

Realpolitik and human rights

*The United States' Foreign Political interest and diplomacy
regarding Rhodesia's Transition to majority rule 1969 – 1979*

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Introduction

The 1970s marked a turning point for the United States' role as a super power as well as its leading foreign political role. The Vietnam War, the oil crises and the Watergate scandal together with the rise and fall of détente affected how the United States could act in the foreign political field. The domestic instability reaching back to the civil right movement of the 1960s and the anti-war movement concerning Vietnam were also markers of a shift in American public mentality concerning the role of the State. This thesis focuses on a certain issue that the United States policymakers faced during the decade, carrying over three Presidencies and the aforesaid shift in the role of the United States in the global world. The issue was Rhodesia's role as an unrecognized state and its transition to majority rule.

The United States' foreign political interest towards Rhodesia and its transition to majority rule is a relevant and current topic to research for several reasons. The topic has not yet been fully researched by using the most recently declassified US foreign political documents and moreover, prior research mainly focuses on unofficial interest of the US towards Rhodesia, not that of the top level policymakers. The topic also bears resemblance to current events such as those of the Syrian civil war as well as the domestic disturbances in Ukraine. In both of these cases the international community plays a crucial part to find a solution to the issues as it arguably did in Rhodesia. Additionally this thesis helps understand how a super power such as the United States defines and acts on its interests, what factors affect this process and what are the final results both internationally and domestically. The chain of events addressed in this thesis lead to the current state of Zimbabwe which has been led by former guerilla leader Robert Mugabe since the founding of Zimbabwe in 1980 to this day.

The 1960s and the 1970s were a time of mass decolonization¹ in Africa, as former colonial countries sought independence from the European states. The only officially recognized white-minority regime was that of South Africa but another African state with a white minority government existed at the time. Rhodesia, present day Zimbabwe, unilaterally declared

¹ A comprehensive definition of decolonization: Raymond F. Betts 2012, "Decolonization – a brief history of the word". *Beyond Empire and Nation – The Decolonization of African and Asian societies, 1930s - 1960s*, 23 – 35, Ed. Els Bogaerts & Remco Raben KITLV Press Leiden.

independence (UDI) from Great Britain on November 11th 1965² and was an unrecognized state until the transition to majority rule and creation of Zimbabwe in 1980. This thesis focuses on the United States foreign political interest towards Rhodesia and its transition to majority rule in the 1970s, starting from Nixon's administration and ending in Carter's in the end of the decade.

Prior research

Academic research regarding the relations of the United States and Rhodesia is scarce at best but two books focusing on the relationship between the United States and Rhodesia were published in 2001. The first book is ANDREW DEROCHE's *Black, White and Chrome: the United States and Zimbabwe, 1953 to 1998*. DeRoche's book focuses on US – Zimbabwe relations from the 1950's to the 1990's. DeRoche's book is the only comprehensive narrative of US foreign political interest towards Rhodesia, especially concerning the 1970's which has not been broadly studied. However as the book was published in 2001 the author did not have access to later declassified and published official foreign political documents. DeRoche filled this gap by referring to various biographies, autobiographies, journals and interviews which creates a different viewpoint to the US interests in the region compared to the official documents used in my thesis. This makes DeRoche's study a vital piece of research literature for me as it confirms many of my findings and analysis from different sources. The book also delves into US politics explaining how and why the Congress and several political figures affected the US relations to Rhodesia, information that was not available from the primary source used in my thesis.

In addition to the studies that focus on US – Rhodesia relations it is important to understand the broader picture of US foreign policy. DANIEL J. SARGENT's *A Superpower Transformed: The Remaking of American Foreign Relations in the 1970s* gives a throughout look at US foreign policy in general during the decade. Sargent's main argument is that the 1970s was the first time the US policymakers had to alter their approach to US role in the world during the post-war period. Regarding my thesis, Sargent's book helps to place the Rhodesian matter to the larger concept of US foreign policy during the decade. Sargent also points out how the different policymakers were trying to find answers to the same questions with different means for example Kissinger's emphasis on geopolitics and realpolitik compared to Carter's focus on global human rights.

² Watts 2006, 442.

CARL P. WATTS' article "*The United States, Britain, and the Problem of Rhodesian Independence, 1964 – 1965*" examines the foreign political interests of the United States concerning the Independence of Rhodesia as well as the Anglo – American relations in solving the matter. Although the main focus of the article is the relationship between Great Britain and the United States, it also briefly examines the background of the United States interest towards the region leading up to the UDI of 1965. For background information concerning US interest on Rhodesia Watts refers to DeRoche's *Black, White and Chrome*. With the main focus on official top level policymakers of both countries, this study is closest to my upcoming research and also uses the FRUS documents as one of the primary sources although the main research question of the article is the Anglo-American relations compared to my focus on US interest and actions regarding Rhodesia.

The second book concerning US and Rhodesian relations published in 2001 is GERALD HORNE'S *From the Barrel of a gun: the United States and the War against Zimbabwe 1965 -1980*. Unlike DeRoche's book, *From the Barrel of a gun* focuses more clearly on the non-official relations of Americans with Rhodesia and its minority regime. As the author informs in the introduction of the book, he is biased towards the subject being himself an active participant in the Pro-Zimbabwe movement of the 1970's. Horne's book is organized by theme, with only one of the three main chapters devoted to official foreign policy of the US. Horne's book focuses on race and its role in the relationship of the US and Rhodesia with additional themes such as economics, cold war politics and mercenaries. Regarding my thesis Horne's book helps understand all the different factors that might affect how and why official foreign policy is done the way it is. Many of these factors are not visible by solely researching the official foreign policy documents. For example Horne identifies numerous US political figures, business people and private citizens who openly supported the Smith regime of Rhodesia and lobbied in favor of removing sanctions against the regime.

Sources and methods

This study is part of the field of foreign political and diplomatic history and focuses on the United States' viewpoints of the events. More specifically this thesis delves into the diplomatic process and closely examines how and why the United States acted on its interests. The primary sources

used in this thesis are the Foreign Relations of the United States, or FRUS, FRUS 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa published in 2011 and FRUS 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa published in 2016. Foreign political and diplomatic history can be seen as a traditional historical research subjects and as such the methodology concerning these topics are rather general in nature to history researchers and the most used method in this thesis is source criticism. MARC TRACHTENBERG's *The Craft of International history* is used as research literature regarding the methodology of foreign political history and on how to approach the FRUS documents as a primary source.

Trachtenberg's book reads like a field manual to anyone who studies history of diplomacy or foreign policy with step by step instruction on how to find and approach sources and how to write a study based on the found sources. Trachtenberg describes FRUS as the primary American collection on foreign political material that consists primarily of State Department document but also includes select documents from other government branches and agencies³. As the FRUS documents have been edited, it is important to remain critical of what documents were chosen to each collection and which were left out and why. Trachtenberg also raises this issue and as an example of this he mentions how British sources contained information of a meeting with the Americans which was left out from the FRUS documents⁴. Overall Trachtenberg does not introduce any specific method that would cover all international history study, but rather emphasizes the importance of critically examining both primary and secondary sources. Documents being left out or censored is sometimes good for the study and raises questions of why these specific documents received this special treatment. In the FRUS documents used in this study some passages or even complete documents are not declassified to this day. Most commonly this appears in intelligence material by the CIA, where several lines in the beginning and end of the documents are left out. In addition to classification, some of the memorandums of conversations contain several lines left out with the marking "unclear". On some⁵ of these missing lines it is possible to deduct from the context that these lines might have been edited out on purpose to not include racist or derogative remarks. These features of the FRUS documents

³ Trachtenberg 2006, 163.

⁴ Trachtenberg 2006, 161–162.

⁵ For example documents 57,58 and 59 in *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa.

only emphasize what Trachtenberg writes of all primary sources requiring carefully conducted critical analysis of not only what is included but also the parts that are left out.

The FRUS documents provide a narrow perspective of events as they only tell the official US view of events and are part of an edited collection meaning several documents are left out. Nevertheless, the FRUS documents are the best source for studying foreign relations history of the US. Concerning this subject, the FRUS documents are a crucial source since a big percentage of documents from the UDI Rhodesia were destroyed⁶ once the Smith regime collapsed. The danger in using only FRUS documents as a primary source is the possible generalization of the viewpoints of the United States as the actual historical narrative of how the events unfolded. Regarding the research questions of this thesis, the FRUS documents are the most suitable for answering them and are referred to only to portray US viewpoints. The FRUS documents used in this study are mostly letters and telegrams sent and received by high ranking US policymakers compared to routine diplomatic exchange between the embassies and the State Department which is more common in FRUS collections. Most of the FRUS documents were not meant to be published as is at the time but the collection also contains press releases and other public statements such as speeches. Many of the private documents refer to the public ones before and after they were published for example the reactions to public speeches and the preparing of press releases.

Research questions and structure

The thesis consists of three main chapters with two sub-chapters each. The thesis is written in a chronological order and answers the research questions in the main chapters with some research questions carrying throughout the thesis while some are answered in single chapters.

The main research questions are:

- 1) Why was the United States Government interested towards attaining majority rule in Rhodesia?
- 2) How did the United States policymakers act on these interests?

⁶ Horne 2001, 23.

The sub questions are:

- a) Were there differences in the Presidencies / administrations of the 1970s United States regarding the relations and goals towards majority rule in Rhodesia? If so, why?
- b) How did the US interest towards promoting majority rule in Rhodesia fit in to broader US Foreign political interests in Southern Africa and its relations to the countries of the region and why?
- c) How did the Cold War and détente affect the process of pursuing majority rule in Rhodesia?
- d) How did the Anglo-American relations affect / come in to play in the attempts to achieve majority rule in Rhodesia and why?

The research questions will be answered by examining the primary sources and combining the findings with prior research. The thesis focuses on the 1970s which consists of three different US presidencies. The timeframe for the study is from 1969 to 1979. The reasons for the specific timeframe are the lack of current research from the era, the available sources and the fact that the theme of majority rule was the leading issue in United States foreign policy towards Rhodesia in the 1970s. In addition to narrowing down the timeframe, the subject will be strictly narrowed down to the official foreign political viewpoints of the United States regarding majority rule in Rhodesia and adjoining topics and countries.

The three main chapters of the thesis are divided by both theme and time frame. The first chapter covers the Nixon and Ford administrations and especially during the latter period the growth of US interest towards Rhodesia and its transition to majority rule. In the first chapter the most crucial policymaker regarding the Rhodesian issue as well as foreign policy in general was Henry Kissinger. The first chapter ends to the breaking down of the Geneva conference and the second chapter consists of the transition from the Ford administration to the Carter era. Time – wise the second chapter covers the first year of Carter’s presidency. The third and final chapter focuses on the momentum slowing down and transition to majority rule in the newly established state of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia.

Terminology

Regarding the use of the term “Rhodesia” many historians have chosen to either anachronistically use the name Zimbabwe or use the colonial name on Southern-Rhodesia whereas some scholars have avoided this by simply referring to the country as the Smith regime. For the sake of clarity, in this thesis the country is referred to by its somewhat controversial UDI name Rhodesia since this is the term used in the primary sources. The term Southern Rhodesia is used when referring to the region prior to the UDI. The term frontline presidents is used of Tanzania’s President Nyerere, Zambia’s President Kaunda and Mozambique’s President Machel as this is the term used in the primary source and is the only suitable term to describe this group of leaders. The term Patriotic Front refers to the alliance between the guerilla armies of ZAPU and ZANLA and their leaders Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe respectively. Since the study focuses on the foreign political interests of the United States it is crucial to examine the meaning of foreign political interests of a country. Several factors such as economics, hostilities and other relationships with foreign countries, domestic politics and history are part of foreign political interests. The interests of a country are defined by policymakers and largely depend on the ideology of the people crafting the policies. With change of administration or personnel, the interests of the country can shift and furthermore, the ideals and goals of policymakers can change over time or differ depending on the issues.

Historical Background of Rhodesia

The colonial history of Zimbabwe and Southern Africa in general is tightly linked with South Africa. The British interest towards the Zimbabwe plateau started in late 19th century in the pursuit of gold found in the region. This also inspired British businessman Cecil Rhodes to obtain a royal charter to his British South Africa Company (BSAC) in 1889 to secure to British and Cape interest the areas north of the Limpopo and Zambesi rivers. The BSAC started pushing in to the area from the Cape Colony in South Africa as the “pioneer column” which set out in 1890, using armed force to seize land when necessary. The main aim of the BSAC was to obtain mining rights but in addition it attained farming land and taxed the locals of the region.⁷The area officially adopted the name Rhodesia in 1898 under the rule of the BSAC. The governance of the area was

⁷ Saunders, Smith, 610–614; Porter 2009.

first done under the Order-in-Council as of 1898 and as of 1923 Rhodesia achieved Responsible Government and acted as a self-governing colony.⁸ In 1910 four South African colonies formed the Union of South Africa, which gained self-representation in 1931. The constitution of 1910 heavily favored the white minority of South Africa and segregation between the races slowly grew until the 1948 general election where the National Party rose to power and begun drafting legislation concerning the justification and enforcement of racial segregation, apartheid.⁹

The white minority and its relationship to the black majority is a significant factor when examining the history of Rhodesia both before and after the UDI. For example, land ownership was one of the main issues that strained this relationship dating back to the 1890s and remained an issue, which was evident in the Land Apportionment Bill that sought to legalize land segregation and was passed in 1930 and implemented in 1931. The bill did not only split the land according to race but also defined landownership differently in the European and Native areas so that European land was seen as privately owned where as black Africans could only attain a communal tenure. In addition to the land segregation, similar acts were passed that effectively restricted the African peasant agriculture that competed with the growing settler commercial agriculture.¹⁰ In addition to restricting the natives in the rural areas, legislation was also drafted to control native Africans in urbanized areas. The Native Accommodation and Registration act of 1946 which denied the unemployed black natives from moving in to urbanized areas are examples of legislature that had the most impact on black Africans.¹¹ In 1951 the Native Land Husbandry Act was adopted which further gave the administration control over the black majority and made it possible for the administration to not only accommodate locals to the countryside but also to transform them in to cheap labor needed in the commercialized urban areas.¹²

After the transfer to Responsible Government in 1923, Southern Rhodesia had acted as an unofficial autonomous entity with the British Parliament having a veto-right to all legislation

⁸ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 58–59; Mlambo & Raftopoulos 2009.

⁹ Omer-Cooper 2006, 158–183.

¹⁰ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 66–68; Mlambo & Raftopoulos 2009.

¹¹ Mlambo 97–98; Mlambo & Raftopoulos 2009.

¹² Mlambo 86; Mlambo & Raftopoulos 2009.

which was never used.¹³ However, Southern Rhodesia also became part of the Central African Federation which included Nyasaland, Northern and Southern Rhodesia and lasted from 1953 to its collapse ten years later. The Federation was administered from Salisbury in Southern Rhodesia and it had both federal and territorial government posts. The Federation was an economic success and Southern Rhodesia as the most industrialized of the territories benefitted the most of the Federation. The inequalities of the economic benefits of the Federation in addition to increased racial tensions led to the gradual collapse of the Federation when the territories adapted new constitutions. In 1963 both Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland attained majority rule and became independent, Northern Rhodesia as Zambia and Nyasaland as Malawi.¹⁴ In Southern Rhodesia the Prime Minister saw that independence was impossible without majority rule and introduced a legislature package that improved education, land owning and political rights for the blacks. This alienated the Europeans from his party and led to the rise of a new right-wing party, The Rhodesian Front that won the elections in 1962. In April 1964 former Minister of Finance Ian Smith rose to power as the Prime Minister and after 18 months of negotiations with Great Britain Smith's government declared Rhodesia unilaterally independent on the 11 of November 1965.¹⁵

In the immediate aftermath of the UDI economic sanctions were imposed towards Rhodesia first by Britain and later by the UN. The first acts by Britain were removing Rhodesia from the Sterling and the Commonwealth preference system, ceasing trade and banning Rhodesia from London's capital markets. The UN Security Council imposed an Oil Embargo and selective sanctions in 1966 and more comprehensive mandatory sanctions in 1968.¹⁶ Despite the mandatory sanctions Rhodesia was able to survive due to countries that did not fully enforce the sanctions; South Africa and Portuguese Mozambique were the most vital life-lines for land locked Rhodesia in both export and import.¹⁷ Mozambique attained independence¹⁸ in 1975 and immediately enforced the UN sanctions as well as confiscated all Rhodesian owned property and assets. These turns of

¹³ Watts 2006, 441–442.

¹⁴ Mlambo, 89–93; Mlambo & Raftopoulos 2009.

¹⁵ Watts 2006, 442.

¹⁶ Mtisi, Nyakudya, Barnes, 126–127; Mlambo & Raftopoulos 2009.

¹⁷ Mtisi, Nyakudya, Barnes, 133–134; Mlambo & Raftopoulos 2009.

¹⁸ After ten years of fighting, Mozambique gained independence from Portugal in June 25th 1975. Birmingham, Ranger, 349–355; Birmingham & Martin 1983.

events made Rhodesia more dependent on South Africa as 80 percent of Rhodesia's foreign trade now passed through South Africa.¹⁹ The two nationalist African opposition parties, ZAPU and ZANU, both formed their own military wings ZIRPA and ZANLA, after the UDI.²⁰ The guerrilla war started slowly and the first major strikes against white settlers occurred in 1972 when ZANLA guerillas attacked white farmers in the countryside. The independence of Mozambique in 1975 opened a new 764 mile long front for the guerillas that started operating from Mozambique.²¹ The opposing sides were not strictly defined by race, although the vast majority of the guerillas were blacks and many black Rhodesians also fought as volunteers for the Rhodesian army and acted as police officers.²²

The conflicts in Angola and Mozambique in the 1960s and 1970s were tied to and heavily affected the situation in Rhodesia in 1976. In Angola a violent uprising of African nationalists against Portuguese colonial rule started in 1961 and raged on into the mid-1970s.²³ In January 1975 the Portuguese were willing to start the transition of Angola towards independence that was led by the three largest African political parties. However, they were unsuccessful in stabilizing the country and instead emerged in civil war sparked by neighboring Zaire's backing of one of the groups and sending Zairian troops to Angola. Other foreign powers including the Warsaw Pact and the United States backed opposing groups but did not directly take part in the conflict. In October 1975 South Africa launched an invasion of Angola and shortly after tens of thousands of Cuban militants were shipped to fight in Angola. In addition to intervention by official governments American, French and British mercenaries took part in the conflict on various fronts. Supported by Cuban forces, the Angolans were able to drive South Africa back from Angola the same year and in November 1975 Portugal let go of Angola completely giving power to "the people of Angola".²⁴ The communist power taking part in the Angolan Civil War was not unnoticed by the United States policymakers who feared the growth of Soviet and Cuban influence in Southern Africa. United States Secretary of State Henry Kissinger had backed South Africa in its invasion but due to domestic politics, most notably the Defense Appropriations Act,

¹⁹ Mtisi, Nkyakudya, Barnes, 144; Mlambo & Raftopoulos 2009.

