretoria and Washington is striking, both launched their covert operations at roughly the same time- in mid-July- and both had military presence in Angola by early September."[182] John Stockwell asserts that "South Africa came into the conflict cautiously at first, watching the expanding U.S. program and timing their steps to the CIA's."[183] Soon, "South Africans and Americans work(ed) side by side, each under his own cover."[184]

The senior elements of the South African government, namely Vorster, the head of the South African Defense Forces, Constand Viljoen, and Defence Minister P.W. Botha, "always insisted they they only brought South Africa into the Angolan conflict at the request of...the U.S." South African leaders seemed to genuinely believe they had American support, at least of the people who mattered, at each critical juncture. Pik Botha asserts in personal interviews that "the United States, at the highest level, requested assistance or requested that South Africa to go in and assist UNITA," saying that the focus of the clandestine partnership was always on "Soviet penetration."[185] South African officials reported that "in October, 1973 Dr. Kissinger told our Minister that the United States 'sometimes had to say things to placate African countries' but that it would avoid 'harassing' South Africa and would always act with 'goodwill and understanding.'"[186] Internal memos circulating within the Department of Foreign Affairs also

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[182] Glejeses, *Conflicting Missions,* 297.

[183] Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies*, 185.

[184] Jan Breytenbach, *Forged in Battle*, 21, quoted in Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 296.

[185] John Stockwell quoted in *Good Guys, Bad Guys*, produced by Martin Smith, performed by Jeremy Isaacs (Burbank, CA: Turner Original Productions, 1998), VHS.

[186] "Secret Report: Recent Developments in U.S. S.A. Relations," October 5, 1973, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa), 1/33/3. vol. 31.

indicated a feeling of mutual understanding between the countries, arguing that "Angola predicted this relationship; Kissinger confirmed it."[187]

However, the South African government did pay close attention to the complicated and divisive debates raging between the various divisions of the U.S. government over its Angola policy. Indeed, South African officials demonstrated an ability to navigate this complicated landscape to their advantage, realizing that the various sections of the U.S. government did not need to agree on how to treat South Africa for relations to proceed. At many critical junctures, the South African government even shared Kissinger's desire to bypass the State Department in crafting policies. South African officials considered "the attitude and actions of the Africa Bureau" on occasions to be "an impediment to the maintenance of normal relations with the United States" believing that the Africa Bureau "appears to be going out of its way to place as many restrictions as possible on U.S.-South Africa contacts."[188] In a secret report circulated within the Department of Foreign Affairs, officials noted that "the intransigent attitude of the Africa Bureau has seriously eroded the value of the State Department as a channel between the South African and U.S. governments. As a result of this negatives attitude, two U.S. agencies (the American National Weather Service and the Energy Research and Development Agency) have in recent months purposefully avoided the State Department when seeking to make contact with authorities. In the other direction, the South African Mission which recently visited the U.S. to negotiate the purchase of three Boeing 747s bypassed the Embassy in Washington, 'for

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[187] "Betoging Teen Suid-Afrika Oor Angola," Telegram from Embassy of South Africa to Department of Foreign Affairs, May 25, 1976, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa), 1/33/3, vol. 31.

[188] Secret Report: Recent Developments in U.S. S.A. Relations, October 5, 1973, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa), 1/33/3. vol. 31.

fear of State Department interference.'"[189] Clearly, the South African government recognized the potential benefits afforded by opting to communicate with certain branches of the U.S. government over others in achieving its desired ends.

On other occasions, South African officials even deliberately approached sections of the U.S. government, namely key executive branch members, who they felt were more favorable to South African interests. For example, on October 10, 1974, the South African Foreign Minister complained to Acting Secretary of State Robert S. Ingersoll, that "the recent State Department publication...states U.S. policy towards South Africa in very harsh terms." In particular, he voiced his concern that the document used the word "abhorrent" in describing the relationship between the two countries. This, according to the South Africa Minister, was of great concern because "it was not in accord with the spirit of the Secretary of State's (Kissinger's) assurances." To this complaint, the South African government received a promise that the matter would be looked into. In fact, in October, 1973, Kissinger even assured the South African Minister that he would curb any "missionary zeal" on the part of his officers in the State Department and block efforts to "harass South Africa."[190] The South African government seemed to be of the opinion that, though not always perfectly effective, Kissinger did verbally commit in private meetings to defending South Africa from criticism by other branches of the U.S. government- namely the State Department- as well as from international organizations.

By October, 1975, it appeared that C.I.A. and South African weapons, training and military instructors were still not enough to ensure UNITA and the FNLA the upper-hand as

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[189] Secret Report: Recent Developments in U.S. S.A. Relations, October 5, 1973, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa), 1/33/3. vol. 31.

[190] Notes on talk between Minister of Foreign Affairs and U.S. Secretary of State, Dr. Kissinger, October 5, 1973, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa), 1/33/3. vol. 31.

