

France's errands for the National Security Council represent far more than a simple attempt to oppose "Soviet penetration" of Africa. If the basic outline of the French-Brazil-South Africa axis is formalized into a working military relationship — including puppet African states like Zaire and Morocco and France's NATO partners — then the strategic correlation of forces

worldwide will shift decisively against the USSR and its allies.

Already, key African and Arab states are threatened directly by the escalating tensions in the region. Algeria, Libya, Iraq, Somalia, Angola, and Mozambique are now facing regional and-or border conflagrations.

## South Africa Readies War Drive

Last week the South African daily *Die Burger* carried a front page lead story which reported that the Vorster government "is planning some early demonstration of South Africa's military capacity" in answer to the intense international pressure being exerted on the South African government. The British *Sunday Telegraph* warned that this show of force "could come this week," and would be a warning to black Africa and a rallying point for domestic political opinion.

The newly installed South African Foreign Minister, Roelof Botha, stated recently: "We have to be prepared to lose the equivalent of a couple of fingers or an eye or an ear to get through this alive." Botha is portrayed in the South African press as knowing better than any of his cabinet colleagues what forces are building up against South Africa, and has told the white South African population not to get involved in minor issues while "our enemies are dancing on the border."

South African Defense Minister P.W. Botha announced on April 22 in Cape Town plans to construct a new air base at Hoedspruit, in the eastern Transvaal, about 100 kms from the Mozambique border. Botha spoke specifically of the possibility of war with Mozambique.

### *Southern Africa Flashpoint*

With these and other developments, the flashpoint for war on the African continent is now refocused to the Southern Africa-Rhodesia area. The Algerian newspaper *El Moudjahid* reported that a White Paper was submitted to the South African Parliament last month which said that in the context of an intensifying guerrilla war against Ian Smith's minority government in Salisbury, Rhodesia, South Africa would have to intervene in support of the Smith regime, adding that in this case "we can then expect guerrilla war to begin to be launched against South Africa also." This is the first time that South Africa has openly stated that it would come to the aid of the beleaguered Smith regime.

South Africa has begun funneling helicopters, jet aircraft and other military equipment into Rhodesia. Rhodesian Foreign Minister Pieter Van der Byl threatened that Rhodesia would unleash its growing military might, in a *London Times* interview, unless pressure for Rhodesia to grant majority rule is relaxed.

He threatened that those countries and political forces which continue to press for majority rule "will provoke a backlash within this country that nobody will be able to contain. Van der Byl made it clear that the Smith government had no intention of granting real majority rule by claiming that they were ready for "majority rule," but it would have to be a "very qualified franchise." He also denounced Patriotic Front leaders Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo.

The extreme economic crisis and the squeeze play by the New York banks is putting the regime in South Africa into war as its remaining economic option. Underlining the situation confronting the South African government, there were massive demonstrations this past week by blacks against increases of 40 to 80 percent in the price of house rent, as well as sharp rises in the price of food. The government used tear gas to break up the demonstrations, but no end to the rioting is in sight. The black unemployment rate is higher than ever, as South Africa heads into its worst recession since the depression of the 1930s.

### *Blackmail*

The threat of the military might of the two minority regimes has already had its effect on the front line states. Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda reportedly said that he welcomed United States indicated willingness to participate in new British efforts towards a negotiated handover to black majority rule in Rhodesia. Kaunda's opening the door for U.S. involvement represents a capitulation to U.S.-British pressure, and opens a breach in the decision by the front line state president that the Rhodesia crisis a question concerning only the colonial power, Great Britain, and the Zimbabwe (Rhodesian) nationalists. A break in the ranks of the front line presidents exacerbates divisions in the Zimbabwe nationalist Patriotic Front, which continues to maintain that U.S. participation would serve no purpose in resolving the crisis. Patriotic Front leader Joshua Nkomo, who is closely allied to Kaunda said in Czechoslovakia at the time that British Foreign Secretary David Owen proposed U.S. involvement, that such an involvement would be "less than worthless."