²⁰ Mtisi, Nkyakudya, Barnes, 119–120; Mlambo & Raftopoulos 2009.

²¹ Mtisi, Nkyakudya, Barnes, 142–145; Mlambo & Raftopoulos 2009.

²² Mtisi, Nkyakudya, Barnes, 120, 125; Mlambo & Raftopoulos 2009.

²³ Birmingham, Ranger, 340–343; Birmingham & Martin 1983.

²⁴ Birmingham, Ranger, 357–359; Birmingham & Martin 1983.

was not able to financially or militarily take part in the conflict.²⁵ The rapid escalation and internationalization of the conflict in Angola and the effects of domestic politics towards military intervention in a similar conflict affected United States policymakers in 1976 regarding the situation in Rhodesia.

Historical background of Unites States and Rhodesia

During the time of the Central African Federation, United States policymakers chose to approach the question of Southern Rhodesia's independency by supporting Great Britain and opposing possible declaration of unilateral independence by the white minority. Great Britain and the US saw that swift decolonization of central Africa was best for them both domestically and internationally since there was no major communist activity in any of the Federation territories and African nationalist sought support from the Americans. These factors resulted in the United States merely observing the developments in the area and letting Great Britain take the lead in the matters.²⁶ The dissolution of the Central African Federation disturbed the stability of the area with increased threat of Communist infiltration in the region. Zambia's copper production and distribution, in which the United States was heavily involved and dependent of, was also threatened by these changes. The United States was not used to following other countries' lead and as frustration concerning the situation grew in the United States it also brought friction to the relationship between the US and Great Britain.²⁷ From late 1964 the United States started planning for the possible UDI and its' impact on Zambian copper fearing that if Zambia embargoed the UDI regime of Rhodesia it would retaliate by cutting off electricity and coal in addition to closing transportation through Rhodesia.²⁸ During the course of 1965 the United States followed the developments in Rhodesia and the negotiation between Southern Rhodesia's Prime Minister Ian Smith and Great Britain's Prime Minister Harold Wilson closely. The United States made it clear both officially and unofficially that if the UDI occurred, the Americans would back Great Britain and take part in the economic sanctions against Rhodesia.²⁹

²⁵ Sargent 2015, 220–221.

²⁶ Watts 2006, 442–443.

²⁷ Watts 2006, 444.

²⁸ Watts 2006, 450.

²⁹ Watts 2006, 456–457.

The United States representatives in the United Nations Security Council voted in favor of the sanctions against Rhodesia in 1966 and 1968. Both series of sanctions were imposed in the United States under executive order.³⁰ Prior to the 1966 sanctions, Rhodesia was the largest source of chrome ore imported to the United States and after the UDI sanctions, the Soviet Union became the new primary source for chrome and in 1968-1969 60 percent of imported chrome came from the Soviets, which gave them the ability to control prices. To counter this in November 1971 the so-called Byrd Amendment was passed in Congress which prohibited embargoing any strategic material from a non-communist country as long as the same product was imported from a communist country.³¹ The passing of the Byrd amendment made it possible for the United States to reopen Chrome trade with Rhodesia despite the sanctions.³² In December 1973 the senate rejected the first of many attempts, supported by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and President Ford, to repeal the amendment. In 1977 the repeal of the amendment was successful and importing Rhodesian chrome was once again forbidden in the US.³³

In the 1970s human rights and non-governmental organizations became influential in the international community as organizations such as Amnesty international got widespread media attention towards human rights issues around the world. This development also effected the crafting of foreign policy for highly influential countries such as the United States, as the human rights aspect could not be ignored.³⁴ Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's relationship to the combination of foreign politics and human rights was complex and changed during his career. He believed that avoiding major wars while advancing national interest was the core purpose of statecraft. Kissinger mentioned the words "human rights" in 39.6 percent of his public speeches in 1976 compares to 5.5 percent in 1974. Nevertheless in his view human rights and the sovereignty of nations were a complex equation and not necessarily Americas business.³⁵ In addition to the emergence of human rights in global politics in the early 1970s were also marked by the détente face in the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union.³⁶ By 1976

³⁰ Randolph 1978, 58.

³¹ Randolph 1978, 57;60.

³² Mtisi, Nkyakudya, Barnes, 134; Mlambo & Raftopoulos 2009.

³³ Randolph, 1978–1979.

³⁴ Sargent 2015, 201–203.

³⁵ Sargent 2015, 206–209.

³⁶ Sargent 2015, 9.

détente was slowly falling apart which was evident from controversies in the United Nations and also events in Mozambique and Angola. The Angolan Civil War was seen by United States policymakers as a proxy struggle between the superpowers.³⁷

³⁷ Sargent 2015, 220–222.

1. Avoiding a Proxy War

The first chapter examines how and why pursuing transition to majority rule in Rhodesia first became a foreign political interest for the United States in the early nineteen seventies and how the US chose to act on those interests. It covers the Presidencies of Nixon and Ford with Henry Kissinger being a significant figure in the crafting of foreign policy during both administrations.

According to Gerald Horne the ties between the US and Rhodesia after the UDI were a lot tighter and close knit than the official relations between the two countries. Nixon aimed to please the southern conservative wing of the Republican Party with what Horne calls the “Southern African Strategy” which meant normalizing relations with the countries of Southern Africa, Rhodesia included.³⁸ Horne sees that Kissinger was not interested in Africa until the Cuban interference in Angola which led to Kissinger’s trip to Southern Africa in April 1976. Horne does not go into detail on Kissinger’s trips and meeting of 1976 but says Kissinger was motivated to pursue majority rule in Rhodesia only as to avoid a confrontation with the Soviet bloc. Horne also notes how the quest of pursuing majority rule in Rhodesia possibly lost Ford the Texas primary.³⁹

1.1. Background to Kissinger’s interest towards Rhodesia

During the Nixon presidency, the administrations main focus was in the handling of the Vietnam War with Africa being far-off on the priority list. In 1969 Rhodesia was not significant to Nixon or Kissinger but similar to Horne’s notion of “Southern African Strategy” DeRoche views that Nixon chose his approach concerning Rhodesia in ways that pleased or at least did not anger the elements of the Republican Party that held the Smith regime of Rhodesia in high regard.⁴⁰ In general, DeRoche portrays Nixon’s stance at Rhodesia as indifferent which is according to DeRoche is evident in the passing of the Byrd Amendment in 1971. In DeRoche’s view Nixon and Kissinger did not actively support or oppose the drafting of the Byrd amendment.⁴¹

³⁸ Horne 2001, 148–149.

³⁹ Horne 2001, 154–156.

⁴⁰ DeRoche 2001, 160–163.

⁴¹ DeRoche 2001, 171–172.

The Nixon administration's first contact with the situation in Rhodesia came a month after the presidential inauguration on the 18th of February. The director of the Bureau of Intelligence sent Secretary of State Rogers a note concerning the possibility of Rhodesia declaring itself a republic in the near future which would effectively end the negotiations between British and Rhodesians of a settlement concerning the UDI.⁴² On the 3rd of April 1969 the President's National Security Affairs advisor Henry Kissinger contacted President Nixon concerning National Security Study medium on Southern Africa which Kissinger would send out if Nixon approved. Kissinger mentioned that there had been no top level research on US interest in the region since Kennedy and that the US possibly had conflicting interests in the area that should be identified. Additionally Kissinger mentioned that the US could change how it dealt with white minority regimes and these options should be researched.⁴³ Nixon approved the study and on the 10th of April Kissinger ordered the review to be constructed on the subject⁴⁴. This shows that although clearly not a top priority, Rhodesia was an issue that concerned the Nixon administration from the beginning. Kissinger did not specify his remarks concerning white regimes but since it was the Johnson administration that enforced the sanctions on Rhodesia it can be interpreted that Kissinger meant the Nixon administration could take a different path.

Rhodesia remained a recurring topic for the Nixon administration during the spring of 1969 with the main issues being attempts to move sanctioned chrome owned by US companies out of Rhodesia⁴⁵ and the presence of the American consulate general⁴⁶ in Salisbury and its future if the Rhodesian's were to declare a republic. The National Security Council paper on Southern Africa was presented in early December and it outlined US interest towards Southern Africa. The paper mentioned that the US has to take into account that its relations with white minority regimes may effect relations with black African states and other non-white countries. Concerning Rhodesia the paper mentioned that the US is in contact with liberation movements that oppose white minority

⁴² Intelligence note from the Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (Hughes) to Secretary of State Rogers, 18.2.1969. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 4-5.*

⁴³ Memorandum from the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon, 3.4.1969. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 7-8.*

⁴⁴ National Security Memorandum 39, 10.4.1969. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 9.*

⁴⁵ Memorandum from Roger Morris of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), 5.5.1969. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 11-13.*

⁴⁶ Memorandum from the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon, 11.7.1969, *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 18.*

governments and that the biggest diplomatic question concerning Rhodesia in the near future is the US Consulate General serving over a thousand Americans in Rhodesia. The paper concluded that Southern Africa is in many ways important to the US and it offered six different options on how to approach Southern Africa ranging from full support to minority white region to embracing transition to majority rule.⁴⁷

Both DeRoche and Horne argue that Kissinger's and Nixon's stance towards Rhodesia during Nixon's presidency was indifferent at best and that Kissinger embraced transition to majority rule only after the Cuban intervention in Angola 1975. The NSC paper of 1969 shows that supporting the transition to majority rule in Southern Africa was one of the six options for policy towards Southern Africa. Without going in to further detail, four out of six of the options were more or less in favor of the majority blacks with options 5 and 6 taking the hardest stand against white regimes. Eventually Kissinger's pursuit of majority rule in Rhodesia in 1976 shares most of its reasoning with option number 6 drafted seven years earlier. Option number 6 argued that transition to majority rule in Southern Africa is inevitable and the US should ensure that the new black majority governments do not automatically join the Soviet bloc due to US support of white minority regimes.

The National Security Council held a meeting going through the NSC paper on Southern Africa on the 17th of December 1969. All the options were briefly revised and although no official decisions were made during the meeting, Nixon concluded:

*Economics are the most important foreign influence on South Africa and Rhodesia. I think we should come down on the side permitting more trade and investment.*⁴⁸

On the 28th of January 1970 Kissinger sent forth the President's decision on a Southern African policy based on the previous NSC meeting. Nixon's approach was a mixture between the NSC paper's options 2 and 3 taking a public stance against apartheid and racial segregation but unofficially embracing investment in the region. The US would not withdraw the Consulate from Salisbury unless a question on US recognition of the Smith government arises in which case

⁴⁷ Paper Prepared by the National Security Council Interdepartmental Group for Africa, 9.12.1969. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 29–54.*

⁴⁸ Minutes of a National Security Council Meeting, 17.12.1969. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 63.*

Nixon would review the policy. The chrome trade being the major economic interest for the US in Rhodesia, Nixon ordered an interdepartmental study on the subject of chrome and sanctions.⁴⁹ Rhodesia declared itself a republic on the second of March, which led to Nixon closing down the Consulate and ordering an immediate study on how the US sanctions against Rhodesia would comply with the UN sanctions but cause minimal damage to US firms operating in the area.⁵⁰

After the declaration of a republic in early May and the US decision⁵¹ to maintain sanctions on Rhodesia no pressing matters concerning Rhodesia arose until Zambia's President Kaunda sent President Nixon a letter discussing concerns of US involvement in the region. Nixon replied Kaunda assuring that the US stood firmly against apartheid and racial injustice. Nixon also mentioned Kaunda's role as the current chairman of the non-aligned conference and assured that the US ambassador to Zambia would be up to date with all US interests to the region and could discuss them any time.⁵²

In his book *Black, White and Chrome* Andrew DeRoche states that Nixon's and Kissinger's indifference towards Rhodesia allowed the congress to pass the Byrd Amendment effectively ceasing the ban on importing chrome from Rhodesia. DeRoche claims that the NSC paper and its handling were part of a delay pattern concerning Rhodesia and especially the chrome issue.⁵³ I argue that although Nixon and Kissinger did not actively support or oppose the Byrd amendment in public, indifference is the wrong term to describe their approach to Rhodesia and the chrome issue. As earlier mentioned, the issues in Rhodesia were acknowledged by top level member of the Nixon administration from the beginning of Nixon's term. In addition, I conclude that the NSC paper and the meetings that followed it show an active interest in the matter that does not fit the term indifferent. It seems that the Nixon administration wanted to have all the necessary information on the subject before acting, since they knew that any decision on the matter would raise highly vocal opposition.

⁴⁹ National Security Decision memorandum 38, 28.1.1970. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 69 – 70.

⁵⁰ National Security Decision memorandum 47, 9.3.1970. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 76 – 77.

⁵¹ National Security Decision memorandum 75, 7.8.1970. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 113 – 114.

⁵² Telegram from Department of State to the Embassy in Zambia, 21.1.1971. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 121.

⁵³ DeRoche 2001, 161–164

The first mention of the Byrd Amendment in the FRUS documents was on the 24th of September 1971 when the amendment had already passed by the Senate. US representative to the UN George HW Bush sent a telegram to the State Department in which he urged the removal of the Byrd Amendment and that the US government should support the State Department which had taken a stance against the bill.⁵⁴ On the 28th of September Kissinger sent a memo to the President in which he outlined the effect of the passing of the Byrd Amendment to the US as well as informed of attempts to repeal the amendment. Kissinger noted that it seemed that the Administration fought the bill but it was still passed by a ten vote margin and that passing the bill aside did not seem possible at the time. President Nixon had written in the margin of the memo that he agreed with the Byrd Amendment and the President had also underlined Kissinger point of the cost of the chrome ban which had tripled the price of chrome imports.⁵⁵ In a conversation with Kissinger later that day Nixon revisited his stance on the issue by stating:

*Don't let State pucker out of this and sink the goddamn – we want to continue to buy that chrome. I mean why should – why the hell do we let the Russian always –*⁵⁶

Regarding the Byrd Amendment Gerald Horne mentions the various US senators and congressmen who worked to get the bill approved as well as the chrome lobbyist who naturally supported the amendment. Horne does not mention Nixon or the white house administration at all concerning the drafting and passing of the bill.⁵⁷ DeRoche delves deeper in to the drafting and passing process of the amendment and also names Senator Byrd's personal motives for the amendment. DeRoche claims that in May 1971 a chrome lobbyist got UN representative George Bush to support the cause on a national security angle⁵⁸. This seems odd considering Bush's telegram to the State Department where he stated that he "strongly associated himself" with the stance taken by Senator McGee who opposed the bill.⁵⁹ The bill was passed and signed in to law

⁵⁴ Telegram from the Mission to the United Nations to the State Department, 24.9.1971. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 141.

⁵⁵ Memorandum from the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon, 28.9.1971. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 142–143.

⁵⁶ Conversation between President Nixon and the President's Advisor to National Security Affairs (Kissinger), 28.9.1971. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 144.

⁵⁷ Horne 2001, 151–152.

⁵⁸ DeRoche 2001, 172.

⁵⁹ Telegram from the Mission to the United Nations to the State Department, 24.9.1971. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 141.

by President Nixon during December 1971 and it came in to effect on the first of January 1972. Kissinger consulted Nixon on how to react to the amendment and informed the President on the State Departments suggestions which were all aimed to dismantle the amendment. Nixon agreed to Kissinger's advice and chose to comply with the amendment and cease the ban of Rhodesian chrome.⁶⁰

DeRoche concludes his analysis of the passing of the Byrd Amendment stating that the passing of the bill "had occurred because Nixon and Kissinger, from 1969 to 1971, simply did not care about events in Southern Africa"⁶¹. It is true that both Nixon and Kissinger had racist views of the black Africans and that they did not actively participate in the passing or blocking of the Byrd Amendment. However the amount of top level memos, telegrams and meetings concerning Southern Africa and Rhodesia during the Nixon Presidency prove that the Nixon Administration was interested in the region, especially the economic aspects, and although they were not concerned with promoting a transition to majority rule in the white minority regimes, they're stance on the matter was not indifferent.

Despite the emergence of the Rhodesian Republic in 1971 the negotiations between the British and the Rhodesians continued. British PM Heath requested Nixon to try to convince Rhodesia to accept the proposal. In November 1971 a letter was sent to be passed on to Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith, to convince him that the United States wished to normalize relations with Rhodesia but could not advance on the matter without a Rhodesian settlement based on the five principles proposed by the British.⁶² PM Heath thanked the Nixon administration on the support and informed on the advance of the negotiations and that Smith had generally agreed to follow the five principles.⁶³ Although the negotiations started with Smith agreeing to the process, the British withdrew during May 1972 after they expected that the black majority would not support the negotiation, which was one of the key requirements in the five principles.⁶⁴ Even though the

⁶⁰ Memorandum from the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon, 17.1.1972. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 169-170.

⁶¹ DeRoche 2001, 177.

⁶² Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in South African, 23.11.1971. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 160-161.

⁶³ Message from Prime Minister Heath to President Nixon, 24.11.1971. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 161-163.

⁶⁴ Ryan 2004.

1971 negotiation attempt was unsuccessful, it is a good example of how the Anglo-American relations worked concerning Southern Africa. The US willingness to immediately back the British was similar to the US response during the UDI in 1964 – 1965 and the same trend would continue in 1976. Even more important is the fact stated earlier, that in 1971 the transition to majority rule in Rhodesia was not in the interest of the Nixon administration but never the less they were ready to support the British in the negotiations that would eventually have led to the transition.

1.2. Laying the foundations for the negotiations

According to DeRoche, during the years 1972 to 1975 the US was mostly passive towards the situation in Rhodesia except several attempts to repeal the Byrd amendment. Henry Kissinger who now was the Secretary of State joined those seeking to repeal the amendment in 1973 arguing that the amendment is harmful to foreign relations without being significant to national security or economics.⁶⁵

On March 21st 1976 Secretary of State Henry Kissinger sent a telegram⁶⁶ to British foreign Secretary Callaghan, who was just named the next Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, responding to an earlier message⁶⁷ sent by Callaghan concerning events in Southern Africa. Callaghan had brought up several threats and issues in the region one of which was the situation in Rhodesia and the threat of Soviet or Cuban interference such as in Angola. Callaghan also brought up the need of addressing the transition to majority rule in Rhodesia sooner rather than later.⁶⁸ Horne sees that the international interference, especially the Cubans, caused panic among the Americans and forced Kissinger to take note of Africa in which he was not generally interested in. ⁶⁹ DeHorne agrees that the proxy war in Angola combined with the Congress ceasing the funding of US covert operations in the area was a crucial factor for Kissinger's pursuit

⁶⁵ DeRoche 2001, 195, 201.