Angola's independence approached. Instead, on the ground, "the MPLA was winning."[191] By October 1975, U.S. officials quoted Botha telling them that "former Prime Minister John Vorster was assured at the highest level on the American side that they would support us and that they wish us to do it (invade Angola)." On October 14, South African acquiesced to these requests, launching a ground invasion of Angola. This so-called Column Zulu advanced at a terrifying speed "smashing through scant and ineffective resistance" at a rate of forty-five miles a day.[192] The official South African statement concerning the incursion defended South Africa's action as necessary response to "the chaos and conditions which...made it possible for SWAPO to freely cross the border, to commit deeds of murder...and to disappear again into the chaotic southern Angola." South African officials also claimed that refugees crossing the border told of Cuban presence as well as "Cuban ammunition and weapon dumps." They noted that, simultaneously, "UNITA and the FNLA appealed to the SADF forces for support against the communist infiltration in Angola."[193] While most of the reasoning contained within the South African government's description of its involvement in Angola is false, the actual final impetus that sparked the military incursion nonetheless remains largely shrouded in mystery.[194]

By November 7, following South Africa's string of impressive military victories, only the "fourth and final phase of the South African military plan was left: Luanda." The SADF prepared to devote its full efforts and resources to the Central Front and to achieving this goal. This crucial date also marked the day Cuban soldiers boarded two planes destined for Angola,

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[191] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 298.

[192] Ibid., 300.

[193] "Nature and Extent of the SADF's Involvement in Angola," The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa), 1/33/3. vol. 66, 3.

[194] Giliomee, *The Last Afrikaner Leaders*, 125

offering support to the increasingly tenuous position of the MPLA and launching the Cuban counteroffensive, Operation Carlota. Likely, "Castro would have preferred to wait until independence, but the battle of Catengue (where MPLA forces were routed badly) changed his mind...It was there that he understood that the South Africans had invaded...and that unless he acted at once, the South Africans would take Luanda."[195] More troubling to Castro was that he "was convinced that the United States was involved in the South African invasion." He later told Senator Frank Church that he could "not believe that South Africa...always so cautious on such matters would have sent forces without the complicity of Kissinger."[196]

Meanwhile, amidst the gathering storm of military confrontation to come, on November 11, Angolans celebrated their official independence day. In a ceremony "at which no Angolans were present" the Portuguese High Commissioner handed power over to the "Angolan people" abiding by the policy outlined in the Alvor Accords that power was not to be handed directly to any of the three liberation movements.[197] Just outside the capital, meanwhile, South African troops continued their advance; the political aims of the incursion seeming safe and substantiated to South Africa's apartheid leadership. Dr. Hilgard Muller, the South African Minister of Foreign Affairs, delivered a sunny New Year's message to the South African people to ring in the New Year. He emphasized that "concerted efforts to isolate South Africa are verging on collapse" directly citing the situation in Angola as evidence supporting his claims.[198]

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[195] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 305.

[196] Church to Carter, August 12, 1977, 2, enclosed in Dodson to Hutcheson, Aug. 17, 1977, FOIA 1977/1633 and interview with García Márquez Risquet, *Operación Carlota*, 15, quoted in Gleijeses, *Conflicting* Missions*,* 305.

[197] Ibid., 311.

[198] "New Year's Message by Dr. Hillgard Muller, Minister of Foreign Affairs," December 18, 1975, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa), 1/33/3. vol. 31.

Ironically, however, just months after Muller's optimistic message, South Africa's military fortunes began to change. A series of sustained military victories by the "South African juggernaut" soon quieted to a halt. The first public sign of trouble came in May, 1976, when South African Defense Minister Botha told the South African Parliament that the SADF had not captured Luanda because "the Americans told him to stop."[199] In fact, Botha's statements directly contradicted the military realities on the ground where South African troops were being thwarted in their numerous attempts to advance northward and to capture the capital. South African leaders were scrambling to publicly explain these military failures. It was becoming clear that "the Americans who planned the covert operation in Angola had overlooked Castro...and Cuba did not even factor into American calculations."[200] Kissinger recalled in his memoirs that "the intervention of Cuban combat forces came as a total surprise."[201] The United States and, by extension, South Africa, were slow to respond to mounting intelligence that indicated a stronger and more effective Cuban presence in the country. By late November, Washington sent two signals that indicated it finally understood the situation on the ground in Angola had changed dramatically and irrevocably. First, the U.S. government approached the Soviet Union with a request for mutual restraint in Angola and second, the administration increased its aid to UNITA and the FNLA.[202] Now, a South African force that thought it was rapidly approaching the light at the end of the tunnel of the entire military operation discovered it was looking directly at open conflict with the Cubans.

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[199] H. H. Schwarz, Republic of South Africa, *House of Assembly Debates*, May 6, 1876, cols. 623-24, quoted in Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 321.

[200] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 329.

[201] Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 815.

[202] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions,* 331.

