

Africa Report by Douglas DeGroot

The global stakes in Southern Africa

The Reagan administration has not embraced Pretoria, but its enemies hope it will do so.

It is being widely predicted that the Soviet-allied African National Congress (ANC) will step up its activities against the South African apartheid regime. Since the 1976 Soweto riots in South Africa, many young black South Africans have gone into exile, and received training in communist-allied or communist-bloc countries. And the balance in the ANC has tipped it away from its previous refusal to strike civilian targets.

South African officials have made it clear that if this step-up occurs, they will retaliate, "Israeli-style," against the neighboring black states, which they have accused of harboring ANC bases.

This spiral of violence will be a test for the Reagan administration. Henry Kissinger and his veteran collaborator George Shultz have an interest in aggravating, not solving, regional crises. That is a perspective they share with the Israeli faction that intends to use the Lavie jet project to make Israel and South Africa the gendarmes of a re-colonized underdeveloped sector. It is also the perspective of Yuri Andropov, who along with the Kissinger-Shultz grouping expects to trap President Reagan in multiple no-win geopolitical situations—leaving him negotiations with Andropov as the only way out. The point is that Andropov and the rest of this menagerie will let the hotspots cool down only if Reagan backs down from his March 23 commitment to develop the frontier technology for antiballistic defense systems.

This is basically how the hot spots in Central America are working; as violence continues between South Africa and its neighbors, southern Africa will become another "crisis management" focus for Reagan. The same group of interests, during Kissinger's official tenure in Washington, turned the Angolan fight for independence into a superpower issue in the mid-1970s.

Angola is again the place where an eventual showdown in the region could reach the superpower brinkmanship point, because of the presence of Cuban troops there. South Africa refuses to permit independence for Namibia, which it occupies with around 20,000 troops, until Angola, which borders on Namibia, expels the Cuban troops. This has also been the position of the Reagan administration.

If he assesses developments from the standpoint of "stopping the communists," Reagan will have no options for U.S. policy in the region that will not be construed as being pro-South African. As the region heats up, Andropov will play his Cuban card in Angola to manipulate a confrontation and ultimately a "deal."

The Reagan administration doesn't want to get caught in the pro-South African trap, according to my sources, and told South Africa after its latest retaliation raids into Mozambique that such activity only played into the hands of Andropov. The May 23 South African air attack against Mozambique was ludicrous as well as murderous. The South Africans could give no mil-

itary justification for their action.

The pretext for the air attack was an unprecedented May 20 car-bomb blast in Pretoria, responsibility for which was claimed by at least a faction of the ANC.

The Reagan administration has been working to improve relations with Mozambique, which also has Soviet and Cuban connections, but no large Cuban troop presence; according to my sources, ties have improved to the point that a U.S. ambassador is about to be sent to Mozambique. The administration is attempting to use this relationship with Mozambique to help find a solution with Angola to the problem of Namibian independence. Once this issue is resolved, Angola will no longer need Cuban troops to protect itself against South African attacks from Namibia and the Jonas Savimbi insurgency the South Africans run from Namibia into Angola.

The justifiable U.S. desire not to lose relations such as these, which will be sabotaged if the administration does anything "pro-South African," will add to Reagan's dilemma.

Judging from the Central American situation, the only solutions that will be offered to Reagan by Shultz et al. will be secret negotiations with Andropov, and/or low intensity operations such as the Project Democracy covert operations being run by Shultz's old friend Lane Kirkland.

In the southern Africa case, this would probably involve anti-communist activities in the trade unions and funding of operations such as Savimbi's, which has been receiving a lot of publicity in the Eastern liberal press. If the Savimbi option were used, it would probably be run through third parties such as Morocco or Israel; for example, Zaire's close ties with Israel would make it possible to make use of Zaire.