⁶⁶ Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom, 21.3.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 481–482.*

⁶⁷ Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom, 23.3.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 482–484.*

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Horne 2001, 155.

of majority rule. In addition DeHorne notes that the US and Nigerian relations were strained due to the US involvement in Angola as well as the Byrd Amendment which was problematic concerning Nigeria's leading role among black African Nations. Without peace negotiations Nigeria could bring the case of armed intervention against Smith to the UN which would be highly harmful for the US.⁷⁰

The Portuguese coup that resulted in the fast collapse of the Portuguese African Colonies brought Southern Africa into the spotlight for the US. Most scholars have come to the same conclusion that the events in Angola and especially the Cuban intervention there combined with congress cutting down funds for military solutions forced Kissinger to embrace the Transition to majority rule to serve the larger purpose of the Cold War and détente. I agree on these statements in general but not that the US and Kissinger were uninterested in the region prior to 1976. The option of supporting majority rule in the region was brought up already in 1969 and the option was nearly identical to the way how the British and the US would approach Rhodesia in 1976.

On the 25th of April 1976 Henry Kissinger met Tanzania's President Julius Nyerere in Dar es Salaam and discussed the situation in Southern Africa. Concerning Rhodesia Kissinger stated: "... I am prepared to put the power of the United States behind the liberation of Rhodesia, in unmistakable terms, so Smith and Vorster cannot possibly misunderstand."⁷¹ Kissinger continued that he did not wish to "see blocks in Africa"⁷² and does not want foreign conflicts to be fought on African soil. Nyerere's view on Southern Africa was that the Rhodesian regime should be pressured and South Africa should also face pressure regarding its military occupation of Namibia. Nyerere also ultimately wanted the apartheid of South Africa to fall. Kissinger explained his views that all of the three concerns were shared by the United States but since the South African question was harder and more complicated the primary focus would be on Rhodesia and Namibia. Kissinger revealed that he had planned to deliver a speech in Lusaka on the 27th of April concerning Rhodesia and in the speech he would lay pressure on South Africa's Prime Minister

⁷⁰ DeRoche 2001, 208–210.

⁷¹ Memorandum of Conversation, 25.4.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII* Southern Africa, 485.

⁷² Ibid.

Vorster concerning Rhodesia.⁷³ Kissinger consulted Nyerere on the key-points of the speech and its impact on the African States. In the speech Kissinger would say that the US will not support factions, urge the neighboring countries of Rhodesia to close their borders and promise that repealing the Byrd Amendment is worked on. Nyerere assured Kissinger that big powers are not wanted in Africa such as in the Angolan Civil War.⁷⁴

Kissinger continued his African tour to Lusaka, Zambia and on the 27th of April he met with Zambia's president Kenneth Kaunda and held a similar meeting of the same topics as with Nyerere two days earlier. Kaunda shared Nyerere's opinion of putting pressure on Rhodesia's Prime Minister Smith and said that it should be done by South Africa.⁷⁵ Kaunda assured Kissinger concerning foreign influence in Southern Africa:

*We do not want to see outside interference at all, and we would not like to see outside support for factions in Rhodesia. They should be left alone; that is the only way to avoid an Angolan situation in Rhodesia.*⁷⁶

Kissinger promised that the US would use its diplomatic and economic powers to lay pressure on Rhodesia and that the United States "are totally behind majority rule"⁷⁷. Kissinger also expressed that if foreign powers keep out of Southern African affairs, the US will support the neighboring states of Rhodesia and take part in resettlement efforts with the British concerning the white minority. Kissinger acknowledged the problematics concerning South Africa's apartheid but concluded that the Rhodesian and Namibian issues should be dealt with first and solving them require help from South Africa.⁷⁸

⁷³ Memorandum of Conversation, 25.4.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 485–488.

⁷⁴ Memorandum of Conversation, 25.4.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 489–490.

⁷⁵ Memorandum of Conversation, 27.4.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 494–496.

⁷⁶ Memorandum of Conversation, 27.4.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 495.

⁷⁷ Memorandum of Conversation, 27.4.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 496.

⁷⁸ Memorandum of Conversation, 27.4.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 496–497.

Based on the meetings Kissinger held with the frontline presidents and the British representatives, the US's main motive for Majority rule in Rhodesia was to avoid confrontation with the communist superpowers. This motive was not a secret in 1976, which is evident from a briefing held by the director of the CIA H.W. Bush to Kissinger, the subject of which was a conversation between South Africa's Prime Minister Vorster and Rhodesia's Prime Minister Smith on June 13th 1976. The Prime Ministers discussed the on-going conflict in Rhodesia and Kissinger's plans of transition to majority rule. They saw avoiding a communist backed insurgency, as in Angola, as the main motivator for Kissinger's negotiations. Vorster thought that President Ford would lose his re-election and Kissinger would be removed from office. Vorster persuaded Smith towards being more open to the negotiation reminding him that they had the ultimate control of the timetables, not the Western States. Smith concluded that emphasizing the threat of communism was Rhodesia's best bet and was evasive when Vorster mentioned the possibility of majority rule.⁷⁹

Kissinger told the frontline presidents that avoiding confrontation with the communist powers was crucial for the United States. For instance scholars such as Daniel Sargent see the threat of Soviet interest to Black Nationalism in the region as the reason why Kissinger pursued a peaceful transition to majority rule in Rhodesia. In addition Sargent noted that Kissinger's new African Policy was unpopular in the United States and possibly resulted in Ford's defeat in the Texas primary just days after Kissinger Lusaka speech.⁸⁰ Kissinger himself knew that there would be major opposition in the United States as he stated to Kaunda: "While it is true that within the United States there will be resistance to my speech today, we have made our decision."⁸¹

Based on both primary and secondary sources the answer to the research question of the United States' interests in Rhodesia in 1976, the primary objective for American policymakers was to achieve majority rule in Rhodesia through diplomatic means and by doing so avoiding another Angola where superpowers fight a proxy war. The specific timing of the diplomatic process had several reasons: the escalation of the war in Rhodesia, the results of the Angolan Civil War and

⁷⁹ Memorandum From Director of Central Intelligence Bush to Secretary of State Kissinger, 19.8.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 523-526.

⁸⁰ Sargent 2015, 225.

⁸¹ Memorandum of Conversation, 27.4.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 496.

Mozambique's independence and support to African nationalists. The efforts to achieve majority rule were led by United States Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and included the highest officials of the countries that took part to the process, heads of state and foreign ministers. The Cold War was a factor for the United States to choose to pursue the issue diplomatically and avoid a confrontation with the Soviet bloc.

On the 8th of July 1976 Kissinger and a group of American foreign policy experts met in Washington D.C. with a similar group of British, led by Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Anthony Crossland, regarding more concrete plans of Rhodesia's transition to majority rule. Kissinger felt that both domestically for the US and for the success of the plan the best way would be for Ian Smith to willingly accept a transition government that he would not be a part of. This way the white Rhodesians would not feel it is forced upon them. The British were reluctant of Smith having any role in the transition but Kissinger was successful in presenting his view, that selling the transition to the white minority would be considerably easier with Ian Smith.⁸² Kissinger, however, did not think that Ian Smith was mandatory to the success of the plan: "I personally think getting an agreement signed is more important than who sign it."⁸³ Both the British and the Americans agreed that there would be a transition government that would hold free-elections and achieve majority rule within two years.⁸⁴ A month later in a private meeting between Kissinger and Callaghan the two discussed the plan for Rhodesia. A key-point, which was also crucial in the earlier meeting, was the economic guarantees for encouraging the white minority to stay in a majority ruled Rhodesia.⁸⁵

The planning of the negotiations continued on the 16th of August with Kissinger meeting the Ambassador Botha of South Africa. The main focuses of the meeting were Kissinger's next meeting with South Africa and the plan for the negotiations. Kissinger explained the significance of the place where they would meet and how it appeared to the frontline presidents. Kissinger

⁸² Memorandum of Conversation, 8.7.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 503-510.*

⁸³ Memorandum of Conversation, 8.7.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 507.*

⁸⁴ Memorandum of Conversation, 8.7.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 507-510.*

⁸⁵ Memorandum from the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Snowcroft) to President Ford, 5.8.1976. . *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 511-512.*

said that meeting in Europe, for instance Switzerland, would be the most convenient and non-provocative. Kissinger also showed Botha a preliminary draft for the negotiations and said he was concerned the British would show it to the frontline presidents prior to the negotiations. Botha made it clear that it is crucial that the British and Americans present the same plan to the Africans.⁸⁶ On August 17th Kissinger met with his fellow US foreign policy experts and discussed the British differing opinions. Kissinger stated: “The British perception is 100% the opposite of ours. They want to tie up the South Africans totally before any move.”⁸⁷ The British disagreed with Kissinger showing Botha only a summary of the plan instead of the full text. In Kissinger’s view the full text was possibly too favorable for the whites and would be hard to sell to the Black African Leaders. Kissinger thought that the British were more concerned in toppling Ian Smith than finding a solution to the problem.⁸⁸

On the 4th of September Kissinger and the American foreign policy experts met with Britain’s Secretary of State and his delegation concerning the Rhodesian issue. The main topics of the meeting were briefing each other on the situation and finally deciding how to approach Vorster and the South Africans. Crossland, who had just returned from Africa, said the African leaders felt passionately about Smith and wanted him removed as fast as possible. Mozambique’s president Machel had joined Nyerere and Kaunda in favoring a peaceful transition to majority rule in Rhodesia.⁸⁹ Rhodesia launched raids on ZANLA camps operating from Mozambique in 1976.⁹⁰ These attacks came as a surprise to Machel who approached both the US and the British after the raids. The frontline presidents had been willing to support the negotiation process but did not know how to unify the African nationalists. The next step towards the negotiations was who would be the negotiator with the nationalists. Both the British and the Americans came to a conclusion that their suggestion for a negotiator would be a white caretaker government that does not include Ian Smith. Concerning Vorster the two sides decided that Kissinger would

⁸⁶ Memorandum of Conversation, 16.8.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa*, 513–515.

⁸⁷ Memorandum of Conversation, 17.8.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa*, 520.

⁸⁸ Memorandum of Conversation, 17.8.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa*, 520–523.

⁸⁹ Memorandum of Conversation, 4.9.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa*, 527–528.

⁹⁰ Mtisi, Nkyakudya, Barnes, 149; Mlambo & Raftopoulos 2009

pressure Vorster to influence Smith to resign and if he was successful both the US and the UK would support the guarantee packages for the white minority, an issue for Machel.⁹¹

On the 6th of September Kissinger and the American delegation met with South African Prime Minister Vorster and his staff in Zurich, Switzerland concerning the majority rule negotiations of Rhodesia. Vorster started by stating that it was in the interest of both blacks and whites that the transition period would be as long as possible. Kissinger replied that the Rhodesian whites and blacks had to agree on a specific time frame but the goal was that it would not be longer than 18 to 24 months. Kissinger told Vorster that when the British representative visits South Africa Vorster would tell them that the Americans had introduced the papers concerning the negotiations and the South Africans were considering them but had not decided on them yet.⁹² Kissinger warned Vorster of telling the British that South Africa agrees to the terms:

*Because if you say you've accepted it, He will immediately run to Dar. And on the political paper too. Say you are sympathetically considering it.*⁹³

Kissinger and Vorster continued going through the plans and specifically the transition period. Kissinger also mentioned he would visit Nyerere in Dar es Salaam next and do his best to sell the plan to him. The emphasis of the meeting with Vorster was going through the plans and modifying certain words and phrases to be less provocative towards the African Nationalists and the frontline presidents backing them. Vorster was more concerned of how the papers define the rights and status of the whites of Rhodesia and how South Africa would benefit from the negotiations diplomatically. Vorster would present the results of the meeting to Smith and if Smith was willing to go forward with majority rule, Kissinger was set to meet them both in Pretoria after he had visited Tanzania and Zambia.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Memorandum of Conversation, 4.9.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 529–535.*

⁹² Memorandum of Conversation, 6.9.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 541–544.*

⁹³ Memorandum of Conversation, 6.9.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 543.*

⁹⁴ Memorandum of Conversation, 6.9.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 544–552.*

Kissinger met Nyerere in Dar es Salaam on the 15th of September and, in addition to Rhodesia, they discussed the imminent negotiations concerning Namibia. The main topic regarding Rhodesia was the guarantee package the western States were putting together. Kissinger explained that they were not only meant to encourage the whites to stay in Rhodesia, although this was important for the US domestically, but rather a larger scale investment to the economy of Rhodesia. Nyerere approved the guarantees and mentioned the British might call a constitutional conference and have at least symbolic role in the transition, which Kissinger did not oppose to. The two formulated a mutual press line and concluded that the rest was up to Rhodesia accepting majority rule.⁹⁵ On the 16th of September Kissinger continued his African tour in Lusaka where he met President Kaunda and conducted a similar meeting as with Nyerere a day earlier. Kissinger briefed Kaunda on what had been discussed with Nyerere and Kaunda agreed to their conclusions. Kissinger informed that he would meet with Smith and Vorster in Pretoria but only if Smith was willing to majority rule. Kissinger said he had pressured Vorster concerning Smith and promised that if he met Smith and Smith did not commit to majority rule the United States would publicly attack Smith's regime. Kaunda was wary of Kissinger meeting Smith and warned of the consequences if Smith was uncooperative. Kissinger also said South Africa could face US sanctions if they were uncooperative and in addition Kissinger assured Kaunda that even if Ford would lose the Presidential elections that fall, his opponent Carter had promised to support the negotiations if the African Presidents support it.⁹⁶

Kissinger met with Smith and Vorster in Pretoria on the 19th of September and discussed Rhodesia's transition to majority rule. Kissinger sent a summary of the meeting to President Ford the next day. Smith and his colleagues agreed to majority rule within two years, the immediate start of negotiations to create interim government, the structure of the interim government and the role of the British in the events. The Rhodesians insisted that once the interim government is formed all guerilla warfare and UN sanctions cease immediately. Kissinger promised that the US and the UK will support this diplomatically. Smith would return to Rhodesia and further negotiate the matter with his party and, if everything went well, he would announce the program

⁹⁵ Memorandum of Conversation, 15.9.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa*, 558–560.

⁹⁶ Memorandum of Conversation, 16.9.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa*, 562–565.

on TV and Radio on the 24th of September. The Rhodesian whites accepted the guarantee package formed by the US and UK and it only need approval of Rhodesian blacks. Kissinger told Ford that he had warned both Vorster and Smith of the dire consequences to them if Smith fails to act as he had promised.⁹⁷ Kissinger told the President that he had personal conflict in driving the matter:

This outcome gives me no pleasure. It is extremely painful for me to be the instrument of their fate—which could turn out to be disastrous. That they have accepted with good grace only makes it harder⁹⁸

On the 20th of September Kissinger met with Kaunda in Lusaka and briefed him on the negotiations with Smith and Vorster. Kaunda was shocked of Smith's approval and wanted to know what the guarantees were for Smith being true to his word. Kissinger told him Smith was aware of the consequences if he betrayed the trust of the US or South Africa, the closes ally to Smith. Kaunda promised to inform the other Frontline Presidents immediately and said he understood that if Smith announces the plan on Friday the 24th as promised, the frontline presidents will have to offer their support and acceptance. Kaunda and Kissinger saw Nyerere's reaction as the most crucial and Kaunda promised to use his influence on the other frontline presidents.⁹⁹

On the 23rd of September Kissinger and the American delegation met with British Prime Minister Callaghan and his staff in London. Callaghan asked Kissinger to tell the British what was expected of them in the following weeks if Smith would deliver his speech on the 24th. Kissinger said that the Africans agreed the next step would be to call a conference and that the British should have some role in them. Kissinger explained that due to several reasons the Americans could not take lead but instead could and would support the British in the matter. ¹⁰⁰ Kissinger mentioned the Cold War affecting the situation: “. . . it would get us in a Cold War competition with the Soviet

⁹⁷ Telegram From Secretary of State Kissinger to President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Snowcroft), 20.9.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 573–574.

⁹⁸ Telegram From Secretary of State Kissinger to President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Snowcroft), 20.9.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 574.

⁹⁹ Telegram From Secretary of State Kissinger to President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Snowcroft), 21.9.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 576–577.

¹⁰⁰ Memorandum of Conversation, 23.9.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 577–579.

Union. You have a legal responsibility to create a framework for an interim government.”¹⁰¹ Both Callaghan and Kissinger came to the conclusion that if Smith presented his speech, the British would contact the Africans and start setting up a conference. Kissinger thought the main focus of the conference would be the creation of the interim government and not a Constitutional Conference. Kissinger believed Smith had agreed to the transition due to several factors including the pressure from South Africa, the guerilla war and the economic sanctions.¹⁰²

The United States’, especially the Secretary of State Henry Kissinger’s, attempts to promote majority rule in Rhodesia had met relative success since it began in March 1976. The cooperation with the British was fundamental to achieve anything since Southern Rhodesia was still officially a part of the Commonwealth despite Rhodesia’s UDI. The British and Americans had shared goals but differed on some of the details and methods of how to achieve the transition to majority rule. The frontline presidents and South Africa’s Prime Minister Vorster were needed to approve the plans to build a stable foundation for the possible negotiations. The last piece in the puzzle was getting Rhodesia’s Prime Minister Ian Smith to agree to the transition. Everything the United States and Kissinger had been working hard to achieve hinged on Smith giving his speech on the 24th of September. A failure to do so could lead to a diplomatic crisis and possibly force the United States to act on their threats and enforce sanctions on South Africa.

Smith delivered the speech¹⁰³ as promised on the 24th of September in Salisbury, the capital of Rhodesia. In the speech Smith stated how the “Western nations”, especially Kissinger and the British Government, were pressuring Rhodesia to transition to majority rule. Smith said Kissinger shared his concerns of possible “Communist penetration” and the speech had strong anti-communist rhetoric and referred to the African nationalists fighting the Rhodesian government as terrorists. Smith also mentioned the financial guarantee packages that had been a

¹⁰¹ Memorandum of Conversation, 23.9.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 579.

¹⁰² Memorandum of Conversation, 23.9.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 580–584.S

¹⁰³ The speech can be found in Telegram From the Embassy in South Africa to Secretary of State Kissinger en Route to Washington, 24.9.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 588–593.

controversial issue especially for the frontline presidents.¹⁰⁴ Smith did not mention that the western powers wanted him to step down and instead he stated:

*For myself, I hope to share the privilege of continuing to play a part in helping to guide the destiny of Rhodesia. I remain dedicated to the ideal of doing all I can to ensure that Rhodesia remains a country in which all of us, of whatever race or colour, can live and work and prosper together in peace, harmony and stability.*¹⁰⁵

The overall tone in the speech was defiant and painted the picture that the Rhodesian government had been driven to a corner concerning the transition to majority rule.

