

Eye on Washington by Nicholas F. Benton

Reagan proposes great project for Africa

In his courageous July 22 speech on South Africa, President Reagan spoke of the needs of the land-locked nations of Central Africa in espousing the economic potentials of the entire region of southern Africa, "from Kenschasa to the Cape."

It was learned in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee the next day that Reagan was referring to a specific proposal—for the development of the "Beira Corridor." This is a rail and general transport project designed to give land-locked nations from Uganda in the north to Rwanda, Burundi, eastern Zaire, western Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi, and Zimbabwe access to the sea through an enlarged port at Beira, Mozambique.

What is unique about this proposal is that the United States is supporting a project which would involve nations being subjected to a lot of Soviet influence—namely, Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

However, it reflects the method espoused by American economist Lyndon LaRouche for over a decade since his "International Development Bank" proposal, which has also helped to shape the "Marshall Plan for the Middle East" proposal of Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres. That method is to offer significant cooperative economic development through "great enterprise" projects as a means to bring nations into political concord.

It may have been generally over-

looked, but this was the major methodological point to his stated policy, namely, a negotiated approach to ending apartheid and "constructing a political system that rests upon the consent of the governed" by addressing the economic interests of all the nations of southern Africa.

Shultz shows blind spot on Soviets again

The differences between President Reagan and his secretary of state, George Shultz, could not have been more clearly delineated than in the comparison between the President's July 22 speech on South Africa and Shultz's three hours of testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee the next day.

Reagan attacked the Soviet-influenced African National Congress (ANC) three times, in the strongest terms, for their terrorist activities, and attempts to make South Africa "ungovernable." He warned of Soviet strategic designs on the region, and said, "Those who tell us the moral thing to do today is embargo the South African economy and write off South Africa, should tell us exactly what they believe will rise in its place. What foreign power would fill the vacuum—if ties with the West are broken?" He answered the question himself with numerous references to the Soviet build-up in the region.

Shultz, on the other hand, mentioned the Soviets exactly once in three hours of testimony, and among other things, reiterated his unqualified offer to meet with the leaders of the ANC.

Of course, none of the senators bothered to bring up the Soviets, either, and that included Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), who was more concerned that Shultz get promises from the ANC to stop-terrorist acts before meeting

with them, but passing up entirely the opportunity to raise questions about the level of Soviet support for the ANC, and their military buildup in the region as a whole.

Moscow and the ANC

For the record, the Pentagon's 1986 edition of *Soviet Military Power* says the following about Soviet influence on the ANC:

"In addition to working for South Africa's diplomatic isolation, the U.S.S.R. seeks to exploit internal discord in that country. Although domestic opposition to the South African government is not united, Moscow attempts to influence events through:

"1) deliveries of weapons to and the military training of armed forces located in regional countries hostile to South Africa,

"2) ties with the South African Communist Party, and

"3) support of the African National Congress, a group that seeks to topple the present government."

The Soviets' military buildup in central and south Africa ranges from the port at Aden in South Yemen (the third-largest port in the world), to the Seychelles Islands on the east coast and the São Tomé and Príncipe islands on the west coast, plus operations directly on the continent centered in Angola.

These capabilities are giving the Soviets the military capacity to block vital sea lanes around the cape, and wage a successful military invasion of the region against the forces of South Africa. With control of that region, the Soviets would have an overwhelming monopoly of a large number of strategic metals required for specialty steel production, including manganese, chrome, and platinum, among others.