

Africa Report by Douglas DeGroot

A new spirit in the White House

The Nigerian oil question and southern African destabilizations are being thrown against it.

In a recent message to Africa, Ronald Reagan pledged U.S. assistance to African nations to aid their economic development and meet their security needs. The message encouraged African leaders who are watching their economies be destroyed as a result of credit cutoffs dictated by the advocates of "controlled disintegration" of the world economy, or are in many cases seeing their security threatened by Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi.

Reagan's statement was delivered to the African American Institute Conference which took place in Sierra Leone the second weekend of January. The annual AAI conference is where U.S. policy makers, government figures and business interests hash out U.S. Africa policy with African leaders.

In his statement, Reagan vowed to "strengthen our African ties" by increasing U.S. "investment, trade and economic assistance and security-related support" for Africa. The statement continued: "The world today is faced with mounting challenges to the independence, freedom, security and well-being of men and nations," which "require that Africans and Americans maintain a candid dialogue and a shared appreciation of our many mutual interests.

"We can neither afford to neglect each other nor to take each other for granted. America's historical and cultural links with Africa as a result of the African heritage

of black Americans are today reinforced by an unprecedented two-way flow of people, goods and ideas between our two continents."

Reagan's approach portended a radical departure from the Africa policy of the Carter administration, which had extremely close ties with Qaddafi, and which accelerated the "controlled disintegration" policy in Africa under the guise of protecting "human rights," pushing only primitive or so-called appropriate technologies that would not conflict with backward tribal belief structures.

However, an array of self-described conservative think tanks and institutions have begun predicting a flareup of hotspots in Africa, especially southern Africa, which would wreck any chances for a successful Reagan Africa policy.

If Reagan responds to the heating up of African hotspots in a simplistic, hardline manner, it will be impossible for him to develop a positive Africa policy. That this is the tactic which will be taken by those opposed to his development of such a policy was made clear by a spokesman for the Heritage Foundation: "There will be a lot of confrontations in Africa in the next four years." He ticked off all the possibilities in the Horn of Africa, southern Africa, and among Qaddafi's targets: "Add all this up and you have a very unstable situation which will be more violent than even the last few years." He asserted that the various hotspots were

not susceptible to settlement, which would prevent Reagan from launching a development policy.

The critical test case for the development of a positive U.S. policy toward Africa is Nigeria, the most heavily populated country in Africa, and the second largest oil supplier to the United States. According to Africanist Peter Duignan at the Hoover Institution, which is attempting to determine Reagan's policy, a conflict involving South Africa could be used to drive a wedge between Nigeria and the U.S. if Reagan could be induced to support South Africa. In such a case "Nigeria would cut off oil shipments to the U.S."

A spokesman for the Heritage Foundation made explicit the intention to ally the U.S. with pro-tribal South Africa: "I think South Africa will have a big role in whatever we do in southern Africa. The U.S. will have to come to terms with South Africa." He added that terrorism would trigger the U.S. shift to the right side of this right-left setup: "I expect a major terrorist campaign in South Africa," citing Mozambique-based Joe Slovo as the mastermind. Slovo is connected to both Soviet KGB and British intelligence networks.

Meanwhile, *EIR* has learned that very high-level members of the Nigerian ruling elite are concerned that leaks about Nigeria's willingness to declare an oil boycott of the U.S. will be played up in the U.S. to poison their relations with the administration. These Nigerians are strongly opposed to using oil as blackmail to affect U.S. policy. Since then *Business Week* and the Newhouse news chain have asserted that Nigeria is prepared to cut U.S. oil shipments.