

Africa policy brings US-China alliance

by Franz Schurmann and John Stewart

(PNS) Behind Henry Kissinger's unexpectedly jubilant espousal of Zimbabwe (Rhodesian) Black liberation lies a far-reaching realignment of power in Africa in which a little noticed but steadily growing U.S.-China informal alliance may play the key role.

The main thrust of the secretary's Africa visit has been to open a wedge in East Africa where an informal U.S.-China commitment can counter growing Soviet influence in Nigeria, Ghana and Angola, and preempt the Soviet-Cuban initiative in the liberation of southern Africa.

In fact, beneath the moralistic overtones of support for majority rule in Zimbabwe lie indications of the same kind of superpower maneuverings that supported the tragic civil war in Angola.

Kissinger realizes, as does South Africa's John Vorster, that time has run out for Rhodesia's quarter-million whites. The nation's six million Blacks will eventually win majority rule, either through a protracted guerrilla war or outright surrender by the Ian Smith regime.

As the guerrilla war expands, a superpower scramble for influence will ensue, as in Angola, focusing on the guerrillas' need for more arms, training and personnel to fight the sophisticated Rhodesian Army.

Unwilling to risk the wrath of conservative elements at home, Kissinger has already stated the U.S. will not supply arms or other military aid to any African nation or liberation movement engaged in Rhodesia. That reduces the aid options to the Soviets and Cubans on the one hand, and China on the other.

Diplomats in Lusaka, Zambia, report that the four key African presidents - Samora Machel of Mozambique, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Botswana's Seretse Khama - have already held a secret meeting to consider the options for military aid to the guerrilla forces.

Both China and Russia have already made substantial commitments to arming and training various nationalist forces, with Russia supporting the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and with China supporting the rival Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). Both movements claim to be the sole representative of Zimbabwe, though neither has a commanding lead.

Military analysts in Lusaka estimate there could now be some 25,000 guerrillas either trained or in training in neighboring Mozambique, mostly under Chinese instructors and armed with Chinese light weapons.

Intelligence sources believe that Russia has recently offered a substantial arms commitment to the Zimbabwe Liberation Army (ZLA), a new force prompted into being by Mozambique President Samora Machel. Young guerrilla leaders, impatient with ZANU and ZAPU leaders who never visited their camps, forged a new leadership committed solely to military combat against the Ian Smith regime.

The Soviet approach probably included the offer of Cuban troops. But the same intelligence sources report the dozen or so Cuban troop trainers already in Mozambique have encountered open hostility from the big Chinese training mission there.

And in any event, the prospect of thousands of Cuban soldiers gaining further influence in southern Africa is anathema to the fierce nationalism of the four presidents, particularly Zambia's Kaunda and Tanzania's Nyerere. The African leaders working hardest for Zimbabwean liberation would obviously prefer to see an all-African victory in southern Africa.

China's silent connection

These conditions set the stage for Kissinger's triumphal reception in Tanzania, his dramatic policy statement in Zambia and the drum rolls and dancing in Zaire.

By firmly grasping the banner of majority rule, and by committing the U.S. to substantial aid to Zaire, Mozambique and other African nations, the U.S. offers an attractive balancing influence to an East Africa dominated by Russian ties. It also provides an ideal staging area for a coordinated U.S.-China policy.

Nyerere has long enjoyed friendly relations with China, evidenced most clearly by the Chinese financing and construction of the great TanZam railway, completed just a year ago.

It was through Tanzania that both China and Russia poured arms and training to Frelimo, the liberation army that fought and beat the Portuguese in Mozambique.

But while Tanzania still retains good relations with Russia and with the Angolan MPLA, Nyerere is hardly anxious

to see a major new Soviet or Cuban presence in neighboring Mozambique.

Such a presence would constitute a geographical encroachment on Tanzania by an alliance of Somalia and Uganda to the north, Angola to the west and Mozambique to the south - all with strong Soviet ties.

If the Soviets and the Cubans swing the Zimbabwe liberation movement to their side through Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia would be eased out of influence over a struggle that eventually could produce far-reaching changes in South Africa itself.

To retain a grip on those events, Tanzania and Zambia need the Chinese connection, at the very least to supply the critical arms and training.

Chinese influence constitutes less of a threat to East African independence, particularly in Tanzania, than the Soviets. China gives but cannot control: it is far away. Unlike the Russians, China has no naval presence in the bordering Indian Ocean. Nor does it have neighboring allies, like Uganda, rattling sabers on the Tanzanian border over territory disputes and threatening to march on Dar Es Salaam.

Given such circumstances, a U.S.-China connection in East Africa could greatly benefit Tanzania. With the U.S. acting the role of the "good cop" by trying to persuade Rhodesia's Smith to throw in the towel, China could have a free hand to play the "bad cop" and feed critical arms and training to guerrillas.

Meanwhile, the U.S. could help Tanzania achieve great strides in agricultural and industrial development at little cost or risk to the U.S.

If such a strategy produced a Black government in Salisbury and brought badly needed western agricultural and transport technology and economic aid to Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, Botswana, and a liberated Zimbabwe, no African could quarrel with such success.

For the U.S., such a strategy could effectively counter the Soviet presence in western Africa and provide a friendly foothold on the vital African coast of the Indian Ocean - a huge plus in the U.S. Navy's cherished strategy for protecting the shipping lanes from the Persian Gulf to the West.