On the 24th of September President Ford sent a message to Prime Minister Callaghan congratulating him and Kissinger in their efforts concerning Rhodesia. Ford emphasized the importance of forming the interim government as fast as possible. He also promised the full support of the United States to Great Britain during the negotiations and in the aftermath, both diplomatic and economic. Ford also praised the collaboration of the two countries in their attempts of finding a solution to the problem in Rhodesia.¹⁰⁶

The speech made by Smith was a major victory for Kissinger since this was the first time Smith publicly embraced even the possibility of majority rule in the near future. However the overall tone of the speech was defiant and did not give the impressions that the Smith regime had come to the conclusion of majority rule without outside pressure. At this point it seemed that the negotiation for majority rule and independence could begin between the African Nationalists and the Smith regime. It is noteworthy that at this point neither Kissinger nor any other top-level US representative had met directly with the Rhodesian Nationalists but had opted to mainly negotiate with the Frontline Presidents, South Africans and finally the Smith regime. This highlights Kissinger's earlier remarks that he did not personally enjoy pushing majority rule in to Rhodesia and mainly cared of stabilizing the region and avoiding confrontation with the Soviets.

¹⁰⁴ Telegram From the Embassy in South Africa to Secretary of State Kissinger en Route to Washington, 24.9.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 588–592.

¹⁰⁵ Telegram From the Embassy in South Africa to Secretary of State Kissinger en Route to Washington, 24.9.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 592.

¹⁰⁶ Message From President Ford to British Prime Minister Callaghan, 24.9.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 594.

On the 25th of September Kissinger sent a telegram to President Kaunda regarding Smith's speech. Kissinger wished to clarify certain details of the speech, for instance that the language Smith used was meant for the shocked audience of Rhodesia and would not have been recommended by the United States. Smith had also mentioned the economic guarantees to the white minority in the speech and Kissinger emphasized that they are a matter of discussion and the frontline presidents should not be concerned about them. The focus of the telegram was to stress how much work had been done to achieve Smith's speech and how negative reception of it could possibly give Smith a reason to back away from the process. Kissinger thanked Kaunda and the other presidents and said that their role would only grow once the negotiations start in supporting the African Nationalists of Rhodesia.¹⁰⁷ Kaunda responded on the 27th thanking Kissinger of his message and clarification of several troubling points in the speech. Kaunda thanked Kissinger for his work on the matter and vowed that he and the other frontline presidents want to solve the Rhodesian issue. Kaunda stated that Great Britain, definitely not Ian Smith, should organize the conference to create the transitional government and asked the United States to pressure the British to do it as quickly as possible. Kaunda was worried that Smith would back away but was hopeful that the transition to majority rule could happen successfully.¹⁰⁸

On the 30th of September Kissinger received a letter from Ian Smith which he had also sent to Prime Ministers Vorster and Callaghan explaining the reactions to his speech in Rhodesia. Smith wrote that he had informed in the speech that the speech had been forced upon him by the Western states as was the whole concept of transition to majority rule. Smith warned of the threat of a communist takeover in the case of transition and named Mugabe and Mozambique's President Machel as possible perpetrators of the coup. Smith said that although shocked, the initial reactions to the speech were mostly positive and understanding. He said the mood had however changed during the week due to statements released by the African Nationalists and presidents. Smith said he is doing his best to sell the transition to his people and stressed how

¹⁰⁷ Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Zambia, 25.9.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 595-596.*

¹⁰⁸ Telegram From the Embassy in Zambia to the Department of State, 27.9.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 597-599.*

crucial it is to quickly win back the trust of white Rhodesians.¹⁰⁹ On the 1st of October Kissinger replied to Smith's letter through the South African embassy of the United States. Kissinger denied forcing the announcement and reminded Smith what they had discussed in Pretoria of how the terms Smith had been presented were likely a lot better than the terms he could get later on. Kissinger shared some of the concern of a communist takeover and emphasized that placing a moderate interim government as quickly as possible would be the best way to avoid it. Kissinger thanked Smith of his steadfastness and said he would send two of his assistants to Salisbury to discuss the United States viewpoints of the settlement.¹¹⁰

Kissinger sent a letter and oral message to be delivered to Ian Smith on the 26th of October regarding the upcoming negotiations and US support for them. In the official letter he clarified the content of the meeting in September. In the oral message Kissinger scolded Smith for referencing to details of the negotiation proposition that were not meant to be used publicly at that point since they were not yet introduced to the Frontline Presidents or Rhodesian Nationalists. Kissinger warned that the US would back away from the process if it was put under pressure on the matter.¹¹¹ The US representative met Smith the next day and delivered both messages reporting back to Kissinger on the meeting. Smith argued that he was not the one who first mentioned Annex C, the document no to be publicly discussed, and that he had to talk to the media to correct wrongful accusations of the situation. Smith said his primary motive for this was to keep the Rhodesian whites as calm as possible. The US representative pointed out illogicalities in Smith's defense and that Smith was not convincing.¹¹²

The Geneva Conference started on the 28th of October with former UK ambassador to the UN, Ivor Richards, leading the negotiations between the African nationalists and the Smith regime.¹¹³ Although getting both sides to the negotiating table was an achievement in itself, the participants

¹⁰⁹ Telegram From the Embassy in South Africa to the Department of State, 30.9.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 599–602.

¹¹⁰ Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in South Africa, 1.10.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 602–604.

¹¹¹ Telegram From the Department of State to the Mission in Geneva, 26.10.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 607–608.

¹¹² Telegram From the Mission in Geneva to the Department of State, 27.10.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 609–611.

¹¹³ Deroche 2001, 226.

were highly cautious of each other including the African nationalists who were anything but unified. Although top-level policymakers from the UK, US and the Frontline Presidents took part in bringing the negotiations together none of them attended the actual conference. The US mission in Geneva kept the state department up to date concerning the negotiations but it seems that the Rhodesian issue became a lesser priority especially for the Americans.

The Presidential election of the US was held in the middle of the Geneva conference attempting to find a solution for Rhodesian independence and majority rule. Ford lost the election to Jimmy Carter in early November meaning that Kissinger and his staff would be replaced in January 1977.¹¹⁴ Although the US was not a participant in the negotiations, the loss of the elections left future US policy towards Southern Africa unknown. DeRoche mentions that even if Kissinger had taken part in the negotiations, the loss of the election would have taken leverage from the current administration. DeRoche sees that Kissinger was fully aware of a possible loss in the elections early in 1976 and that one possible motive for addressing the Rhodesian issue was not to help Ford win the election but to get acknowledgement for himself in helping to find a solution for the issue.¹¹⁵ The British informed Kissinger through the US mission in Geneva that the current objective of the conference was to set a date for independence and majority rule only afterwards address the interim government.¹¹⁶ The following weeks saw the parties go back and forth on the issue and on the 27th of November Nkomo and Mugabe agreed to set the date as the British proposed if they accepted minor changes to the details.¹¹⁷

Kissinger sent two similar letters to Presidents Kaunda and Nyerere regarding the Geneva Conference and its realities. In the letter to Kaunda Kissinger remarked that the transfer to majority rule would not happen immediately without an interim government and it had never been mentioned that it would. Kissinger also stated that amid the negotiations both the African Nationalists attending and the Frontline Presidents observing had some unrealistic views of the situation. The first was that the Smith regime held power in Rhodesia and were the ones who

¹¹⁴ Sargent 2015, 227.

¹¹⁵ DeRoche 2001, 227–228.

¹¹⁶ Telegram From the Mission in Geneva to the Department of State, 3.11.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 616.

¹¹⁷ Telegram From the Mission in Geneva to the Department of State, 27.11.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 635.

should be negotiated with, not anyone else especially not the US. He also dismissed rumors that Smith would agree to not have white representatives in the interim government or that the US could pressure Smith to do this. Kissinger noted that the US had very limited power to persuade Smith and would not use even that little if the rights of the white minority were not guaranteed. Kissinger addressed the role of the 5 points and mentioned that they were the reason why Smith chose to negotiate in the first place and they could not be dismissed now that the negotiations had begun. Kissinger warned that the Patriotic Front's current proposal for the interim government could not be supported by the US and that a swift end to the violence in Southern Africa was more important for the people of Zimbabwe and Zambia than to the US.¹¹⁸

Both Nyerere and Kaunda individually replied to Kissinger's message. Nyerere pointed out that his first choice had been to support guerilla warfare and force Smith to accept to negotiate. Nyerere said that Kissinger had persuaded him in that Smith could accept the transition to majority rule through purely diplomatic means. Nyerere was skeptical of the negotiations and the current proposals for the interim government by Smith. Nyerere assured Kissinger that he also wanted a fast and successful end to the negotiation not at any cost.¹¹⁹ Kaunda's response to the letter shared the same tone as Nyerere's but was more disappointed and furious than skeptical. Kaunda felt that Kissinger had deceived him and proved it with quoting Kissinger on previously sent letters. Both Kaunda and Nyerere thought that British presence in the interim government was now crucial and could supplant the white representatives. Kaunda concluded that at this point the past should not be dealt with but the focus should be on the settlement that ensured protection and safety for all Zimbabweans and not only the white minority.¹²⁰

These letters show the crumbling of the trust built by Kissinger to Nyerere but especially Kaunda during the spring of 1976. The communication between Kissinger and the Frontline Presidents seems to have been more frequent than the FRUS documents reveal since Nyerere mentions a telegram he sent to Kissinger on the 5th of October that was not part of the FRUS collection. It is

¹¹⁸ Telegram from Department of State to the Embassy in Zambia, 6.12.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 637-641.*

¹¹⁹ Telegram from Embassy in Tanzania to the Department of State, 9.12.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 643-650.*

¹²⁰ Telegram from Embassy in Zambia to the Department of State, 9.12.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 650-654.*

possible there were further messages sent that were not even mentioned in the FRUS documents. Nyerere and Kaunda were not wrong in accusing Kissinger of deceiving them since from the start Kissinger had intentionally withheld information from the Frontline Presidents, most notably concerning Annex C of the proposal for transition.

The FRUS documents concerning Kissinger's negotiation attempts confirm most of DeRoche's conclusions on the topic. As mentioned before I disagree with DeRoche on Kissinger's interest towards Southern Africa prior to 1976. As the first chapter explains, Kissinger was generally aware of the events in Southern Africa since 1969 and the number of top-level letters and meetings concerning the region show that Kissinger was not indifferent towards the area. However Kissinger's stance regarding majority rule in the area can be described as indifferent, even through 1976 when Kissinger was pursuing the transition. Regarding the research question of US interest towards majority rule in Rhodesia the answer for the Kissinger era is simple. Kissinger did not ever truly pursue majority rule but was highly concerned with stabilizing the region in which promoting transition to majority rule was a way to achieve the primary goal. So in a way pursuing majority rule was a tool to achieve stability in the region. Although promoting majority rule was an option already in 1969, the US policymakers chose to embrace it only after the Portuguese colonies had fallen and the whole region of Southern Africa was unstable.

The Geneva Conference closed on the 14th of December 1976 without achieving its goals.¹²¹ Kissinger met with South African ambassador to the UN and US on the 24th concerning the negotiations and Ivor Richard's upcoming trip to South Africa to discuss a new proposition for the interim government. Kissinger explained the new proposal to Botha which was essentially the five points with elements from annex c. The veto power of the minority which had been impossible to accept for the Frontline Presidents and African nationalists was modified that if the white minority and the British Interim commissioner voted together they would get a veto. Kissinger mentions that the Geneva Conference was mismanaged and that the Ford administration was fully behind annex c and would still be if they had stayed in office. Kissinger also told the ambassador: "If I were still in office, I would have taken over the negotiation". Kissinger also says that even though they lost the election he sent Kaunda and Nyerere the letters in which he defended the content of annex c. Botha says Richard told the South Africans that they

¹²¹ DeRoche 2001, 227.

were never truly behind annex c which outrages Kissinger.¹²² The conversation between Kissinger and Botha gives good perspective of how Kissinger viewed the negotiating process in Geneva. It is clear that at this point Kissinger was not satisfied with how the British orchestrated the negotiations and the loss of the elections affected Kissinger's ability to have an impact on the negotiations. As noted earlier, DeRoche mentioned Kissinger's lack of leverage due to the lost election. This document proves that Kissinger at least said he would have acted if he had the power to.

Kissinger and South African ambassador Botha met again three weeks later on the 15th of January and only five days before Carter's inauguration on the 20th of January 1977. Kissinger had called Botha in to have a final discussion on Southern Africa and the developments in the region since their last meeting three week earlier. Botha had met with future secretary of state Cyrus Vance who said their evaluation on the region was not ready but they would take positive note on any constructive role South Africa took regarding Rhodesia and South-West Africa. Botha continued that due to an UN resolution unfavorable to South Africa Prime Minister Vorster was reluctant to continue pressuring the Smith regime on majority rule. Botha told Kissinger that South Africa may feel like they have to "fight it out" in Southern Africa. Kissinger strongly advised Botha that they should first try the other options. Kissinger ended their conversation on Rhodesia with the remarks that the current plan by Richard and the British was probably at the very limit of what the Smith regime and South Africa could accept and that the South African government should first see how it plays out before choosing to act alone in the region.¹²³ Kissinger's meetings with Botha were his last attempts in pursuing majority rule in Rhodesia as a US policymaker. Kissinger's will to get results in Rhodesia even after the lost election support DeRoche's statement that a major reason for pursuing peace in Southern Africa was to build Kissinger's legacy.

The first chapter examined how promoting the transition to majority rule in Rhodesia became a part of US policy towards Southern Africa during the 1970s. Kissinger's pursue of majority rule in

¹²² Memorandum of Conversation, 24.12.1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa*, 696–703.

¹²³ Memorandum of Conversation, 15.01.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa*, 706–713.

Rhodesia is mentioned in the prior studies of US and Rhodesian relations which did not use the same FRUS documents that were available for my study.

Horne does not specifically examine the negotiation events of 1976 but mentions how Kissinger was remorseful of having to bring down the Smith regime due to US foreign political concerns in the region. Horne also states that in his September 1976 meeting with Smith Kissinger did not actually propose true majority rule but a system where the white minority would still control the security forces and civil service and have veto power over a new constitution.¹²⁴ Horne did not have a specific reference for these statements but they most probably refer to annex C regarding the formation of the interim government. It is undeniable that Kissinger had deep sympathies for the Smith regime and loathed the African Nationalists but his choice to present annex C to Smith was primarily a way to get him to negotiate the issue. Furthermore the issue regarded only the interim government, not the actual structure of the new majority ruled state. Horne's main concern was not top level US policymakers and these statements on Kissinger were only a small detail in his larger analysis using mainly research literature.

DeRoche closely detailed and analyzed Kissinger's attempt in promoting transition to majority rule in Rhodesia during 1976. DeRoche's conclusion on Kissinger's efforts was that his personal attributes and tactical errors in communications with the Frontline Presidents and Rhodesian Blacks were major reasons why the negotiations in 1976 were unsuccessful. DeRoche however sees that Kissinger was instrumental in getting Smith to publicly endorse majority rule which meant that it was extremely hard for Smith to completely back away from it. In addition Rhodesia and Southern Africa became issues that top-level US policymakers participated in which set a precedent for the next administration.¹²⁵

The first chapter answers most of the research questions which are briefly discussed here and more specifically in the Conclusions chapter. At the end of the first chapter a visible change has occurred on the US interest towards Southern Africa and promoting majority rule in Rhodesia. Kissinger chose to pursue majority rule in Rhodesia to prevent an internationalized crisis in Rhodesia similar to the one in Angola earlier that year. The NCS paper of 1970 already detailed

¹²⁴ Horne 2001, 156–157.

¹²⁵ DeRoche 2001, 228.

why the US should support the transition and the actual process was heavily based on Anglo-American cooperation with the UK taking the lead as Southern Rhodesia was officially Commonwealth territory. Kissinger's biggest achievement was helping to create the right circumstances for the conference regarding the transition to majority rule. The first chapter answers most of the research questions which are briefly discussed here and more specifically in the Conclusions chapter.

2. The Rise of Human Rights

The second chapter examines how the transition of power in the US affected promoting majority rule in Rhodesia. The Chapter focuses on how the Carter administration sought to keep the momentum achieved in 1976 alive and achieve the transition to majority rule as quickly as possible.

President Carter emphasized the importance of human rights as an early priority for his administration. Sargent notes that human rights became a part of Carter's presidential campaign only in 1976. Regarding foreign policy Carter named Zbigniew Brzezinski as the national security advisor and Cyrus Vance as secretary of state. Where Carter was focused on human rights Brzezinski thought Carter's approach was influenced more by morality than by geopolitical factors. The transference from the Ford administration to Carter's went with surprisingly strong continuation in most foreign political issues. Although Carter pursued human rights at the same time he sought to uphold détente.¹²⁶ Regarding Rhodesia, already in 1976 Vance suggested that Carter continued to pursue majority rule in the region but taking a slightly different approach from Kissinger in crafting a settlement more acceptable for the Africans. In addition to Brzezinski and Vance, US ambassador to the UN Andrew Young was a key-figure regarding majority rule in Southern Africa reflecting Carter's plans to utilize the UN more effectively than his predecessors.¹²⁷

2.1. New administration with familiar objectives.

On the 19th of January a day before Carter's inauguration Kissinger and his crew met with the foreign policy experts¹²⁸ of the new administration to discuss US policy towards Southern Africa. The Carter executives asked questions throughout the meeting but it consisted mainly of Kissinger briefing on the situation. Kissinger begins the meeting by explaining why the US first got involved in promoting majority rule in Africa which in his words was after the Angolan

¹²⁶ Sargent 2015, 234–236.

¹²⁷ DeRoche 2001, 244–245.

¹²⁸ Brzezinski, Vance and Young.

conflict to avoid similar events in Southern Africa. Kissinger emphasized that before his involvement the frontline president's did not believe Smith would be willing to negotiate and that the US approach to get South Africa to pressure Smith was the main reason why he was ready to publicly embrace majority rule. He says that annex C was most crucial in getting Smith to negotiate and some details in annex C concerning the interim government were the reason why the negotiations had not been successful. Kissinger criticized Ivor Richard and the Geneva Conference on the fact that they "wasted" three weeks on setting a date for independence which all parties had before agreed was in a two year window meaning they did not address the real issues in the conference. Kissinger advised the new administration to not be in contact with Smith directly but to work around him as Kissinger had done and contact Smith only after all other parties had agreed on the matters. Kissinger's concluding advice on the process was to first get the African nationalists and Frontline Presidents to agree on the details. Only after this should the set details be brought to South Africa and Smith to be approved.¹²⁹

The Carter administration came into office on the 20th of January 1977 and on the 25th Secretary of State Vance sent President Carter a memorandum of the formers meeting with Ambassador Botha regarding the negotiations for Rhodesia's majority rule. Smith had declined Richard's proposals for the continuing of the Geneva Conference and Vance suggested that the US should do what it could to salvage the situation and continue to pursue majority rule in Rhodesia. Botha had inquired if the White House supported the repeal of the Byrd amendment despite Smith's possible co-operation which Vance confirmed to Botha. Vance assured Botha that the US would continue to find a peaceful solution in Southern Africa and the same message was sent to the Frontline Presidents and other African leaders. Vance also stated that the Carter administration would not consider ending the isolation of Rhodesia before an interim government is formed and in addition to repealing the Byrd amendment the US will seek to end other loopholes to in the embargo.¹³⁰ This memorandum and the prior meeting between Kissinger and the new administration shows how the Carter administration were heavily invested in finding a solution in Southern Africa even before the inauguration and immediately after it. As DeRoche mentioned

¹²⁹ Memorandum of Conversation, 20.01.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1969-1976, VOL XXVIII Southern Africa, 714–726.*

¹³⁰ Memorandum from Secretary of State Vance to President Carter. 25.1.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 362–364.*

earlier, the Carter administration continued right where Kissinger left off. It was however clear from the beginning that the new administration would be harder on Smith and South Africa which is apparent from the haste to repeal Byrd amendment and strictly enforce the embargo.