Meanwhile, comments by the international press and even by usually tight-lipped South African officials who were frustrated by these military losses only further threatened the operation; "the big lie was unraveling."[203] The South African press in *The Cape Times* soon quoted General Viljoen stating "we're not in it alone. You'd be surprised to know who's in it with us."[204] Even South African officials were having an increasingly difficult time towing the line regarding South African "non-involvement" in Angola. The South African Ambassador wrote to Pik Botha stating "we are aware that very little news has been permitted to appear in our own press about what is happening (in Angola) and we do not wish to question the reasons for this, which are no doubt well founded. But our problem overseas is knowing how to react to questions based on reports in overseas newspapers, not subject to restriction at all. Up to a point we can try to discount them as communist propaganda...but there are circumstances where this has been impossible."[205] For South Africa, there seemed to be no easy answers for how to deal with its emerging public relations crisis.

Soon, even the Soviet press began to make references to the "imperialist alliance" unfolding in Angola. Some of these accounts, only recently made available to scholars by the release of the back files of the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, reference Soviet perceptions at the time of the U.S.-South African relationship as one of outright collusion. *The Daily Report: Soviet Union* published on July 14, 1975 reported that South Africa's Prime Minister had recently been "using and overusing words that are new in his political vocabulary"

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[203] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 321.

[204] A. Sparks, *A Mind of South Africa* (London, 1991), 306, quoted in Graham, *Covert Collusion?*, 34.

[205] "South African Military Involvement in Angola," Letter from the South African Embassy to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, January 14, 1976, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa), 42.

such as "détente." Rather than read this as a shift in South African policies, the Soviet newspaper condemned the South African regime as a "symbol of racism, apartheid, discrimination, oppression and repression" stating that changing rhetoric was obviously evidence of "backing by NATO circles."[206] Along the same lines, the *Soviet Daily* report accused the U.S. government of "distorting" what was really going on in Angola, a truth-hiding effort the Soviet press reported was like "trying to hide a burning candle in a heap of hay."[207] An article that ran in the 1976 *Soviet News* stated that, "from the beginning of Africa's liberation, the U.S. ruling circles have done everything in their power...to replace the old colonialism of West European imperialism by their own neo-colonialism, with the former colonial bosses playing second fiddle." The article cited what was unfolding in Angola as evidence that the U.S. sought "to save the racialist regimes...Washington is interfering in the affairs of the Continent in the interests of the racialist cliques which are in power in South Africa."[208] Though, of course, the Soviet Union would have its own interests in disseminating such a story, this evidence indicates, that, even at the time of the South African invasion of Angola, it was possible to make the argument that South Africa and the U.S. were involved in a collusive partnership.

The international press, and, by extension, the public, was also putting together the pieces. A 1976 telegram discussing the policies of the Export-Import Bank of the United States (Ex-Imbank) towards South Africa recognized public perceptions that increasingly "view U.S.

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[206] Yuri Potemkin, "South Africa Strengthening Ties with NATO," *Daily Report: Soviet Union*, July 10, 1975: H2, The Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) Full-Text Archive.

[207] Kim Gerasimov, "Western Intervention Scored." *Daily Report: Soviet Union*, December 22, 1975, The Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) Full-Text Archive.

[208] "Kissinger-Vorster Talks Do Not Help African People" *Soviet News,* September 14, 1976, The Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) Full-Text Archive.

intervention in Angola as an unholy alliance with South Africa."[209] Public documents and statements from the various Angolan rebel movements also highlighted the relationship. A UNITA pamphlet explained that the Angolan conflict was "waged against the backdrop of imperialist superpower collusion and that South Africa, encouraged by the U.S., made her inroad into (the) Angolan melee."[210] As the international press discovered and exposed more information about the South African military incursion, a large disconnect was emerging between these press accounts and the public statements offered by the apartheid government.

Nonetheless, as late as December, 1975, the South African government continued to refute assertions that South African troops had invaded Angola. In an interview with Prime Minister B.J. Vorster published in *The Sunday Telegraph* in response to the question "what is the position in Angola at the moment, Will South African forces be withdrawn?" the Prime Minister answered "I want to say specifically that South African forces are not involved in any fighting in Angola at the moment."[211] Following reports by the Minister of the Interior of Angola that "South African forces armed with machine guns have already deeply entered into our territory" Pik Botha told government officials to report that "there is no truth in the current allegation" and that the "Consular-General has been requested to make official denials reiterating it is our policy

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[209] "Regarding Eximbank's Policy toward South Africa," Telegram, February 9, 1976, The Digital National Security Archive.

[210] "UNITA: Angola's National Liberation Struggle Through 1976," 17, quoted in Hallett, *The South African Intervention in Angola,* 17.

[211] Transcript of *The Sunday Telegraph* Interview with the Honorable B.J. Vorster, March 14, 1976, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa), 1/33/3.

to respect territory of neighboring and other states." Furthermore, it was instructed for the relevant officials to "please make a similar denial to the Portuguese government."[212]

South African officials did realize, however, that the truth would be discovered, and that, when it was, "the credibility of the South African government" would likely suffer from this "cover-up of the Angolan adventure."[213] They debated amongst themselves what to do in cases such as the situation that occurred on January 9 when the *London Times* interviewed a young South African captured in Angola. The young soldier publicly shared all details about his capture and the circumstances that brought him to Angola. South African officials watched with concern noting his report "conveys an impression of unvarnished accuracy, very difficult to refute."[214] Such official debates over the difficulties of maintaining the South African façade would soon be resolved permanently.

