

Africa Report by Douglas DèGroot and Mary Brannan

Bush gives Pretoria carte blanche

The only national sovereignty in Africa which the United States recognizes, the Vice President demonstrated, is South Africa's.

African nations must give up their sovereignty, Vice-President George Bush told them last month on his seven-nation tour of Africa.

Bush didn't say that in so many words, but his deprecatory attitude toward the Organization of African Unity (OAU), a continent-wide organization of sovereign nation-states, was the beginning of this message. His endorsement of South Africa's murderous and destructive role in southern Africa, and his repeated backing of the South African position on the issue of independence for Namibia, drove the point home.

Last week I reported the economic policy content of Bush's trip, which was based on a World Bank nation-wrecking blueprint. The trip was set up by Asst. Secretary of State for African Affairs, Chester Crocker. "Crocker held Bush's hand throughout the entire trip," one Washington source told me. Crocker worked under Henry Kissinger when Kissinger headed the National Security Council Staff, and became later African Studies director at Georgetown's Center for Strategic and International Studies, a favorite Kissinger haunt.

Crocker's priority concern for Africa is its mineral wealth. Married to a Rhodesian, he is considered an expert on southern African affairs.

The key political concern of the African leaders Bush met with was the Reagan administration's attitude toward the stalled negotiations on the independence of Namibia. The U.S. had relaunched these negotiations,

which involved four other Western nations (France, Britain, Canada and West Germany), South Africa, and SWAPO, the national liberation movement in Namibia. The issue of Namibian independence has been unresolved since 1966, when the United Nations revoked South Africa's League of Nations mandate to administer the territory. South Africa presently occupies the territory with upwards of 20,000 troops.

On his trip, Bush adopted the South African position on further Namibian negotiations, making the withdrawal of Cuban technicians and troops from neighboring Angola a precondition for further talks, and thus attempting to dictate Angola's foreign policy.

The Namibia issue as it is being currently played out has nothing to do with independence, but whether South Africa will be able to make and break nations at will in southern Africa. South Africa is sponsoring a rebel movement which is trying to topple the government of Mozambique. A similar force is prepared for operations into Zimbabwe. South Africa is backing the Unita guerilla insurgents in Angola. South African troops actually occupy part of Angola's Cunene province. On Nov. 11 Angola's President reported that the South African Army has inflicted \$10 billion in material damage on the country since independence in November 1975.

While South Africa has been on the rampage, the Reagan administration has not lifted a finger to rein it in. According to Crocker's reasoning any

harsh words from the administration would disrupt his policy of "constructive engagement," based on enticing South Africa to reenter Namibia negotiations they have repeatedly backed away from, by coaxing and wheedling. Bush indicated that Crocker will continue to pretend to seek to negotiate for two more years while South Africa gets a free hand to destroy other nations: "If there is to be security in Southern Africa, South Africa must be involved in shaping it." South Africa's threats to drop any pretense of talks and instead install a black puppet government of its own in Namibia—the excuse used by Crocker, *et al.* to continue the "negotiations" charade—are only a bluff. No such arrangement could last.

South Africa's destructive activity nicely complements the IMF's nation-wrecking. South Africa easily qualified recently for a \$1 billion IMF loan, unlike other Africa countries, since South Africa has no qualms about destroying its own population.

Bush's efforts to use African refusal to accept the linkage of Namibian independence to the withdrawal of Cubans from Angola met with blistering criticism from even moderate African governments. In words of Kenya's President Daniel Arap Moi, "No nation that possesses true democracy and national sovereignty should connect the two issues."

Afterwards, Crocker treated all criticism of Bush's trip as if Africans were children letting off steam: "African leaders often find it hard to state publicly their positions, and must publicly express a position of disassociation from us . . . the point is, no one should be deceived about the rhetoric involved."

As one of my African sources put it: "Bush made Kissinger look like a pygmy."