According to DeRoche Vance and Young concluded that repealing the Byrd amendment would be a good first step for the new administration.¹³¹ In a telegram sent by Vance to Carter, the former said that he would make a public statement on the 31st of January regarding US governments plans on repealing the amendment as well as that the US will not accept an internal solution made by Smith, Carter agreed on these points.¹³² This was a strong stance taken by the US administration and although Kissinger had tried to repeal the amendment, the statement made by Vance was a lot stricter in its language. Vance also publicly condemned Smith's plans for an internal solution which Kissinger had also opposed but not as strongly in public.

The new administration took a different approach regarding Black African Leaders and although Kissinger had made Rhodesia on top priority in 1976, he had alienated powerful regional states such as Nigeria. On the day he was sworn in, Ambassador Young was told by Carter to travel to Africa to see what the African leadership expected concerning US involvement in Southern Africa.¹³³ On the 29th of January Vance sent a letter to Zambia's President Kaunda informing him on US stance on the Smith speech on the 24th. Vance made it clear that the US would not accept an internal solution which Smith was seeking and that the Carter administration was doing their best to repeal the Byrd amendment. Vance also mentioned Young's trip to Africa and hoped the two had time to meet and discuss the situation in Southern Africa. Kaunda replied to the letter and was positive on the new administration commitment to majority rule but remarked that the Smith announcement forced the Frontline Presidents to support Zimbabwean nationalists in their armed struggle against the Smith regime.¹³⁴

¹³¹ DeRoche 2001, 245.

¹³² Memorandum from Secretary of State Vance to President Carter. 29.1.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa*, 364–365.

¹³³ DeRoche 2001, 246.

¹³⁴ Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Zambia. 29.1.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa*, 36–366.

Before embarking on his Africa tour Ambassador Young visited London on the second of February to discuss Southern African affairs with Ivor Richard and British policymakers.¹³⁵ Young was able to meet with most of the British key-persons regarding Southern Africa and the US embassy in London informed the State Department on the results of the meetings. The British felt that the current efforts for a settlement had run dry and were waiting for the new US administration to inform on their plans. In other words the British did not have a policy for the US to support. The British believed US relations to South Africa were critical for the process and were waiting for the new administration to establish the relationship. Young had also met with two Commonwealth officials who indirectly supported the Frontline President's choice of regarding aid to the guerillas as a "soft option" which in turn threatened the negotiations.¹³⁶ Young's brief trip to London before his Africa tour is similar to how Kissinger always first met with the British before going to Africa. The key difference to 1976 is that the British were now unsure of how to proceed and were waiting for the US to form their approach on Southern Africa before crafting a new policy on the region.

Since the beginning of talks on majority rule Smith had preferred a so-called internal solution where the Rhodesian government settled on a transition to majority rule with Zimbabwean nationalists who they preferred. National security advisor Brzezinski received a CIA cable on the fourth of February on the Smith regime's current plans regarding an internal solution. The CIA reported that the security forces of Rhodesia supported the solution and thought of it as the only way to achieve moderate African majority rule and that in the current state Rhodesia could not survive the combined effect of guerilla warfare and economic sanctions. The Smith regime felt that the Geneva Conference had failed due to the Frontline President's and the Patriotic Front swaying too far apart from the original propositions by Kissinger concerning majority rule. Smith would pursue an internal solution where Robert Mugabe was left out of the power structure of at least with as little power as possible. The Smith regime felt that the US should be "open minded" for the internal solution to succeed. Smith would meet Vorster on the 9th of February to sell the

¹³⁵ Memorandum from Secretary of State Vance to President Carter. 2.2.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa*, 367.

¹³⁶ Telegram from the Embassy in the United Kingdom to the Department of State. 3.2.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa*, 370–371.

idea of the internal solution to South Africa.¹³⁷ This intelligence cable emphasizes the significance of Vance's public opposition to an internal solution as the Rhodesian government still viewed it as the best possibility. The reference to US open mindedness regarding an internal solution is somewhat bizarre considering that even Kissinger opposed the internal solution and the new administration would be even stricter on such issues and had even publicly said so.

Secretary of State Vance met Ivor Richard in Washington on the 8th of February and discussed the US and British cooperation in solving the problems in Southern Africa. Two days later Vance sent President Carter a memo concerning Rhodesia and said that he would meet with the British two weeks later once the British have finished their views on the issue. Vance presented Carter with five options on how to move forward in Rhodesia with three of the options were to continue the Geneva conference in some form, one option was to end the efforts and one to promote a larger international role in the settlement. Carter replied that the best current options were to reconvene the Geneva conference either on the basis of general principles or on the basis of all existing proposals and later increase US role in the process. Vance also noted that the US has to be able to put more pressure on Rhodesia and one aspect of it was to pressure South Africa to comply with the sanctions or face additional boycott by the US.¹³⁸ The Carter administration continued to coordinate their efforts in Southern Africa. Kissinger had his views of why the conference in Geneva failed as did the new administration which still believed that the conference could be reconvened but with more focus and identifying the problems. The Frontline President's choice to support guerilla action and Smith's apparent pursue of an internal solution painted a pessimistic picture of a new conference and its possibility to succeed.

Under a week after the CIA cable sent to Brzezinski on Smith's plans to move forward with an internal solution, on the 10th of February Vance informed Carter on new turn of events. Botha had contacted Vance regarding the meeting between Smith and Vorster where Smith had indicated he had accepted that majority rule must be achieved in 15-18 months, the five points by Kissinger are no longer a viable basis for negotiation and that Smith would not pursue an internal solution. Vance would meet with Botha and the British to discuss the new circumstances and if found

¹³⁷ Central Intelligence Agency Information Cable. 5.2.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 372-373.*

¹³⁸ Memorandum from Secretary of State Vance to President Carter. 10.2.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 379-382.*

genuine act on them as swiftly as possible. Vance also mentioned that he had testified in favor of repealing the Byrd amendment in the senate and was optimistic that the repeal would succeed at least in the senate and possibly in the House.¹³⁹ In a separate summary of his talks with Botha, Vance was skeptical of Smith's true intentions in not pursuing an internal solution. Botha had said that Smith did not clearly state it but indicated that since the five points were no longer viable neither was an internal solution based on the five points.¹⁴⁰ The CIA cable was accurate on Smith's meeting with Vorster but the apparent theme of the meeting was almost opposite to what the CIA predicted. Although a positive turn, the US policymakers were highly skeptical of the true intentions of Smith.

The US and Great Britain meeting on how to pursue Southern Africa began on the 21st of February. Vance informed Carter on three key points of the discussions: the British had not recovered from Richard's failure in Africa and were concerned of how the Carter administration's opposition to apartheid might endanger South Africa's support in gaining majority rule in Rhodesia. The third point was the sudden passing away of British Foreign Minister Crosland, who had been heavily involved in the Anglo-American cooperation regarding Southern Africa. Vance noted that he assured the US would try not to provoke South Africa but might have to speak out against segregation in the UN. Carter agreed that in the near future the US has to be forceful on the matter.¹⁴¹ Two days later the British and Americans met with Botha to discuss South Africa's viewpoints on the negotiations and new turn of events. Botha delivered his government's message that they believed Smith would negotiate if a single nationalist leader was chosen to do the negotiating. If such a leader was chosen the South African's would deliver Smith. Vance noted that to Carter that in fact this was the so-called internal option as choosing a single leader would bypass the guerilla leaders and result in Muzorewa becoming the leader. This in turn could lead to a civil war similar to the one in Angola. Vance said that both they and the British did not view

¹³⁹ Memorandum from Secretary of State Vance to President Carter. 10.2.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 383–384.*

¹⁴⁰ Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom. 12.2.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 386.*

¹⁴¹ Memorandum from Secretary of State Vance to President Carter. 22.2.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 387–388.*

this as viable and should try to reconvene the Geneva negotiations on the basis of general principle.¹⁴²

The skepticism by Vance towards Smith's change of heart proved to be in place as did the CIA information cable on the nature of Smith's negotiations with Vorster. As mentioned earlier, the fact that both Rhodesia and South Africa promoted the internal solution if though the Carter administration had publicly rejected it was note-worthy. For the US to support such a settlement after publicly vowing not to support it would have made the Carter administration seem untrustworthy in not only Southern African issues but in a larger scale. Even though the new administration had been only less than two months in office and had endured several setbacks concerning Rhodesia, Vance and Carter continued to pursue majority rule in the region. In hindsight the failed conference, change of administration and finally the death of Crosland would have been a chance to stop efforts in the region without losing once face.

South African ambassador Botha was set to become the new foreign minister in April. President Carter and his top executives including Vance and Brzezinski met Botha on the 23rd of May to bid him farewell and more importantly discuss Southern Africa with the new foreign minister. Regarding the US and South Africa relations, Botha mentioned that personally he did not support racial segregation but wanted a democratic system unlike the majority ruled countries of sub Saharan Africa. Botha noted that South Africa had taken steps in moving away from apartheid which it had not received any recognition from the US or the UN. Carter remarked that if the US had more information on the South African policies they could receive more support from the US. Regarding Rhodesia Botha noted that they expect Smith to hand over the power in two years and if the black faction can decide on one single leader South Africa could give some guarantees. Carter then asked did the South Africans have any specific leader they preferred which Botha declined saying: "We will support anyone that has majority support – anyone who has the black jungle on his side". Botha concluded that if Mugabe was the leader freely chosen by the people the South Africans would accept him.¹⁴³ Although the meeting was officially held as a farewell to the departing diplomat, it was actually the first time President Carter met with a top-level South

¹⁴² Memorandum from Secretary of State Vance to President Carter. 23.2.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 388–389.

¹⁴³ Memorandum of Conversation. 23.2.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 805–811.

African government member. The relations between the Carter administration and South Africa had worsened due to the US public stance against apartheid. One possible motive for the meeting was the concern by the British on the relationship of US and South Africa and consequences in the ability to get to Smith through the South Africans.

Regarding the Anglo-American initiative on Rhodesia, DeRoche mentions that the repeal of the Byrd amendment in mid-March encouraged the British to continue efforts on Rhodesia and lead to Prime Minister Callaghan visiting Washington in March and together with Carter making Southern Rhodesia a high priority. Both set top-level diplomats to oversee the matter including Secretary of State Vance and newly appointed Foreign Secretary Davin Owen.¹⁴⁴ The FRUS documents do not mention Callaghan's trip to London which tell more of how the FRUS collections have been organized than anything else. However in this matter DeRoche refers to David Martin's "The Struggle for Zimbabwe" published in 1981 which most likely based the information of the meeting on an interview rather than official documents. DeRoche's notion of the repeal of the Byrd amendment encouraging the British to continue pursuing Rhodesia gives the picture that they had not done so prior to the repeal. The repeal of the Byrd amendment was a crucial event in enforcing regulations on Rhodesia and getting closer to majority rule but it was not the single event that sparked a new effort by the British and Americans. The meeting between Vance and Owen in early April can be seen as a direct continuation to the previous Anglo-American cooperation regarding Rhodesia and dating back to Kissinger's term as Secretary of State.

Vance met with British Foreign Secretary Owen in London on the 1st of April where the discussed Owen's upcoming trip to Africa concerning reconvening the negotiations for Rhodesian transition to majority rule. The British plan consisted of a series of official meeting by the parties and an election before the end of 1977 and independence by March 1978. If Smith did not join the process, the British would first meet with the nationalist and with possible support from the US seek Rhodesian acceptance later. The plan consisted of heavy US support and participation both diplomatic and economic. It also mentioned the possibility of a peacekeeping force, either UN or

¹⁴⁴ DeRoche 2001, 248.

more like Commonwealth, in Rhodesia during the interim government and elections.¹⁴⁵ On the 8th of April Vance wrote Owen's on the US government's stance on the topics Owen's would discuss in Africa. Key points of the letter was the franchise of the elections, Smith could be told it was negotiable even though only one-man one-vote would be acceptable. Another detail was the use of the Zimbabwe development fund which could be canceled if the new majority ruled country did not abide by the rules. Vance also agreed with Owen that there was no need for guarantees for the white minority but rather basic rights for all Zimbabweans.¹⁴⁶

On the 14th of April Vance informed Carter on the immediate results of Owen's trip to Africa where he was able to meet with most of the key figures except Sithole, Kaunda and Nigerian representatives. The Frontline President's had reacted mostly positive and even the first hand skepticism from Mugabe and Nkomo faded away. The biggest questions from the Africans were if greater American involvement in the region would provoke the Soviets and how Smith could be forced to accept the settlement. However British intelligence reported that Machel and Kaunda might oppose the settlement which proved the unpredictability of the Frontline Presidents. Vorster and Smith had not directly opposed the settlement but Vorster warned Owen that Smith might criticize the effort in public to calm down the right-wing element in Rhodesia.¹⁴⁷ Owen's trip to Africa and the way how he first consulted with and then reported to the Americans on it is a prime example of how Anglo-American relations worked very similarly during the Carter administration as they did with Ford's. Even though the original Kissinger plan was being replaced, the new propositions bore a lot of resemblance to the original five points. Also the role of the Frontline President's was as significant as it was in 1976 with the addition of Nigeria getting a role in the process.

Vance, Owen and their personnel met in London on the 6th of May to discuss the progress on Rhodesia now that Owen had finished his trip in Africa. Owen said that the British are not pressing for an announcement of next steps towards a conference nor should the US and UK be fully committed to another formal conference until its success was more probable than at the

¹⁴⁵ Memorandum from Acting Secretary of State Christoph to President Carter. 2.4.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 400.

¹⁴⁶ Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom. 8.4.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 401-402.

¹⁴⁷ Memorandum from Secretary of State Vance to President Carter. 14.4.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 403.

moment. The US and UK should move forward bilaterally but downgrade US participation in a possible conference due to the negative reactions in Africa. The US and UK would both name top-level diplomats to a consultative group meant to pursue the conference. The two countries would first inform the parties involved before publicly announcing their plans on the 11th of May. Vance would meet Nkomo later that day and try to convince him that the consultative group genuinely pursued results and was not “just another paper exercise”. Vance also briefed the British on US Vice President Mondale’s meeting with Prime Minister Vorster which was not only about Southern African regional issues but also the need for social change in South Africa in order to maintain current relations between the two countries.¹⁴⁸ According to DeRoche the consultative group was formed to be able to continue the bilateral effort despite the Patriotic Front’s and the Frontline President’s opposition to increased US role. This way the US would still be a part of the process but not the official conference. Before the consultative group began its travels to Africa, Andrew Young took part in the Maputo conference where Frontline Presidents Machel and Kaunda told him that supporting the armed struggle was their number one option but the Anglo-American initiatives could be the second best option.¹⁴⁹

Vance and Brzezinski met with ZAPU leader Joshua Nkomo after the meeting with the British earlier that day. Vance told what the US wanted to happen in Rhodesia, the key point was majority rule and independence in 1978. Nkomo criticized US cosponsoring the conference to which Vance replied that after Owen’s trip to Africa they had decided to drop US participation in the conference and rather take part in the consultation process prior to the actual conference. Nkomo and his aids immediately questioned the consultative group and suspected that the conference would only be a rubber stamp based on the earlier consultations which actually were the true negotiations. The main issue during the conversations was the US participation in the process which Nkomo kept questioning and Vance told him that the British might completely withdraw without proper US support. Vance concluded the meeting with remarks that “cosponsorship” by the US had genuinely been dropped and the US only wanted to do anything it

¹⁴⁸ Telegram from Secretary of State Vance to the State Department. 6.5.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 406–408.

¹⁴⁹ DeRoche 2001, 249.

can to assist the process.¹⁵⁰ Nkomo's skepticism towards US participation in the Rhodesian Conference was known prior to the meeting which was one of the reasons for creating the consultation group instead of moving forward with cosponsoring the conference. Nevertheless Nkomo immediately identified the true purpose of the consultation group and did not react positively to it.

US Vice President Mondale met with South African Prime Minister Vorster in Vienna on the 19th of May regarding issues of Rhodesia, Namibia and US – South African relations. Vorster maintained that it would be easier for Smith to negotiate with one chosen African leader which Mondale agreed but insisted that the leader be chosen by election and not named by outside powers. Vorster assured that South Africa would not stand in the way of Owen's mission but declined to put more pressure on Smith since Vorster claimed that Smith had already accepted the transition to majority rule and would not attempt to stay in power. Mondale declined to offer separate guarantees for the white minority due to constitutional protection to all Rhodesians which did not convince Vorster who feared the whites would leave the country with negative consequences. Vorster warned that Nkomo and Mugabe were the real problems for Rhodesia, not Smith who was willing to step down after a reasonable settlement had been reached. The South Africans had not heard of the new role of the Zimbabwe Developmental fund which no longer was only a guarantee for the whites but rather a system to insure development of an independent Zimbabwe. Vorster and Botha had not been told of the change since Kissinger had introduced the original idea of the fund. The new role of the developmental fund and the increased violence in the region were two issues where the US and South Africa did not agree. Although both sides acknowledged that violence had risen, Vorster saw Smith's raids to neighboring countries justified in order to keep the Rhodesian civilians safe. Both sides agreed that the violence should stop for the duration of the negotiations. The next steps would be to first get general agreement and then draft a constitution before moving forward on elections, transition to majority rule and independence.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Telegram from Secretary of State Vance to the State Department. 6.5.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 411–413.

¹⁵¹ Memorandum of Conversation. 19.5.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 428–441.

Vance and Owen met in Paris during the OECD meeting on the 24th of June to discuss the current state of their efforts in Southern Africa and Owen's upcoming trip there. The main issues of the meeting were the future of law and order in Zimbabwe. Universal suffrage would probably be acceptable to the Patriotic Front and Frontline Presidents although it would not contain safeguards for whites meaning it would raise opposition from Smith and South Africa. According to Owen one of the toughest issues for the African nationalists was the pensions of current Rhodesian government employees. The British could pay off some of the most controversial cases but the majority of pensions would be a responsibility of the new Zimbabwe government which could have access to frozen Rhodesian funds abroad. Owen suggested a Commonwealth peacekeeping force for the duration of the elections and asked if the US could offer logistical and possibly economic aid to the efforts. Vance could not promise it at the moment but was optimistic of getting approval from congress. The peacekeeping force would have patriotic front forces alongside it and the majority of the Rhodesian army would be dissolved. Both Vance and Owen agreed that they had to move fast on the issue and had to take into account several factions that the negotiation package should be acceptable to.¹⁵² After the meeting President Carter and Vance agrees that the US could possibly offer transportation for Commonwealth troops to Rhodesia but preferably no sustained involvement. Vance informed Owen of this with the addition that the White House would have to first discuss the matter with Congress and the Department of Defense before fully committing to it.¹⁵³

The Americans and British did their best to move forward in Rhodesia after the Geneva conference had failed and try to maintain momentum gained by Kissinger and the British in 1976. The new administration and the British had however left out some of the elements of Kissinger's plan that were the main reason why Smith agreed to embrace majority rule, most notable of these elements was the financial guarantees to the whites and the veto-vote for the white minority in drafting the constitution. The violence in the region had escalated since 1976 and both South Africa and the Frontline Presidents were more willing to choose violence over diplomacy than earlier. Since the British led negotiations in Geneva had no success, the new

¹⁵² Memorandum of Conversation. 24.6.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 448–454.