Amid swirling controversy over whether or not South African troops had invaded Angola, on December 13, 1975, the first South African prisoners of war in a quarter of a century were unveiled to the public and to the international press. Captured by Cubans in central Angola they represented "irrefutable proof" that Pretoria was lying about its involvement in Angola.[215] As public revelations about South Africa's incursion grew, the South African government was

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[212] Telegram from Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Pretoria to the South African Ambassador in Lisbon, Portugal, November 7, 1975, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa), 1/33/3.

[213] Telegram from the South African Embassy in West Germany to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, July 2, 1976, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa), 1/33/3, vol. 29.

[214] Such claims become starker given the fact that P.W. Botha kept an extensive collection of press cuttings, which he stored directly next to South African official statements on the issues. Thus, in many cases, the South African Department of Foreign Affairs archival record reads as a charge by a foreign press outlet followed by a denial in the form of the account offered by the South African government- the disconnect between reality and the official line of the apartheid government is indeed striking when displayed in this format. "South African Military Involvement in Angola," Letter from the South African Embassy to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, January 14, 1976, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa), 42.

[215] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions,* 322.

realizing that U.S. support might not be as unwavering as they had hoped to believe. South African leaders were forced to confront the reality that the U.S. would not assist South Africa in facing its recent military and public relations troubles. The South African Department of Foreign Affairs analysis of the situation realized that the U.S.'s hands were tied, noting that "what they consider as necessary strategically at the same time seems to be politically impossible to them." South African officials realized that the U.S. "dared not...explain the essentials to their public at home."[216]

Even the order that finally came for South African troops to retreat from Angola was shrouded in secrecy. While the U.S. Network Radio reported that South African troops would begin withdrawing from Angola in 48 hours, South African officials were instructed to "please delete from our diary LOC 40" the radio report detailing this very decision as "the Minister of Defence has prohibited publication of this news in terms of the Defence Act."[217] The South African government continued to attempt to retain strict press censorship controls over the entire affair.

It was only later, in subsequent interviews, that Botha and Vorster would both assert that South African troops crossed into Angola "with the approval and knowledge of the Americans" but that "when we had nearly reached the climax, we were ruthlessly left in the lurch."[218] Vorster also claimed that "South Africa would never have intervened" without the "expressed understanding that the U.S. would continue to arm the SADF if it suffered heavy losses." In later

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[216] "RSA Se Strategiese Opsies" 1975, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa), 3/33/3 vol. 30.

[217] "LOC 83: Urgent- Confidential Note to Editors," August 1, 1976, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa), 1/22/ 3 vol. 9.

[218] Graham, *Covert Collusion?,* 20.

interviews, when asked whether or not the U.S. had "solicited" South Africa's involvement, Vorster responded that he would not call anyone who said that "a liar."[219]

Ultimately, South Africa's leaders were left to confront the realities of, in the words of General Viljoen, "a Cold War game played with very little integrity- a textbook example of how it should *not* be done."[220] Viljoen's comments strike at the heart of the dilemma high-ranking South African officials faced when dealing with the U.S. from the very beginning: they were caught in a political framework pushing them towards intervention in an increasingly hostile neighborhood but misunderstood the "hazards and fickleness of Western support."[221]

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[219] Graham, *Covert Collusion?,* 21.

[220] Constand Viljoen, Fax message, May 9, 2011 quoted in Giliomee, *The Last Afrikaner Leaders*, 132.

[221] Giliomee, *The Last Afrikaner Leaders,* 133.

Chapter IV: The Unceremonious End of an Intervention: Severing Links and Ties

As late as August, 1975, the U.S. Congress, like the South African and American public, remained largely absent and misinformed about the events transpiring in Angola. Senator Joseph Biden once even admitted that most members of Congress could not discern between "Angola and Mongolia."[222] The depth of congressional ignorance about Angola was further perpetuated by the fact that the meetings of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Africa were often attended by only one senator: Richard Clark. Clark, a Democrat from Iowa, became the first member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with an interest in discerning the realities of what was unfolding in Angola. Eventually, he opted to make his own trip to Africa, and returned "skeptical of CIA briefings."[223] The enormous gulf between what Congress knew of C.I.A. activity and what was really going on in Angola can be seen in Clark's statements offered as late as August of 1975. Arguably the member of the Senate most interested in the U.S.'s Africa policy, Clark stated in a 1975 press conference he was not aware of any U.S. arms finding their way to Angola.[224] Stockwell also affirms that high-ranking C.I.A. officials were "feeding Congress patently false information about the ongoing Angolan operation and depriving them of the full information which they needed to perform their constitutional role."[225]

Increasingly, however, Clark began to shepherd the U.S. Senate towards heightened knowledge of the Angola situation, beginning the process of unraveling executive branch lies and misinformation. By December, 1975, the executive branch again requested approval for Angolan

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[222] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 330.