It would also counter the rightwing attacks in the U.S. charging Kissinger with selling out southern Africa and the Cape of Good Hope to the forces of Soviet domination.

For China, the scenario enables Mao Tse-tung to pursue his number one enemy, Soviet "hegemonism", by joining with the U.S. as the brass knuckle under the velvet glove.

Kissinger may have revealed the U.S.-China connection in Africa in his Lusaka speech by ostentatiously using the standard Chinese term "hegemonism".

Battle for dominance

Even if Ian Smith decides to pull out without a fight and flee to England, the U.S.-China connection will continue to play a role. For once the white-minority Rhodesian government is out - by force or by surrender - a battle may ensue between Black nationalist factions for dominance, as it did in Angola.

There is now no clearly dominant leadership among the nationalist forces, and there is little reason to believe there will be when majority rule is finally achieved.

The Kissinger tactic in such an event has already been outlined in testimony before the House Intelligence Committee. The U.S. will "promote moderate Black governments in Rhodesia and Namibia...to protect the economic and strategic interests of the west."

If Zimbabwe is quickly liberated, the three organizations could easily start fighting each other and produce another Angola. Or it is equally possible that one single powerful liberation force could emerge to take command.

But one thing is certain - the big powers - the U.S., Russia and China - are

more deeply involved than ever in southern Africa. Kissinger's plea for "an African solution to Rhodesia" voiced in Lusaka is little more than polite rhetoric. Despite the African leaders' strong will for independence, their lands are too important to the big powers to be left to themselves.

[Franz Schurmann, author of *Ideology and Organization in Communist China* (U.C. Press, 1964) and *Logic of World Power* (Pantheon Press, 1975), is a noted foreign policy analyst now teaching at U.C., Berkeley. John Stewart is an editor of Pacific News Service.]

Youth tour construction sites

The Urban League's Labor Education Advancement Program (LEAP) an affiliate of the United Way, has just completed its first annual high school "hard hat" construction tour. The construction site was PGE's new tri building complex on Main between 1st and 2nd Streets.

Assisting the LEAP staff was Donald Leugacher, PGE's project manager, and training coordinators of the electrical, pipe and cement mason trades.

Twenty-two students and five counselors representing six high schools took

part in the construction site visit. The purpose of the tour was to increase the student's construction knowledge. All students that participated have expressed an interest in a building and construction trade career.

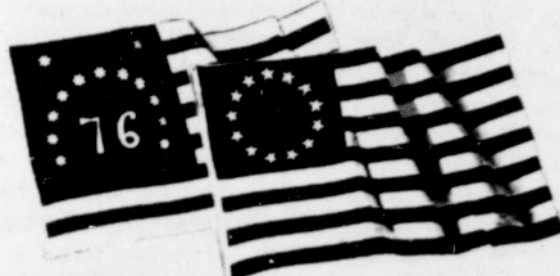
Portland's construction future looks very positive, local labor leaders are very optimistic that the industry will start to increase its productions with the summer months finally arriving.

Another tour is being planned for early fall.

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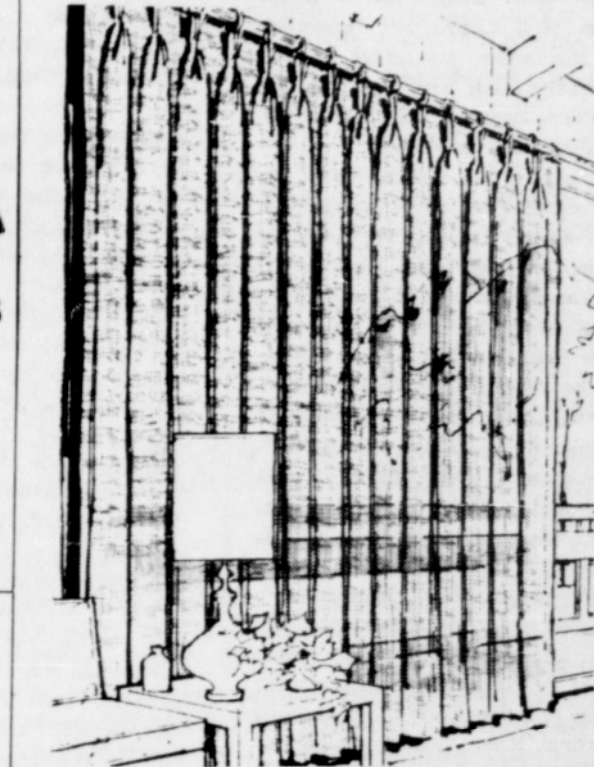


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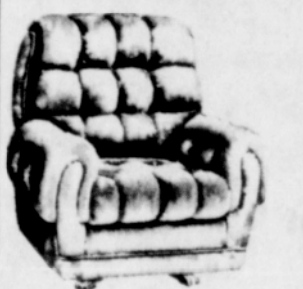


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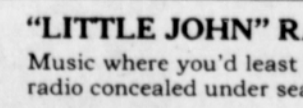


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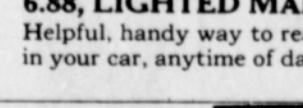
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