¹⁵³ Memorandum from Acting Secretary of State Christoph to President Carter. 29.6.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 456–457.

administration had increased the US participation in the process which caught immediate backlash from the Patriotic Front and the Frontline Presidents. The Carter administration had pursued the Rhodesian issue at least as vigorously as Kissinger but had not been able to create any major advancement regarding a peaceful transition to majority rule except the repealing of the Byrd amendment.

On the 7th of July Vance sent Carter a memorandum on Rhodesia with only worse news regarding the process. The Consultative Group had met with Nkomo in Lusaka where he did not present the Patriotic Fronts plans for constitutional and transitional processes but instead insisted that only the British, Patriotic Front and Smith should negotiate the issues leaving the US out. The Consultative group had also met with Smith who vowed to new had Rhodesia to the Patriotic Front and was once again leaning towards an internal solution. In addition the Zambian Foreign minister had warned the Consultative group that Zambia might not support a settlement based on a negotiated constitution.¹⁵⁴ These latest developments were grave for the Consultative Group and their chance of success.

2.2. Moving forward despite setbacks

President Carter and his top executives met with Foreign Minister Owen on the 23rd of July in Washington to discuss the stalling efforts in Southern Africa. Owen remarked that a commonwealth peacekeeping force had not gained traction and might have to be replaced with a UN force. Owen continued that one man – one vote should be closer tied to the ZDF so that if the blacks get the vote they have to agree to pay the pensions for current Rhodesian employees which the UK would also help to finance. Regarding the free elections, troubling news regarding Nkomo's plans of ceasing power with a rigged election. Carter inquired on Nkomo's loyalty to the Soviets which Owen declined saying that Nkomo had gained support from various faction and politically Nkomo was somewhere between Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda and Malawi's Hastings Banda. However the UK or US can't openly support the Patriotic Front because of the risk it carries to white Rhodesians. According to Owen there will never be a solution acceptable to all

¹⁵⁴ Memorandum from Secretary of State Vance to President Carter. 7.7.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 458.

parties but rather a solution which gains the most support. Using the internal option for the interim period was discussed but according to Young held the risk of driving the Patriotic Front closer to the Soviets. They agreed that at this point the best options would be to continue the attempt of getting a negotiated settlement and possibly support some form of an internal option. They concluded that since the UDI of 1965 had been illegal, the country would first revert to its status under British rule before official independence as a majority ruled state.¹⁵⁵

DeRoche mentions that in the July 23rd meeting Owen had proposed a settlement including Nkomo but excluding Mugabe who had caused severe frustration to the British. The US State representatives had opposed leaving Mugabe out since it would probably offend the Frontline Presidents and not cease the fighting since Mugabe's army was much larger than Nkomo's. DeRoche mentions that there was a pro-pf movement in the State Department that insisted discussing with a united Patriotic Front.¹⁵⁶ The official memorandum of conversation from the meeting did not contain Owen's complaints of Mugabe and he only mentioned Mugabe saying: "Mugabe, for all of his reputation, does not really seem to be a thorough-going Marxist."¹⁵⁷ In the official memorandum Owen however spoke up Nkomo on various occasions which make DeRoche's statement concerning Owen completely plausible. The FRUS documents are official government material that have been edited, sometimes on numerous occasions, and may not contain all information regarding the topic. Even though the memorandum on the July 23rd meeting did not mention Owen's wishes to only support Nkomo, it painted the general picture that Owen favored Nkomo.

On the 4th of August President Carter and his executives met with Tanzanian President Nyerere and his staff. In the July 23rd meeting the Americans and British had agreed that Nyerere would be the first to see and comment the new proposal before it became public since Nyerere had influence on Kaunda who in turn had influence on Nkomo.¹⁵⁸ Nyerere agreed with Carter on the general ideas of minimizing violence in the region and independence with majority rule but did not support universal suffrage insisting on one man – one vote instead of one person – one vote.

¹⁵⁵ Memorandum of Conversation. 23.7.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 459–467.

¹⁵⁶ DeRoche 2001, 251.

¹⁵⁷ Memorandum of Conversation. 23.7.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 468.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

Both parties agreed that the new government for a free Zimbabwe should be chosen via election after a constitution was drafted. Even though Nyerere was mostly cooperative with the US proposal on the elections, Carter remarked that the US was concerned with the Frontline Presidents' lack of coordination and the threat of one of them wishing to install a leader of their choosing in Zimbabwe to which Nyerere gave no reaction. The interim government and armed forces for the election period were discussed with Nyerere agreeing to either a Commonwealth or UN peacekeeping force governed by the British. Nyerere thought that the core of the new Zimbabwean army would consist of PF troops and was skeptical of Carter's proposition of including some element of the Rhodesian army.¹⁵⁹ Regarding Rhodesian army members in the new armed forces Nyerere stated:

The army will be the key new element contributed by the new Zimbabwe Government. But this does not mean that some of the people in Smith's army cannot be picked up for the new army¹⁶⁰

DeRoche mentions the August 4th meeting and that Carter agreed to Nyerere's request of dismantling the security forces and replacing them with liberation forces enraging the British who had not agreed to this. According to DeRoche accepting the liberation forces as the base of the army was against consultation with the British since May. It also became a hindrance in the negotiations since the President's words could not simply be ignored.¹⁶¹ The FRUS documents do not contain this discussion or the aftermath following it. However previous documents such as the memorandum of conversation from the Paris meeting on the 24th of June maintain that both US and UK saw that the Smith army would be disbanded with individual members invited to join the new army, exactly the same that Carter proposed Nyerere.

Secretary of State Vance sent the White House a summary of his meetings with Nationalist leader Muzorewa and President Nyerere on the 13th of August. In his meeting with Muzorewa, the latter complained how the US and UK had only convened with the PF and not him who had the real support of Rhodesian Blacks. Vance assured him that the new leader for Zimbabwe would be

¹⁵⁹ Memorandum of Conversation. 4.8.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 470–475.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 474.

¹⁶¹ DeRoche 2001, 251–252.

chosen in free-elections and not by the US or the UK. He also reminded Muzorewa that they had consulted with all parties including Muzorewa and that an internal settlement between Muzorewa and Smith would fail due to lack of international support. In his meeting with Nyerere the most discussed topic was the same as in the meeting between Carter and Nyerere, the Zimbabwean army. Nyerere inquired if Vance had informed the South Africans that Tanzania wants not only Smith but his army gone. Vance specified that according to the new plan, the peacekeeping forces would help train an army during the transition period and drawing forces from the Rhodesian Army and the Patriotic Front. Nyerere still wanted the main body of the post-independence army to consist of liberation forces but it could contain some element of the Rhodesian army. He also agreed that the British Resident Commissioner could call on both the Rhodesian army and liberation forces during the transition period if needed.¹⁶²

The new Anglo-American plan had replaced the previous Kissinger plan; although the two plans bore many similarities issues such as the one-man one vote were new in the Anglo-American plan.¹⁶³ On the 12th of September Vance sent Carter a status report and recommendation of action concerning the Rhodesian settlement. Vance noted that they had to maintain the gained momentum and get the preliminary negotiations started. Smith was still leaning towards an internal solution but Muzorewa and Sithole who were needed for it to work were supportive to the Anglo-American initiative. The US would have to gather support in the UN to be able to get the UN peacekeeping force approved in the Security Council. The US might have to put pressure on South Africa in order to influence Smith to accept the terms of the settlement and to finally resign. If Rhodesia backs down or stalls in the settlements, it will lead to consequences on South Africa in the UN and other sources.¹⁶⁴

President Carter ordered a policy review committee meeting to discuss ways to pressure South Africa and Rhodesia if either one failed to cooperate with the negotiation process. On the 26th of September a memo on Carter's decision on the sanctions was sent to the committee members. Only if Carter himself authorized it, the US would proceed to lay economical pressure on South

¹⁶² Telegram from Secretary of State Vance to the White House and the Department of State. 13.8.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 480-481.

¹⁶³ DeRoche 2001, 252.

¹⁶⁴ Memorandum from Secretary of State Vance to President Carter. 12.9.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 482-484.

Africa through an arms embargo, labeling products to ensure not ending up in Rhodesia and a tighter enforcement on civilian material that can also be used in a military context.¹⁶⁵ Already in early 1976 Kissinger threatened South Africa that not cooperating regarding Rhodesia could have dire consequences on South Africa. The Carter administration had a stricter interpretation that even if South Africa cooperated but Smith was the one causing trouble, it would never the less lead to sanctions against South Africa.

President Carter met with Nigerian General Obasanjo¹⁶⁶ and his delegation on the 11th of October concerning the current events in Rhodesia. Obasanjo noted that the Carter Administration's policy in Africa compared to earlier US governments made the meeting possible and congratulated Carter for having a definitive African Policy. Obasanjo expressed that Nigeria supported the armed struggle in Rhodesia but was optimistic on the Anglo-American proposal and believed it could ultimately work. However Nigeria would not fully support the negotiations before a concrete plan for Smith's removal was in place. Carter responded that at the moment there was none, but Smith had not opposed the Anglo-American plan and combined with pressure from South Africa could step down willingly. Obasanjo replied that for some of the African President's Smith would have to give up and not cooperate, and that if the US applied pressure on South Africa there should be both sanctions and oil sanctions. Obasanjo vowed that neither he nor the Frontline Presidents would accept an internal solution to which Carter replied that the US did not prefer it but it was an African issue and none of the Rhodesian parties had fully opposed it. Concerning a foreign peacekeeping force, Obasanjo did not oppose and said that Nigeria could possibly participate in a UN mission but not Commonwealth since it "lacked teeth".¹⁶⁷ Since the beginning of US government interest towards majority rule in Rhodesia, the Americans had consulted extensively with the so-called Frontline President's and South Africa but during Kissinger's term the US did not involve Nigeria in to the talks although it was a major black African power. Carter's meeting with Obasanjo and involving Nigeria to the process shows

¹⁶⁵ Memorandum from the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron). 26.9.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 493.

¹⁶⁶ General Olusegun Obasanjo was the head of military government in Nigeria from 1.10.1976 to 31.12.1983. Stewart 1989, 199.

¹⁶⁷ Memorandum of Conversation. 11.10.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 494-498.

that the new administration approached Africa differently from its predecessors which was also noted by Obasanjo.

On the 6th of November a telegram was sent to the State Department containing a summary of meeting between the Anglo-American group and local parties in Salisbury. The Rhodesian government was willing to meet the Patriotic Front in Malta but would not send military official to the meeting. The army for the transition period was a common topic in all the discussions in Salisbury, to which Lord Carver responded that the core force would be police with some elements from the armed forces. All-white units and subunits would be disbanded and the army would be a mixture of current units and liberation forces or “citizenry at large”. Although all the local parties agreed on the general principles of the Anglo-American proposal, the diplomat who sent the telegram believed that the actual negotiations would be difficult.¹⁶⁸ The Americans and British held a meeting on the 14th of November planning their next steps based on the meetings in Salisbury focusing on the up-coming Malta meeting between the PF and Rhodesian Front which was originally planned for the 25th of November. The participants were pessimistic that the talks would amount to much if Both Nkomo and Mugabe were present but since the invitations had been sent it should be carried out. The next step was to present the proposition to the Frontline Presidents which should happen as fast as possible and preferably by top-level diplomats such as Young and Owen.¹⁶⁹

DeRoche states that during the fall on 1977 although the Anglo-American plan had gained momentum and not been fully dismissed by any of the parties, it seemed Nkomo and Mugabe believed it was more favorable for them to continue fighting than to negotiate. On the 23rd of November the Rhodesian forces attacked rebels in Mozambique causing over a thousand casualties in the so-called Chimono Raid.¹⁷⁰ On the 4th of December Carter responded to President Machel’s letter two days earlier in which he requested assistance in preventing additional raid to Mozambique. Carter expressed that he shared the grief and sorrow of the brutal attacks and that the US government had taken steps to de-escalate the situation by laying

¹⁶⁸ Telegram from the Embassy in Botswana to the Department of State. 6.11.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 503–507.*

¹⁶⁹ Telegram from the Embassy in the United Kingdom to the Department of State. 14.11.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 508–509.*

¹⁷⁰ DeRoche 2001, 257.

additional pressure on South Africa and Rhodesia. He insisted that events like the raid to Mozambique prove how crucial it is to bring majority rule to Rhodesia as swiftly as possible and to end the blood-shed.¹⁷¹ On the 6th of December a US diplomat to South Africa delivered a message to the South African and Rhodesian governments condemning the raid to Mozambique and mentioning the civil casualties including children. The Rhodesian representative remarked that the Anglo-American initiative was dead duo to the PF choosing armed conflict instead of negotiating and that the raid was a pre-emptive strike against the guerillas planning to launch a major offensive on Rhodesia. The Rhodesian representative was assured that the Anglo-American plan was still alive and he was to take the message with him to Salisbury.¹⁷²

Despite the increasing of violence in Rhodesia and the Chimono raid, the pursuit of the transition to majority rule continued. On the 30th of December President Carter responded to President Nyerere's letter concerning Rhodesia. Both agreed that they had to act swiftly and Carter implied that Owen's invitation to Nkomo and Mugabe to take part in negotiations was crucial at this point. He urged that Nyerere and his Frontline President colleagues would not push for further sanctions in the UN until the negotiations had finished. Carter stated that any settlement attempts that did not include Smith resigning, the dismantling of the current army and replacing it with a new Zimbabwean army would not get support from the US government since lasting peace could not be achieved without them. Carter mentioned Smith's speech on the 24th of November in which Smith committed himself to majority rule based on adult suffrage with constitutional guarantees for whites and a possible internal settlement based on these. Carter told Nyerere he was concerned of the speech and hoped the Muzorewa and Sithole still believed in the Anglo-American plan and would not take part in an internal settlement. He noted that the new government of Zimbabwe should have both domestic and international support.¹⁷³

DeRoche mentions that the Patriotic Fronts willingness to fight and Smith's remarks of an internal settlement did not bode well for the success of the Anglo-American plan at the end on 1977. In addition to the bad news from Africa, in the US congress support for an internal

¹⁷¹ Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom. 4.12.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 517.*

¹⁷² Telegram from the Embassy in South Africa to the Department of State. 6.12.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 518–519.*

¹⁷³ Letter from President Carter to Tanzanian President Nyerere. 30.12.1977. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 524–525.*

settlement in Rhodesia had begun to materialize with a republican senator criticizing the Carter administration for not accepting an internal settlement between Smith, Muzorewa and Sithole which would lead to both majority rule and peace. The threat of the internal solution pressured the Patriotic Front to take part in the negotiations which would eventually be held at Malta.¹⁷⁴ The Anglo-American group had endured numerous setbacks in a short amount of time, but the general ideas of the Anglo-American proposal had been accepted by all parties. Some issues such as the armed forces for the transition period and beyond remained a controversial topic. For the Carter Administration, accepting an internal settlement after publicly objecting one would have been politically difficult despite the sudden support for one in Congress.

Mugabe and Nkomo accepted Owen's invitations to the meeting in Malta on the 19th of January, 1978 and the meeting took place starting on the 30th of January. DeRoche mentions how the US and UK approached the talks without a preset agenda. According to DeRoche the Patriotic Front tried to establish dominance during the first day of the meeting especially concerning the transition period and who oversaw it.¹⁷⁵ On the first day both Nkomo and Mugabe took a hard stance regarding the negotiations and they criticized that Sithole and Muzorewa were still a part of the future negotiations since neither one of them commanded military forces. Due to the fact that the Patriotic Front had been fighting the Smith regime for a long time, both Nkomo and Mugabe felt that the Patriotic Front should have a significant role during the transitional period and to at least be able to guide the interim government to the "right direction". The biggest issue during the first day of negotiations was the role of the patriotic front in the interim government which Owen said could not be to act as a superintendent as proposed by Nkomo. Regarding the interim period and a ceasefire Nkomo stressed: "To be able to discuss the ceasefire it is important that the interim arrangements reflect the position of those actually doing the fighting."¹⁷⁶ Furthermore both Nkomo and Smith objected with the concept that the Patriotic front negotiated directly with Smith. They preferred that the Front negotiates with the UK and US and the latter parties force Smith to accept the terms. Owen partially agreed in that they should now move to

¹⁷⁴ DeRoche 2001, 257–258.

¹⁷⁵ DeRoche 2001, 258.

¹⁷⁶ Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom. 1.2.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 533.*

an agreement between the PF and UK making Smith the one to be moved towards acceptance.¹⁷⁷ The primary source confirms DeRoche's description of the first day with the additional information of Mugabe's and Nkomo's reluctance to accept Muzorewa or Sithole to the negotiations. The negative attitude towards Sithole and Muzorewa from the Patriotic Front had existed since the Kissinger attempts in 1976 and no doubt the flirtation with Smith regarding an internal solution only strengthened the disdain towards Sithole and Muzorewa.

On the second day of the meeting on the 31st of January, the Patriotic Front once again targeted the interim period and specifically the police force. Nkomo blamed the current police force in taking part to the discrimination and violence against blacks and insisted that a new police force would be created from Patriotic Front fighters. Owen and Lord Carver insisted that there was a need for a trained and organized police unit and that the new police chief would be responsible of getting rid of the harmful elements in the force. The Patriotic Front once again complained of them being seen as equals to Muzorewa and Sithole which bore the danger of the latter three reaching the internal settlement.¹⁷⁸ On the third and final day of the meeting Nkomo once again addressed the role of the Patriotic Front in the interim government to which Owen suggested that the PF could take part in the governing council thus having a significant but not dominant role in the process. Nkomo argued that since the Patriotic Front and its fighters represented the people of Zimbabwe, a dominant role in the interim period was justified. Sithole and Muzorewa would not be part of the governing council in the Patriotic Front's plans but Smith was. The reason was that the latter controlled armed forces which according to Nkomo Sithole or Muzorewa did not. Nkomo also dismissed a UN peacekeeping force saying that those who controlled the armies should mutually agree on the next steps. According to Nkomo foreign UN observer did not know the situation and could not restrain the forces from damaging the population. Owen and Young concluded that the parties attending the Malta meeting should now reflect on the discussed points, keep a tight press line and meet together later, for instance in New York in early February.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 527–534.