[223] Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies*, 229.

[224] Herbert Levin, *Codel Clark: Press Conference*, 1975, The Digital National Security Archive.

[225] Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies,* 229.

expenditures, but this time, with the "stench of U.S. collusion with Pretoria hanging in the air" Congress "paid attention" and refused to approve their appropriation.[226] This termination of funds, accomplished by passing the Clark and Tunney Amendments, "represented the high point of a congressional revolt against the anti-Communist ethos of the Cold War and executive authority in foreign policy."[227]

Kissinger reacted quickly to such congressional oversight attempts, appearing before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations to argue that "security in Angola depended upon equilibrium not surrender." He urged Congress to cooperate, or perhaps acquiesce, to the executive branch's demands with an "appreciation of the larger interests involved and with a sense of national responsibility."[228] Hoping to assuage growing disillusionment in Congress over South Africa's racial policies, Kissinger affirmed publicly that South Africa had intervened in Angola "without consultation with the United States."[229] He even went so far as to say that "to us, the South African intervention represented...a political embarrassment."[230]

Kissinger also challenged the Senate's decision to block the funding for the C.I.A.'s covert program in Angola on ideological grounds. To the Secretary of State, "America's modest direct strategic and economic interests in Angola are not the central issue." Instead, "the question is whether America still maintains the resolve to act responsibly as a great power, prepared to

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[226] The lack of knowledge about C.I.A. activity is evidenced by the fact that the only public discussions of the policy were those that took place as part of this Senate hearing. Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution*, 263.

[227] R. D. Johnson, "The Unintended Consequences of Congressional Reform: The Clark and Tunney Amendments and U.S. Policy toward Angola." *Diplomatic History* 27 (2002): 215. doi: 10.1111/1467-7709.00348.

[228] *Angola: Security Depends Upon Equilibrium Not Surrender*, Senate Subcommittee on Africa, Washington D.C. (March 1, 1976) (testimony of Henry A. Kissinger), 290.

[229] Kissinger *Years of Renewal,* 292.

[230] Ibid., 293.

face a challenge when it arises, knowing that preventive action now may make unnecessary a more costly response later." In a statement indicative of the mindset that had dominated how Kissinger and his C.I.A. colleagues construed the situation in Angola from its earliest days, he further stated "let there be no mistake about it- the culprits in the tragedy that is now unfolding in Angola are the Soviet Union and its client state, Cuba."[231] Gerald Ford added his objections to this unexpected termination of C.I.A. funding by warning the Senate that this "abdication of responsibility...would have the gravest consequences for the long-term position of the United States and for international order in general."[232]

The U.S. executive branch was quickly backpedaling from any commitment to Pretoria and accelerating its efforts to sever any suspected links with the internationally vilified apartheid regime. As Congress became increasingly more vigilant about U.S. involvement in Angola, Kissinger and the C.I.A. shrank even further from disclosing the very details congressional oversight efforts desperately sought. "From Kissinger down, U.S. officials stoutly maintained that there had been no cooperation whatsoever between the United States and South Africa and that C.I.A. activities within Angola had been limited to intelligence gathering. Neither statement was true."[233] Again, as they had at multiple instances throughout the Angola affair, the realities of the U.S.-South African relationship did not align with the rhetoric.

Meanwhile, as revelations of the U.S. role in Angola became increasing public, the war itself was going badly for the U.S. alliance. The Secretary for Foreign Affairs in South Africa

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[231] *Angola: Security Depends Upon Equilibrium Not Surrender*, Senate Subcommittee on Africa, Washington D.C. (March 1, 1976) (testimony of Henry A. Kissinger), 290.

[232] Gerald R. Ford: "Remarks on Senate Action To Prohibit United States Assistance to Angola.," December 19, 1975. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=5447.

[233] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 296.

noted that "anything can happen in Angola in this Year of Grace, 1975."[234] Indeed, MPLA forces, with substantial Cuban assistance, routed South African troops attempting to advance on the capital of Luanda. Meanwhile, South African leaders watched in disbelief as the U.S. Congress cut aid to the C.I.A.'s Angola program, leaving the SADF to face its recent string of military losses alone.

By March, 1976, South African troops commenced their retreat. Scholar Piero Gleijeses argues that the decision to retreat was driven largely by the fact that South Africa's leaders feared their country's now-heightened isolation.[235] The apartheid government, according to a South African Congress member, found itself "naked in the world." The *Cape Times* reported that "when the chips were down, there was not a single state prepared to stand with South Africa."[236] A South African Broadcasting Company report proclaimed that South African officials harbored a "long-standing assumption that the U.S. can kick us about as it pleases and yet count on us...for diplomatic assistance, for strategic materials and facilities, for protecting the Cape route and for stemming alone, as in the case of Angola, the communist tide of the subcontinent."[237] The military retreat thus marked the unceremonious end to what South African journalist Colin Legum called "the most traumatic event in South Africa's history since the Anglo-Boer War at the turn of the century."[238]

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[234] "Developments in Angola," Letter from the South African Consulate-General in Luanda, Angola to The Secretary for Foreign Affairs, April 23, 1975, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa). 1/22/3 vol. 5.

