

Africa Report by Douglas DeGroot

Another superpower confrontation site?

The Soviets and South Africans have made a devil's pact to heat up southern Africa. U.S. policy is unprepared.

Since the Dec. 6 South African invasion of Angola with, according to some reports, as many as 10,000 troops, all the ingredients for turning southern Africa into an arena of superpower conflict are falling into place.

U.S. press accounts claim that, in a private exchange in New York in November between Soviet and South African officials prior to the South African invasion, the Russians condemned both South African support for Angolan rebel forces and South African military activity in Angola, and reaffirmed Soviet support for the Angolan government. The publicizing of this not actually so unusual meeting is a signal that the conflict is about to be further heated up. South Africa is exposing its planes to enemy fire, which would provide pretexts for escalation.

There are rumors that South African troops may go as far as Luanda, Angola's capital, inviting the Russians to counterattack.

The South African invasion follows an intensification of military destabilizations and economic sabotage in the last few years against neighboring black nations, carried out by South Africa or its proxy forces. The neighboring states have thereby been pushed toward alliances with the Russians, whether they like it or not.

Mozambique officials met three times with South Africans in the past year in an attempt to halt the attacks from South African-run guerrilla bands. Mozambique is in the midst of its most serious economic crisis since independence, as drought compounds

the effects of South African sabotage; forty thousand died in 1983 due to food shortages, according to Mozambique officials.

The conflict between the Russians and the South Africans is a set-up, an operation put in place by the Russians and the Nazi networks which now pull the strings in South Africa.

The set-up works to mutual advantage, the South Africans being able to use the "Soviet threat" to justify their military activity in the region, and the Russians gaining another crisis point which can be used to cut off supplies of strategic minerals to the United States, while Moscow self-righteously denounces the Reagan administration as a racist backer of South Africa.

The South African regime finds very convenient the domestic terrorism now launched by the Soviet-controlled anti-apartheid organization, the African National Congress. The ANC has been retooled since the 1976 Soweto riots in South Africa to strike at civilian targets. This shift was signaled by a May 20 car-bomb attack in Pretoria during rush hour. South African officials brag about how they control the ANC and other opposition groups. South African intelligence has been charged with terrorist incidents.

The unresolved status of Namibia, the territory bordering on Angola which is occupied by South Africa, allows the Russians and their Nazi International allies to play out the conflict. The sizable contingent of Russian-controlled Cuban and East bloc forces in Angola provides the Russians with their primary base of oper-

ations in the region. The SWAPO guerrilla forces fighting for the independence of Namibia have bases in Angola, and the South Africans describe their invasion of Angola as a pre-emptive move against these guerrillas.

The Reagan administration's support for the South African position of demanding the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola before the Namibia question can be settled has given South Africa a green light to carry out its confrontationist regional policy. Backing South Africa in the hope of safeguarding strategic minerals will backfire against the President, fuel the "hot spots" which jeopardize resources, and outrage many voters during an election year.

Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker has warned that as a result of South Africa's stepped-up military campaign against neighboring states, southern Africa, "could end up as a replica of the worst aspects of the Middle East."

In short, South Africa has dropped all pretenses of disguising its activity—and U.S. policy under Kissinger ally George Shultz is only making matters worse.

Instead of trying to develop allies in the region, the State Department has devoted itself to further weakening the economies of black Africa. Last month the administration announced that it intends to cut economic aid to Zimbabwe by one-half.

Zimbabwe, no great friend of the Russians, is one of the victims of South African clandestine operations as well as economic blackmail based on trade and transportation. Zimbabwe is also badly affected by the same drought hitting Mozambique; thousands of cattle could be lost. Although congressional pressure may reverse the policy, the intention is clear.