¹⁷⁸ Telegram from the Embassy in Malta to the Department of State. 31.1.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 535–537.*

¹⁷⁹ Telegram from the Embassy in Malta to the Department of State. 1.2.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 538–540.*

On the 5th of February Owen sent Vance a letter recapping the results of the Malta conference. Although Owen's viewed the meeting in itself a success, there were several points on which the Patriotic Front was very far apart from the Anglo-American proposition. Although Owen mentioned that individually some of the points could be negotiated but as a whole the gap was big. In particular the governance during the transitional period and the Patriotic Fronts demands of superintending the process as well as managing the police force were troublesome to the UK. Owen mentioned that they had stretched their credibility when accepting that the Zimbabwean army would be based on Patriotic Front forces. Owen mentioned that the Frontline Presidents had already accepted the police force for the transitional period prior to Malta. Owen thought that the UK and US should meet with the Frontline Presidents as fast as possible and get them to apply pressure on the Patriotic Front to get closer to a compromise on the few key issues regarding the interim period. Vance replied that he had the same feeling of the meetings based on the reports from Young and Moose and that a key achievement of Malta was the ability to measure the distance between the Anglo-American plan and the Patriotic Front's views. Vance also agreed that the Frontline Presidents were crucial in getting Nkomo and Mugabe to compromise.¹⁸⁰ The biggest accomplishment of the Malta Conference was identifying the key point on which the Patriotic Front and the Anglo-American initiative disagreed which in turn kept the hopes of moving on with the negotiations alive.

¹⁸⁰ Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom. 7.2.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 541-542.*

3. Facing Realities

The third and final chapter continues examining how the Carter administration continued to pursue the transition to majority rule in Rhodesia despite several setbacks and the slowing down of the momentum gained in 1976.

3.1. Regaining lost momentum

Since publicly accepting majority rule in 1976, Ian Smith had always preferred an internal solution with Rhodesian nationalists and leaving out the Patriotic Front guerillas. Only two weeks after the Malta conference between the UK, the US and the Patriotic Front, the internal solution looked more probable than before as Smith, Muzorewa and Sithole signed a preliminary agreement for the internal settlement on the 15th of February. The British government opposed the plan and were ready to accept it only if it compared well to the Anglo-American proposal.¹⁸¹ The US Policy Review Committee met on the 17th of February to discuss the situation in Rhodesia. The conclusions were that if the PF continues fighting after the internal settlement, increased Soviet and Cuban interference in the conflict is probable which militarily would only have short-term impact but politically harmful for the US and its African policy. The committee also acknowledged that there was considerable domestic support in the US to accept an internal solution in Rhodesia. The US government could not at the moment either fully oppose or embrace the settlement but had to be ready for either option. Publicly the US could respond to the agreement between Smith, Muzorewa and Sithole as a right step towards the end goal of transition to majority rule but it should be done with restraint keeping the other options open. The US should try to take part in the settlement to make sure that the key points of the Anglo-American proposal are kept intact. The US could also put blame on the Patriotic Front and Frontline Presidents that by not embracing the Anglo-American plan they laid the foundation for the Salisbury proposal. The Anglo-American proposal should remain on the table as a possible vehicle that all parties could accept. The next step for the US is to contact Sithole and Muzorewa to find out how and how fast would Smith be removed of power under the Salisbury proposal. It is also crucial to find out what the Patriotic Front and Frontline Presidents plan to do next and

¹⁸¹ DeRoche 2001, 260.

what they expect the US to do. The US should also try to link the Patriotic Front to the internal settlement without making any specific proposals or commitments.¹⁸²

DeRoche notes that a day after the Salisbury announcement Andrew Young condemned the internal settlement as to not bringing peace to the region by not including the Patriotic Front. The US Ambassador to Zambia, Stephen Low, agreed with Young in that the internal settlement was not in the best interest of the US or Southern Africa in that it bore the risk of internationalizing the conflict by added presence of Cuban and Soviet forces.¹⁸³ Vance sent a memorandum to President Carter concerning the looming internal settlement in Rhodesia on the 21st of February. Owen had met with Sithole regarding the Salisbury announcement and had inquired the latter on how Nkomo could be included into the internal settlement. According to Vance the British sought to split the Patriotic Front in favor of Nkomo however Sithole did not promise a special role for Nkomo during the transitional period or any role if Nkomo represented foreign interest. Vance outlined what they knew at the moment of the internal solution and Carter asked for a simple comparison between the Anglo-American proposal and what was currently known of the proposed internal solution.¹⁸⁴ The comparison was sent by Vance to Carter on the 27th of February. The foreword to the comparison sums up the biggest problem of the paper: all the details for the Anglo-American proposal are naturally well known but many key elements in the Salisbury declaration were unknown. For instance such important factors as the form of government and a ceasefire in the armed conflict were not specified. The Rhodesian army would probably carry on forming the basis of the Zimbabwean army with a possibility of adding guerilla troops to the mix and the Rhodesian government had proposed Smith would still hold power during the one year transitional period before the elections. The white minority would have a set number of seats in the national assembly for the next 10 years and a veto-power on topics not yet specified.¹⁸⁵ On the surface the internal settlement seems extremely far apart from the Anglo-American plan and has many similarities to the Kissinger plan. In itself the Salisbury proposition

¹⁸² Summary of a Conclusion of a Policy Review Committee Meeting. 17.2.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 543–544.

¹⁸³ DeRoche 2001, 260–261.

¹⁸⁴ Memorandum from Secretary of State Vance to President Carter. 21.2.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 546.

¹⁸⁵ Memorandum from Secretary of State Vance to President Carter. 27.2.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 554–558.

seemed a remnant of 1976 and too far apart from the Anglo-American plan and the Patriotic Fronts proposition. The original interest of the United States towards Rhodesia was preventing an internationalized conflict similar to the one in Angola and although the Carter administration pursued Southern Africa differently than its predecessor, the Cold War element of the Rhodesian conflict was still an issue. As Young and Low noted at the time, supporting the internal settlement would not have prevented the escalation of the crisis.

The Salisbury announcement made the internal settlement more probable than ever before during the United States efforts in promoting majority rule in Rhodesia. As the process had always been an Anglo-American cooperation swiftly after the new turn of events, British Foreign Minister Owen and State Secretary Vance sent each other letters to plan their next steps in Rhodesia. On the 26th of February Vance responded to Owen's letter regarding the situation in Rhodesia. Vance agreed with Owen that they could not ignore the talks in Salisbury and continue to push the Anglo-American proposal but at the same time they had to keep supporting the principles of the Anglo-American plan and not seem to abandon the gained initiative. According to Vance the only possible differences in how the US and UK view the situation was how much the Frontline Presidents should be included to the process. Vance believed that dialogue should be kept up with both the Frontline Presidents and the Patriotic Front. Vance had attached possible talking points to the Frontline Presidents for joint use by US and UK diplomatic missions. The Patriotic Fronts persistence in having a dominant role during the transitional period was the main reason for the Anglo-American plan not proceeding. The main points were that the US and UK were still aiming to achieve genuine majority rule in Rhodesia and both countries were skeptical towards the internal settlement. The internal settlement could not be ignored but despite domestic pressure in the US and UK the countries had not accepted the Salisbury agreement. If the Patriotic Front would denounce the Anglo-American plan and especially the British Resident commissioner for the second time it would only strengthen Smith's initiative.¹⁸⁶

Although the Carter Administration did not view the possible internal settlement as a positive turn, there was growing domestic support in the US towards the internal settlement. According to DeRoche 24 US Congress representatives requested Carter to support the internal settlement

¹⁸⁶ Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom. 26.2.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 551-553.*

right after the Salisbury announcement. The representatives supporting Rhodesia opposed the State Department and Young blaming them of irresponsible and inflammatory views. The internal settlement seemed to move forward when on the 3rd of March Smith, Muzorewa and Sithole signed the agreement called the Salisbury Plan which was immediately rejected by Nkomo and Mugabe.¹⁸⁷ Muzorewa met with Vance on the 8th of March attempting to get US support for the Salisbury plan and the internal settlement in general. Muzorewa insisted that Smith would only namely remain Prime Minister during the transitional period with the true power residing in the Executive council. Muzorewa told Vance that most of the guerillas would lay down their arms after the settlement and possible Soviet and Cuban involvement would then be against the people of Zimbabwe and not Ian Smith. The details of who truly controlled the security forces during and after the transitional period were not clear and Muzorewa was evasive on the topic. Muzorewa did not answer to questions and critic regarding if the power was genuinely transferred to blacks in the Salisbury plan. Muzorewa agreed that he would join an Anglo-American held conference which consisted of all the parties, the Patriotic Front included.¹⁸⁸ The Salisbury plan and the meeting with Muzorewa did not make the internal solution seem any better than it did in the comparison ordered by Carter. Muzorewa continued to undermine Nkomo and Mugabe as well as the potential escalation of the conflict. As stated earlier, although the Carter administration pursued majority rule in Rhodesia genuinely they also shared the cold war aspect which was the main reason why Kissinger got interested in the region two years earlier.

After meeting with Muzorewa on the 8th of March, Carter and his top advisors met with Owen later that day. Owen noted that Cuban interference in Rhodesia was a real threat and in the case of the internal settlement failing, the Patriotic Front would seek help from the Anglo-American group to oust Smith which they were unable to do. This would lead to the Patriotic Front turning to the Cubans and soviets for help. The Anglo-American plan could not be stretched further to please the Patriotic Front but at the same time the current internal settlement was not viable. Carter noted that they should stick to the Anglo-American plan with the addition of some elements from the internal settlement which should then be discussed in an all-party conference.

¹⁸⁷ DeRoche 2001, 260–262.

¹⁸⁸ Telegram from the Department of State to Multiple Diplomatic Posts. 9.3.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 559–564.

Carter concluded the meeting saying that the US and UK agree on the general principles at this point and should move forward swiftly.¹⁸⁹ After the meeting with Carter, Owen continued to discuss the next steps with Vance in detail. The two decided that the upcoming meeting the Patriotic front should only be attended by Vance to not give a false impression that the meeting was a direct continuation of the Malta conference. They decided that an all party conference should be set up as fast as possible for instance in New York, possibly during the next weeks while Nkomo and Mugabe were in the US. They also discussed the invitations and possible attendance to the conference and concluded that the Frontline Presidents and South Africa could also take part. After the meeting Vance and Owen released a joint press-announcement that the US and UK would continue to facilitate a settlement that included all parties within the principles of the Anglo-American plan.¹⁹⁰ The Carter administration continued to promote transition to majority rule in Rhodesia jointly with the UK. During 1977 and 1978 the Americans were mostly in contact with the British Foreign Minister Owen while the British Prime Minister Callaghan was not directly involved compared to 1976 when the latter personally pursued the issue with Kissinger. On the other hand Carter was much more involved to the process than Ford, who let Kissinger lead US foreign policy in Southern Africa.

Five days after the meetings with Owen, Vance met Mugabe and Nkomo in New York on the 12th of March. The Patriotic Front rejected the attempts to swiftly set up an all party conference in New York claiming that Owen had previously withdrawn the invitation to such a meeting which was disputed by US diplomats. Nkomo and Mugabe suspected that by not reconvening the Malta talks and by publicly calling the Salisbury announcement a “significant step” the US and UK had abandoned the Anglo-American proposal. Vance argued that this was not the case as the Anglo-American plan remained the item to which all future propositions would be compared to and that it was now time to bring all the parties together to negotiate a settlement. The Patriotic Front showed more enthusiasm towards the Anglo-American proposal than ever before and that the discussions of Malta should be continued. According to Nkomo and Mugabe the next step would be to discuss military matter with the British and Smith after which Muzorewa and Sithole could

¹⁸⁹ Memorandum of Conversation.8.2.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 564–566.*

¹⁹⁰ Telegram from the Department of State to Multiple Posts. 16.3.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 566–573.*

be included to the talks. The Patriotic Front declined an all party conference at this stage as no negotiations could be based on the internal settlement. According to Nkomo and Mugabe the next step should be for the US and UK to publicly continue to negotiate the Anglo-American proposal with the Patriotic Front ignoring the Salisbury conference and the internal settlement.¹⁹¹ Although the internal settlement seemed to bring the Patriotic Front close in accepting the Anglo-American proposal, Nkomo and Mugabe would not accept to take part in the internal solution. Essentially the Patriotic Front insisted that the US and UK continued to push the Anglo-American proposal and ignore the internal settlement which Vance and Owen had specifically decided not to do in their letters to each other a few week earlier. It is possible that the Patriotic Front knew this was something that the US and UK could not do and were intentionally pursuing unobtainable goals only to give the impression that the Patriotic Front were still willing to negotiate.

On the 22nd of March Carter sent a letter to President Nyerere regarding the latest events concerning Rhodesia. Nyerere had contacted both Carter and British Prime Minister Callaghan suggesting an all party conference to which Carter responded it being the primary goal for the US at the moment. Carter assured that the US and UK were still dedicated to the principles of the Anglo-American proposal and no party should dominate the interim period and to expand their power during that time. He noted how the Patriotic Front viewed that they would legitimize the Salisbury Agreement by taking part to any negotiations based on it and that military and transitional matter should first be discussed by Smith, the Patriotic Front and the British before moving to constitutional issues by all parties. Carter acknowledged the issues but maintained that the best course of action would be to set up the all party conference and discuss the matter there and reach a settlement based on the principles of the Anglo-American proposal. Carter asked Nyerere to help influence Nkomo and Mugabe to accept the idea of an all-parties meeting without unnecessary precautions. Nyerere responded to Carter's letter on the 28th of March saying that the Patriotic Front had come a long way since Malta in accepting the Anglo-American proposal. Nyerere believed that the remaining issues regarding the proposal were minor and

¹⁹¹ Telegram from the Department of State to Multiple Posts. 12.3.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 574-575.*

could be discussed between the Patriotic Front and US and UK in a follow-up meeting to Malta prior to the all-party conference.¹⁹²

In addition to Tanzania's Nyerere, President Carter similarly shared letters with President Kaunda of Zambia. On the 27th of March Carter sent Kaunda a similar letter as to Nyerere earlier, discussing the new turn of events in Rhodesia and the internal settlement. Carter mentioned how Andrew Young had addressed the internal settlement in the UN Security Council meeting and condemned Rhodesian raid to Zambia. Carter assured Kaunda that both the US and UK still held to the principals of the Anglo-American proposal and the biggest challenge ahead would be to gain the agreement of all nationalist leaders. Carter emphasized that although Nkomo and Mugabe had publicly supported the Anglo-American plan, there still were many incompatible issues in the Patriotic Front's stance towards the proposal. Carter hoped Kaunda and the other Frontline Presidents could influence the Patriotic Front to take part in an all-party meeting in the future and the Americans could take interim steps to help make it happen.¹⁹³ Carter addressed Kaunda and Nyerere in a similar respectful but straightforward manner. Apparently the exchange of letters between Carter and the Frontline Presidents was more or less frequent but only a small number of those letters were chosen to the FRUS collection. These few letters however give perspective to the way how Carter communicated with the Frontline Presidents which had a lot in common to Kissinger's letters to the Presidents in 1976. Compared to Kissinger, Carter was more frank with the President's and at least based on the de-classified documents did not intentionally deceive Kaunda and Nyerere like Kissinger in the spring and summer of 1976.

After the busy month of March reacting to the Salisbury Announcement, Presidents Carter and his top advisors visited Nigeria and Liberia making Carter the first US President to visit Sub-Saharan Africa while still in office.¹⁹⁴ On the 1st of April Carter and his delegation met with Nigerian General Obasanjo in Lagos discussing various topics including Rhodesia. Obasanjo said he had supported the Anglo-American proposal from the start and viewed the Malta talks successful since the Patriotic Front had now according to him accepted the proposal. Carter

¹⁹² Letter from President Carter to Tanzanian President Nyerere. 22.3.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 576–577.*

¹⁹³ Letter from President Carter to Zambian President Kaunda. 27.3.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 578–579.*

¹⁹⁴ DeRoche 2001, 264.

responded saying he had not heard of this but Obasanjo assured the Americans that the Patriotic Front had indeed accepted the proposal and the minor issues could be negotiated including the Patriotic Fronts role during the transitional period. Carter argued that the Patriotic Front had only accepted the proposal for the basis of negotiation whereas the US was fully committed to it. Carter noted that for the plan to be sellable to the American public there had to be UN presence, UK authority and free elections which all were instrumental parts of the Anglo-American proposal. Carter and Young noted that the Patriotic Front kept changing their acceptance of the Anglo-American plan depending on the crowd making it impossible for Carter to sell to Congress. The next steps would include meeting between the US and Patriotic Fronts as well as a possible joint US-UK meeting with Smith prior to an all-party conference. Obasanjo's priority was the removal of Smith and he believed it was important to get all the participants to one meeting fearing separate meeting would raise suspicion and distrust. Young proposed a meeting with the Patriotic Front and Frontline States in Dar-es-Salaam as a continuation to the Malta conference prior to the all-party meeting.¹⁹⁵

The Dar-es-Salam conference took place on the 14th and 15th of April when Vance and Owen met with the Patriotic Front and the Frontline Presidents to continue the talks in Malta.¹⁹⁶ Before beginning the actual meetings, Vance and Owen met in the morning on the 14th to discuss their tactics and goals for the conference. Owen stressed that it should be made clear to the Patriotic Front and Frontline Presidents that the Anglo-American Proposal would be the basis for the all-party negotiations and the Dar-es-Salaam meetings would only lay foundations for the bigger conference instead of setting agreements that would be later on imposed on the other parties. They should focus on issues that would be crucial to the Salisbury group: the role of the British Resident commissioner and the wording that the Zimbabwean army would be based on liberation forces. Owen argued that they should not commit to anything that would limit them and reduce flexibility in the all-party conference. Young raised the question of the UN peacekeeping force, insisting that without strong UN presence the attempt would fail to which Owen and Vance partly agreed. The point on which Vance and Owen disagreed the most was the role of observer in the meeting which made Owen worry might set a precedent to future meeting

¹⁹⁵ Memorandum of Conversation.1.4.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa*, 582–588.

¹⁹⁶ DeRoche 2001, 264.

if too many observers were allowed to which Vance countered that the Tanzanians had invited Nigerians in addition to the Frontline States and this should be accepted since Tanzania was the host to the meetings.¹⁹⁷ The meeting between Owen and Vance was straightforward and familiar since the two of them had worked together a lot for over a year on Rhodesia and other issues. As DeRoche mentioned they were the “the most powerful diplomatic team ever assembled to tackle the Rhodesian issue”¹⁹⁸. The two set similar goals to the current conference, as they did in the Malta talks, but the all-party conference was now the concrete primary goal and the current meetings only preparation for the actual event.