[235] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 340.

[236] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions,* 341.

[237] "South Africa" Report by South African Broadcasting Corporation, September 17, 1976, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa).

[238] Colin Legum and Tony Hodges, *After Angola: The War over Southern Africa* (London: Africana Publishing 1976), 35.

For the apartheid government, the entire episode would prove disastrous, with negative consequences reaching far beyond the military humiliation it currently faced. Ultimately, according to scholar Piero Gleijeses "Pretoria lost more than international standing in Angola." As "the tidal wave unleashed by Cuban victory washed over South Africa" SWAPO further entrenched itself, amplifying its cross-border raids against South Africa's Namibian occupation and igniting the very vicious guerilla movement of Pretoria's nightmares.[239] Meanwhile, Angola had also "blurred the image of South African and mercenary invincibility." South Africa's apartheid leaders were forced to confront the uncomfortable reality that they had been defeated by non-white forces. Within the span of a single month, black South Africans would cheer Mozambique's independence and celebrate the SADF's defeat in Angola watching "the White Giant retreat for the first time in recent history."[240] Just three months later, in June, 1976, the internal dissent swirling within South African society exploded into the Soweto riots. 15,000 protestors marched through Soweto in protest to the apartheid system, a resurgence in popular protest ignited by the new government decree that mandated that half of the curriculum in black schools be taught in Afrikaans, regarded as the language of the oppressor.[241] South Africa would soon descend into a vortex of violence, with American televisions tuned nightly to horrific images of unarmed black demonstrators brutalized at the hands of South African police and soldiers.[242]

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[239] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 346.

[240] Ibid., 346.

[241] Nigel Worden, *The Making of Modern South Africa: Conquest, Apartheid*, *Democracy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 129.

[242] *Have You Heard From Johannesburg?: The World Witnesses the Soweto Uprising*, Independent Lens: PBS Video, accessed March 20, 2013, http://video.pbs.org/video/2185498596/.

As South African troops withdrew from Angola and South African leaders expressed their feelings of betrayal by the U.S. government, Kissinger was forced to search for other options in Angola. The C.I.A. scrambled to recruit a mercenary army to continue the confrontation with the Soviets over "a country that was of little importance to either of us."[243] South African officials were left to again grapple with these U.S. decisions. In a 1976 letter, the South African Consular-General asks the Department of Foreign Affairs what to do with petitions from potential American mercenary soldiers wishing to fight in Angola. A hand-written note attached to the letter raises moral qualms, pondering whether "it is proper for our Mission to be involved in mercenary recruitment at all?"[244] Because the U.S. government prohibited the use of the word "mercenary" in "cables, memoranda, in files and at headquarters and in the field...thereafter mercenaries who were hired and sent to Angola were called 'foreign military advisers.'"[245] Despite such last-ditch attempts by the U.S. to bolster its Angola alliance, "the military situation turned from bad to disastrous."[246] By February, the C.I.A. began to make "generous payoffs to anyone who had been associated with our side of the Angolan war." Now, "bereft of the South African shield, UNITA and the FNLA promptly crumbled."[247] Meanwhile, the "total bill for the abortive...mercenary program came to $569,805."[248]

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[243] Isaacson, *Kissinger*, 670.

[244] "American Mercenaries in Southern Africa," Letter from the South African Consular-General to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, April 21, 1976, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa).

[245] John Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies*, 183, quoted in Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 334.

[246] Ibid., 233.

[247] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 342.

[248] Ibid., 342.

With the collapse of the mercenary effort, Kissinger turned to blaming Congress and its extended oversight efforts for the entire U.S. failure in Angola. He testified in January 1976 that the administration's policy had begun to pay off when the Senate suddenly "pulled the plug."[249] Looking back, however, scholars have seen the situation differently, targeting Kissinger's own policies as central to U.S. failures in Angola and even condemning the Secretary of State's policies as "amoral." Piero Gleijeses argues that it was "the relentless hostility of the United States (that) forced the MPLA into an unhealthy dependence on the Soviet Union" and "encouraged South Africa to launch its devastating military raids" that would continue well into the 1980s against the MPLA government[250] Indeed, to Gleijeses, although "the United States bore no responsibility for the outbreak of the civil war,...Kissinger did his best to smash the one movement that represented any hope for the future of Angola." Even at the time such developments were unfolding, Robert W. Hultslander, the C.I.A. Station Chief in Launda conceded that he had come "to share...(the) assessment that the MPLA was the best qualified movement to govern Angola."[251] Nonetheless, Hultslander, like many other C.I.A. officers who harbored similar doubts about UNITA and the FNLA's fitness to lead, would forge ahead with the U.S.'s IAFEATURE program.

With the retreat of the last South African troops from Angola in 1976, the South African government was left to "review our relationship with the West."[252] The apartheid regime was

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[249] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 332.

[250] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 359.

[251] "Interview with Robert W. Hultslander, Former CIA Station Chief in Luanda, Angola," Interview by Piero Gleijeses, The National Security Archive, 1998. Accessed April 3, 2013, http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB67/transcript.html.

[252] "RSA Se Strategiese Opsies," 1976, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa), 3/33/3 vol. 30.

forced to admit that "since the Second World War, South Africa has been taken for granted by the West....Whichever way the West might treat us, we could be relied upon to fall into line if there were an East/West crisis." Worse still, South African leaders felt that the West had become "increasingly critical of South Africa's domestic arrangements, which they of all groupings of states, should realize are no concern of theirs." Though they might declare in 1976 that South Africa was "no longer prepared to be taken for granted by the Western Alliance," it seemed that, for South African and U.S. officials alike, the only course of action was to continue, as much as possible, to obscure the details of the clandestine collusion.[253] And, indeed, to a large extent, these officials were successful in meeting their goals; as late at the 1990s it was nearly impossible to talk meaningfully about the covert collusion that had transpired in Angola. "The culture of silence" that enveloped this sensitive episode would endure.[254]

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[253] "RSA Se Strategiese Opsies," 1976, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa), 3/33/3 vol. 30.

[254] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 393.

Conclusion and Parting Observations

This thesis has sought to marshal the primary source evidence available to target an area of historiographical silence. The goal is to understand the realities and delusions that drove the U.S. and South Africa together into a risky, and ultimately unsuccessful, military venture in Angola. I have attempted, as much as is currently possible, to offer a systematic analysis of the events that unfolded between 1974 and 1976. The goal is to analyze the structural and contingent factors and flaws that shaped the policy articulation process on both sides of this clandestine partnership. In short, this thesis represents an attempt to illuminate the internal architecture of covert collusion. Along the way, I have sought to understand how serious structural and institutional flaws became compounded by a range of contingent factors to frame the context in which the U.S. and South Africa interacted in visualizing Angola. At each juncture, I have sought to apply, in many cases for the first time, current historiographical thinking by a range of scholars on a range of Cold War issues to this specific Angola episode. I have also attempted, wherever possible, to continue to widen the window of opportunity created for scholars by the declassification of government documents related to this period. Ultimately, however, where previous historiography has considered the issue from either the U.S. or South African sides, this thesis has attempted to break new ground by holding both the South African and U.S. components of this clandestine relationship within the same frame of analysis.

If nothing else, however, this thesis demonstrates how much still remains to be divulged, disclosed and declassified on both the South African and U.S. sides about what transpired in Angola. There remains, as of yet, “no smoking gun” available that fully details this story of

secrecy, lies, and misinformation; perhaps there never will be.[255] Vorster's comments to the South African Parliament seem to ring almost as true today as they did in 1976 when he said "the Angola matter is an exceptionally delicate matter. Even on this occasion there are things I dare not say." All he dared to admit at the time was that "South Africa's involvement was not an isolated one...others were also involved."[256]

By 1976, it was possible for Ken Owen of *The Star* newspaper to state that South Africa "can count on nobody in what it pleased the Minister of Defence to call 'the Free World.'" Instead, according to such commentators, the apartheid government was "utterly and completely bereft of friends and allies in the West."[257] Ultimately, however, the course of history would prove Owen wrong. The U.S. and South Africa would continue their troubled, flawed, and deeply conflictual partnership well into the 1980s. By 1981, the U.S. was still struggling to resolve the inconsistencies and hypocrisies that had long defined bilateral relations. This time, the U.S. attempted a controversial policy known as "constructive engagement," which sought to "work quietly with the South African white minority government, stressing common strategic interests, empathizing with white fears, and utilizing a unilateral rather than a multilateral approach in diplomatic negotiations."[258] The U.S. government again partnered quietly with an apartheid administration it privately realized was unlikely to ever undertake the reforms necessary to end its oppressive apartheid system. Ten years later, the U.S. government seemed

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[255] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 387.

[256] Ibid., 387.

[257] Ken Owen. "Angola: Time to Face the Facts," *The Star*, 1976, The Republic of South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs Archive (Pretoria, South Africa), 1/22/3.

[258] Pauline H. Baker, *The United States and South Africa: the Reagan Years* (New York: Ford Foundation, 1989), 3.

no closer to resolving the fundamental disconnect in U.S.- South African relations than it had been at the time of the Angolan Civil War.

By 1984, Archbishop Desmond Tutu called "constructive engagement...an abomination, an unmitigated disaster" and described continued instances of U.S.-South African "collaboration as immoral, evil, and totally un-Christian."[259] Eventually, as it had in 1976, Congress would again disagree with the executive branch over its handling of the South Africa issue, this time overriding a presidential veto by Ronald Reagan to finally impose the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act on South Africa.[260] With the imposition of such economic sanctions "constructive engagement had officially lost its domestic battle for survival." A Panel appointed by the Reagan State Department delivered a shocking epitaph blatantly stating that the policy "has failed to achieve its objectives."[261] South Africa and the U.S.'s troubled relationship continued, but now, finally, amidst widespread criticism and public disgust, the U.S. would take a tougher stance on affecting change.

By the 1970s and 1980s the rigid model of apartheid was breaking down in South Africa, accelerated, in part, by events such as the failed Angola catastrophe. Domestically, "the spiral of resistance and repression intensified" and "by the mid-1980s, virtual civil war existed in many parts of the country."[262] As "international condemnation grew and economic sanctions began to bite" the South African State President finally committed to commencing negotiations with the newly unbanned anti-apartheid movements. Eventually, the apartheid state would fall

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[259] Derrick Z. Jackson, "Reagan's Heart of Darkness," *The Boston Globe*, (2004): 1, accessed January 24, 2009, http://www.boston.com/news/globe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2004/06/09/reagans_heart_of_darkness/.

[260] Thomson, *U.S. Foreign Policy towards Apartheid South Africa,* 129.

[261] Thomson, *U.S. Foreign Policy towards Apartheid South Africa*, 147.

[262] Worden, *The Making of Modern South Africa,* 131.

completely. South Africa would draft a new democratic constitution and hold its first free and democratic elections in 1994. The African National Congress with Nelson Mandela at the helm were elected to lead the "new South Africa," a multiracial democracy Desmond Tutu called "the Rainbow Nation."[263]

In turn, the years since 1976 also marked enormous changes for the other powers associated with the Angola conflict. Scholar Piero Gleijeses observes that "the Soviet empire has collapsed, the Soviet economic subsidy has evaporated...and Cuba is bankrupt."[264] The time may finally be ripe for all relevant governments to divulge their secrets and break the "culture of silence" that has enveloped the Angola affair.[265] Indeed, it is becoming possible now, for the first time, to catch glimpses of what unfolded during these years.

Most recently, for example, South African scholar Christopher Saunders has used archival evidence to chart the "untold story" of meetings between the South African and Angolan governments that commenced in 1976 with the withdrawal of South African troops from Angola.[266] These classified high-level talks would continue even as South Africa repeatedly attacked the MPLA-Marxist government that ultimately came to power. Saunders's research illuminates once-secret diplomatic connections that existed directly "alongside South Africa's military aggression and demonization of the Angolan government as a Soviet client." Such "meetings were highly secret and none of those involved have written about them;" access is possible only because of the recent opening of these files in the archives. Thus, Saunders's

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[263] Ibid., 131.

[264] Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 394.

[265] Ibid., 394.

[266] Christopher Saunders, "The South Africa-Angola Talks, 1976-1984: A Little-Known Cold War Thread," *Kronos: A Journal of Cape History/ Joernaal vir Kaapse Geskiedenis* 37 (2011): 1, accessed February 13, 2013, http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0259-01902011000100007&lng=en&nrm=iso&tlng=en.

discovery points to the existence of additional layers of complexity to the Angola situation and demonstrates how much remains to be uncovered and documented about this time period.

Ironically, however, after all that had happened, it was perhaps Jonas Savimbi, UNITA's leader, who summed up what transpired between the United States and South Africa in Angola best. He once stated, "if you are a drowning man in a crocodile infested river and you've just gone under for the third time, you don't question who is pulling you to the bank until you are safely on it."[267] Indeed his comments rang as true for each of three Angolan revolutionary movements as for the "unholy alliance" forged between the apartheid government and the United States. The tragic legacy of the Angolan story is that such international interventions would further exacerbate an Angolan conflict that would drag on, with only brief interludes, until 2002. Tragically termed the "forgotten war"[268] and "an orphan of the Cold War"[269] it earned the dreaded title of the "longest running conflict of the modern world."[270] The silences associated with what had transpired continued, and now, only recently, are being broken. It is becoming possible now, for the first time, to speaking meaningfully about how the United States and South Africa covertly colluded to shatter the "shell of constraint,"[271] allowing the "unthinkable to emerge under the guise of wisdom and prudence."[272]

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[267] Jonas Savimbi quoted by Linda Marinda Heywood, *Contested Power in Angola: 1840s to the Present*, (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2000), 199.

[268] Christopher Pycroft, "Angola: "The Forgotten Tragedy,'" *Journal of Southern African Studies* 20, no. 2 (1994): 241–262.

[269] Margaret Joan Anstee, *Orphan of the Cold War: The Inside Story of the Collapse of the Angolan Peace Process, 1992-93* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 542

[270] Guimarães, *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War,* 458.

[271] Davis, *The Angola Decision,* 109.

[272] Meeting with Dr. Carol Anderson, Personal Interview, September 26, 2012.

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