After the meeting with Owen, Vance met with Nyerere on the 14th of April in Dar-es-Salaam. Nyerere thought that the Patriotic Front had accepted the major principles of the Anglo-American proposal but were still hesitant on some of the details that should be now negotiated. Nyerere favored the Anglo-American plan as the basis for the transition and hoped that the US and UK could “save” Muzorewa from the Salisbury group and include him in the deal since compared to Sithole and Chirau, the former was a real political leader according to Nyerere. According to comments in the telegram Nyerere seemed supportive of the Anglo-American Plan in general and at least partially accepted the importance of South African and Rhodesian cooperation in any settlement.¹⁹⁹ After the meeting with Nyerere, Owen joined Vance for their last meeting of the day with the Patriotic Front. The meeting was started with the note that it should be a direct continuation to Malta to which Nkomo questioned if they were to reach binding agreements or if it was only another round of consultations. Owen and Vance both assured that they hoped for agreement on the issues and to ideally move to the all-party conference with common views. The Patriotic Front still insisted in dominating the transitional government although they now accepted UN peacekeeping forces and the British Resident Commissioner who would only have limited power in matter not related to protection from outside forces. Owen pointed out that the proposition by the Patriotic Front was fundamentally different from the Anglo-American proposal and the British parliament would not take responsibility of the transitional period under the proposed terms. The powers and membership

¹⁹⁷ Telegram from Secretary of State Vance to the Department of State. 14.4.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 592–596.

¹⁹⁸ DeRoche 2001, 264.

¹⁹⁹ Telegram from the Embassy in Tanzania to the Department of State. 14.4.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 597–599.

of the Governing Council remained a big issue for the Patriotic Front as did the role of the Resident Commissioner. The third major issue was the consistence of the police force of which the Patriotic front still wanted majority control to which Owen blurted that if the Patriotic Front had control of the police the world would not be convinced that the elections were genuinely free. After the meeting Tanzania's Ambassador noted that the Patriotic Front began the conference intentionally taking a hard line approach to bargain for a more favorable outcome in the next meeting. Owen had not declined even the most controversial proposals but kept replying that they could not be accommodated with the Anglo-American proposal.²⁰⁰

On the second day of the negotiations Vance and Owen met again with Nyerere at the request of the latter. Nyerere guaranteed that he would try to influence the Patriotic Front to accept the full role of the Resident Commissioner but did not go into detail on the Governing Council remarking that the role of the Resident Commissioner was the most crucial but the political realities of the Patriotic Front should reflect to the Governing Council. Vance agreed that the Resident Commissioner was instrumental for the success of the Anglo-American plan; he however disagreed with Nyerere's remarks regarding the police force which Nyerere thought should have a considerable amount of Patriotic Front troops added to it. The three men agreed that it was important not to let the negotiations break down and Nyerere asked Owen and Vance to be as flexible as possible concerning the police force. Vance commented in the telegram that the question of the police force would be the next key issue and the only positive aspect at the moment was moving forward with the all-party conference which the Patriotic Front had accepted earlier that morning.²⁰¹ The final full delegation meeting took place on the afternoon of the 15th of April. The discussed topics at the meeting were UN peacekeepers, the role of the Resident Commissioner, the governing council and the army and police forces. The Patriotic Front was willing to accept UN forces but only for certain duties compared to the Anglo-American Proposal where the Resident Commissioner would use the forces as seen fit. The Patriotic Front also accepted the role of the Resident Commissioner but still insisted on a powerful Governing Council dominated by the Patriotic Front which both Owen and Vance opposed. The Patriotic

²⁰⁰ Telegram from Secretary of State Vance to the Department of State. 14.4.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 599–602.

²⁰¹ Telegram from Secretary of State Vance to the Department of State. 15.4.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 603–604.

Front maintained their prior stance regarding the police and armed forces on which all the participants agreed that should be decided prior to the transition although the formation of especially the police force was not agreed on. The meeting concluded with the notion that the remaining issues should be discussed directly with the Salisbury Group in the upcoming all-party conference which would be set up as swiftly as possible. The next steps for Vance and Owen would be to meet with the Salisbury Group representatives and South Africans and try to set up the conference.²⁰²

DeRoche writes about the Dar-es-Salaam conference that Mugabe and Nkomo insisted control of the executive council to which Owen and Vance replied it did not meet the requirements of the Anglo-American plan. According to DeRoche the conference produced some progress but due to the issue of control during the transitional period the conference did not lead to an agreement and further negotiations would only occur in an all-party conference.²⁰³ The FRUS documents reveal that the Governing Council was not the only point of disagreement during the Dar-es-Salaam conference although it was a major one. The powers of the Residents Commissioner, the mandate of the UN peacekeeping forces as well as the police force were unsolvable issues during the conference which were to be negotiated closer during the possible all-party conference. As Owen and Vance had feared, the Patriotic Front still did not fully embrace the Anglo-American Proposal despite claiming otherwise to the Frontline Presidents. The biggest accomplishment of the Dar-es-Salaam conference was that the Patriotic Front agreed in joining an all-party conference. If the conference had broken down and the Patriotic Front had abandoned the diplomatic process it would have been a serious failure for the Carter administration who sought to find a peaceful transition to majority rule in Rhodesia and avoid it becoming the Cold War proxy front that originally brought Kissinger and the US to Southern Africa.

On the 16th of April Vance and Owen met with South African Foreign Minister Botha and Foreign Secretary Fourie in Pretoria to discuss the latest developments in Rhodesia and the results of the Dar-es-Salaam conference. Vance and Owen concluded that the Front Line presidents had been successful in persuading the Patriotic Front to compromise on some of the key issues with the

²⁰² Telegram from Secretary of State Vance to the Department of State. 16.4.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 604–611.

²⁰³ DeRoche 2001, 264.

dominance over the transitional period and the control of the security forces being the remaining issues. Owen pointed out similarities in the Patriotic Front's plans of a governing council they would dominate during the transitional period to the Salisbury group's Executive council. Botha and Fourie were optimistic that Smith would turn over power before the end of the year and that the African nationalists of the Salisbury group would then gain major domestic and international support. Owen raised the issue that proceeding with the internal solution could lead to a civil war between the black instead of the previous conflict which had mostly been between white and black. Botha replied that it was important to leave the door open for Nkomo and Mugabe to join the internal settlement and instead of an internationalized conflict there was a bigger chance of it becoming a tribal conflict. Owen confirmed that if the settlement led to a genuine election and the stepping down of Smith, the British would support the progress. Owen was concerned that the Soviets and Cubans could intervene during the interim period and thwart the process. Young argued that the US and UK kept the Anglo-American Proposal as a safety net and would not place full support on any single party prematurely. Botha agreed that having a safety net was a constructive step but was wary of supporting the all-party conference saying that the South African government had to be extremely careful of how they approached the current Internal Government of Rhodesia. In a private meeting later that day Botha promised to help bring the all-party conference together but repeated the need to proceed carefully.²⁰⁴

Vance, Young and Owen continued their attempt to set up the all-party conference by meeting with the Rhodesian Executive Council of Muzorewa, Sithole, Chirau and Smith on the 17th of April. The Anglo-American diplomats tried to convince the Executive Council that it would be beneficial for the Rhodesian to join the all-party conference and including the UN to the settlement and the transitional period would bring international acceptability and insure legitimacy and stability. Failure to attend the conference bore the risk of escalating and internationalizing the conflict by Soviet or Cuban interference. Even if the conference did not produce results merely attending it would show that the Executive Council was willing to continue negotiations and increase how the international community viewed the Salisbury group. Vance and Owen insisted that the primary goal for the UK and US was to assist in bringing free and fair elections to Rhodesia. The Executive

²⁰⁴ Telegram from Secretary of State Vance to the Department of State. 17.4.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 513-615.

Council expressed that the internal settlement contained the principles of the Anglo-American plan and that a new all-party conference would only confuse the Rhodesians of whom they claimed 80 percent supported the internal settlement. The Salisbury Group was highly reluctant to take part in the conference but Smith admitted that continuing negotiations would give much needed improvement to the Executive Groups image. The Executive council promised to seriously consider joining the all-party conference while at the same time wished that the US and UK would support the internal settlement. Owen and Vance did not vow to support the settlement even if it gained major domestic support but at the same time they were not trying to stop the progress of the internal settlement and the British Government would judge if possible elections met the British criteria and determine if granting independence after the elections was suitable.²⁰⁵

DeRoche writes that after the Dar-es-Salaam conference Vance and Owen traveled to Pretoria trying to get Vorster to pressure Smith regarding the latter's participation to the all-party conference. Vorster declined but admitted that a lasting solution must have international acceptance and criticized how the US and UK welcomed the internal settlement in a lukewarm way. DeRoche continues that failing to get Vorster's support Owen and Vance told Muzorewa and Smith that the US and UK could not support the internal settlement and a deal acceptable for everyone should be drafted at an all-party gathering. According to DeRoche Owen and Vance concluded that the internal settlement simply was not viable since it was not beneficial to all parties and continued to promote the conference which Smit and Muzorewa promised to consider. DeRoche writes that Vance and Owen were unsuccessful in bringing together the all-party conference during the spring of 1978 and were criticized by the press for favoring the Patriotic Front. DeRoche concluded that was not the case since the primary goal was to cease the fighting which would not happen with the internal settlement since a plan agreed to by the Patriotic Front was essential for peace.²⁰⁶

The FRUS documents do not include the meeting with Vorster and only detail the earlier meeting with Botha and Fourie which contained similar topics. On the meeting with the Patriotic Front,

²⁰⁵ Telegram from Secretary of State Vance to the Department of State. 17.4.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 511-612.

²⁰⁶ DeRoche 2001, 265.

DeRoche only mentioned Muzorewa and Smith representing the Rhodesians although Chirau and Sithole were also present but did not actively take part in the conversation at least based on the telegrams of the meeting. However based on the FRUS documents Vance and Owen were not as strictly opposed to the internal solution as DeRoche stated but only declined to support it beforehand. As mentioned earlier Owen and Vance told both the South Africans and Rhodesians that if the internal solution produced a free and fair election and led to the removal of Smith the UK would consider accepting the result of the election and possibly granting independence. Overall Vance and Owen pursued the all-party conference but were unofficially ready to back the results of the internal settlement if they were in the principles of the Anglo-American Proposal and resulted in the end of violence in the region. For the US the single most important mission in Rhodesia even during the Carter administration was to de-escalate the armed conflict in Rhodesia and avoid Cuban or Soviet intervention which DeRoche also concluded.

3.2. The Carter administration's commitment

Promoting universal human-rights was a personal mission for Jimmy Carter as President. However he could not avoid geopolitics and the realities of the cold war which became evident in mid-May 1978 when Carter accused Cuba of supporting a rebel invasion of Zaire's Katanga province. Carter encouraged the French to intervene militarily making Katanga another African Conflict with strong Cold War ties.²⁰⁷ Carter met with Zambian President Kaunda on the 17th of May in Washington and they discussed a large variety of topics including Rhodesia and rebel activity in Katanga that began on the 13th of May. Carter inquired if there was Angolan or Cuban presence in Katanga which Kaunda claimed to know nothing of but the latter insisted that the problems in Katanga and Zaire in general were caused by internal reasons. Kaunda stated that the administration of Zaire was deeply corrupted and President Mobutu would need to be helped to understand the issues better and to reorganize the country. Discussion concerning Rhodesia was general in nature and aimed to bring about the all-party conference.²⁰⁸ DeRoche points out that the US logistical assistance to the French and Belgian forces on the 18th of May did not go unnoticed by the Frontline Presidents. After two week of limited fighting the rebel retreated and

²⁰⁷ Sargent 2015, 270.

²⁰⁸ Memorandum of Conversation.17.5.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa*, 616–619.

although neither the US or UK directly intervened in the conflict DeRoche notes that US actions in Katanga led to the breakdown of the Anglo-American initiative.²⁰⁹ There is no mention of the US participation in Zaire affecting the negotiation process on Rhodesia in the FRUS documents but the lack of documents from the 17th of May to the 14th of July speak volumes in itself. In comparison there are 9 documents from April 1st to the 17th of April and only one, the meeting with Kaunda on the 17th of May, from mid-April to mid-July. Although the primary source does not directly confirm DeRoche's statement of the Zaire incident breaking down the Anglo-American initiative, it is clear that something changed and the attempts to swiftly set up the all-party conference suddenly halted after the 17th of May meeting with Kaunda where the conference was still mentioned as a near-future goal which makes DeRoche's theory more than plausible.

The Carter administration had been successful in helping bring down the Byrd amendment during the first months of the presidency but there were still several US congressmen who for various reasons wished to lift the sanctions on Rhodesia. During the summer of 1978 a pro-Rhodesian group in the US senate sought to pass a bill, the Helms amendment, ending the sanctions on Rhodesia due to the progress of the internal settlement.²¹⁰ On the 14th of July the Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations sent Senator Byrd a letter summarizing how the Helms amendment would harm US Foreign Policy in Southern Africa and not only damage the image of the US but possibly lead to an escalation of the conflict in Rhodesia.²¹¹ Carter personally campaigned for the tabling of the Amendment and for instance hosted one hundred Senate staffers at the White House on the 20th of July to discuss the bill. The bill was eventually tabled on the 26th of July but as DeRoche notes another amendment concerning sanctions in Rhodesia passed that same day, the Case-Javits amendment. The Case-Javits amendment would lift sanctions on Rhodesia after the end of 1978 if President Carter acknowledged that the Rhodesian regime was willing to sincerely negotiate in an all-party conference and there would be genuine free and fair elections. As DeRoche concluded the Carter

²⁰⁹ DeRoche 2001, 265.

²¹⁰ DeRoche 2001, 266.

²¹¹ Letter From Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations (Bennet) to Senator Robert C. Byrd. 14.7.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 621-623.*

administration was not only able to block the Helms amendment but also defended two crucial points of the Anglo-American proposal and got them into US legislature.²¹²

Even though the momentum had slowed down considerably since April the US policymakers continued to try to set up the Rhodesian all-party conference and on the 28th of July Vance met with Muzorewa in Washington regarding the situation. Muzorewa justified being in Washington where he had campaigned for the passing of the Helms amendment and noted that six years earlier he had done the opposite and embraced sanctions but the difference was that now Smith was seriously willing to step down and the country was ready to move to majority rule. Muzorewa noted that the sanctions would only hurt the transitional government and that there were two seats empty for Mugabe and Nkomo on the executive council but the two were unwilling to join the majority. Vance replies that sanctions would not be lifted before a new legal government has been established and at this point the Executive council would have nothing to lose in joining the all-party conference. Muzorewa downplayed the need for a conference vowing that the current settlement fulfilled the major requirements of the Anglo-American proposal. When Vance questioned him of a ceasefire Muzorewa concluded that the guerillas were becoming desperate and chose to attack soft targets and even though it might seem that the conflict was escalating it was actually de-escalating. When Vance pushed Muzorewa on the issue of joining the conference the latter replied that it would only be a waste of time. Vance also presented Muzorewa with a list of proposed topics for the all-party conference but made it clear that they were still unofficial. Muzorewa warned Vance that there was a threat of a Civil war between Nkomo's and Mugabe's troops and that Vance should visit Rhodesia to see the situation himself. Vance declined the invitation and added that he could visit the area for the all-party conference which Muzorewa had not agreed to join during the meeting.²¹³ The meeting was held after the Helms amendment had failed which made it possible for Vance to take the hard stance as he did towards Muzorewa. The US continued to try to promote the all-party conference even though none of the Rhodesian participants were eager to join it.

²¹² DeRoche 2001, 267–268.

²¹³ Telegram from the Department of State to Multiple Diplomatic Posts. 28.7.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 628–632.

DeRoche writes that the escalation of violence during the summer of 1978 led to nearly three-fourths of major US newspaper editorials to support the internal settlement and condemn the Patriotic Front. DeRoche adds that using this momentum the pro-Rhodesian group behind both the Byrd and Helms amendments invited Ian Smith to Washington to speak to the congress in October of the situation in Rhodesia.²¹⁴ Vance and Owen met on the 28th of September to discuss how to proceed on the Rhodesian issue. The main topics was the content of the newly revised Anglo-American Proposal which addressed the key issues raised by both the Salisbury Group and the Patriotic Front such as the role of the Resident Commissioner and distribution of power during the transitional period. They planned to present the revised plan to the parties shortly and use it as the basis for the all-party conference which should be held as fast as possible. The meeting ended with Owen's remarks on Smith's visit to the US and a pending VISA question that even though the handling of the visit was an internal matter of the US, maybe it could be linked to the conference. Vance promised to consider holding the conference in New York but proposed that they should also continue to look for alternative venues.²¹⁵

Although Smith's invitation to the US did not come from the Carter administration but from the supporters of the internal solution, Owen saw it as a good opportunity to gain some lost momentum regarding the all-party conference and the transition to majority rule. Kissinger had worked together with the British and let them take the lead concerning Rhodesia whereas Owen and Vance cooperated more tightly. Even though the Rhodesian issue was fundamentally a British issue, the US played an active role during the Carter administration. The Anglo-American initiative had not been highly successful but Vance and Owen continued to pursue the all-party conference and modify the Anglo-American proposal despite growing acceptance towards the internal solution which was evident from Smith's invitation to the US.

Smith and his delegation arrived to the US on the 7th of October. Smith met with several key US politicians including President Ford and Senator Reagan in addition to several other congressmen and senators. However Carter did not invite Smith to the White House and declined

²¹⁴ DeRoche 2001, 268–269.

²¹⁵ Telegram from the Department of State to Multiple Diplomatic Posts. 28.9.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 632–637.

to meet with him at all.²¹⁶ Even though Carter did not meet with Smith during the latter's visit to the US, Vance and Young discussed Rhodesian issues with Smith and Sithole in Washington on the 9th of October. Smith explained that the current problem in Rhodesia was Terrorism and how to stop it. Smith continued that many of the guerillas would join the internal settlement if the US and West endorsed it. Sithole added that the issue was no-longer with majority rule since that had been conceded in the March 3rd agreement and western support is the only missing element of making the internal settlement work. Vance replied that the US viewed the situation very differently and that the goal of the Anglo-American initiative was to come up with proposals acceptable for all parties. Vance repeated his argument that there was nothing to lose and much to be gained by joining the all-party conference. Sithole and Smith countered Vance's statement and complained that even a UN peacekeeping force would not be impartial and that the Patriotic Front did not want genuine elections. Smith also referred to the British and Kissinger's promise to stand by the five points which were swiftly dropped when questioned by the African Nationalists. Sithole added that if the Executive council joined the all-party conference it would bring to question the current plans for elections which according to Sithole already were fair and just. Vance continued to press the Executive council in joining the conference to which Smith replied that at one point Nkomo and Mugabe were already willing to join the internal settlement but due to Nyerere's intervention the attempt failed. Vance assured Smith that the US and UK would carefully plan the conference to give it the best chances of success and there would be no preconditions for attendance. Young and Vance made it clear that the US would not back down from Rhodesia and replied to Smith's question that there would be no US troops sent to Rhodesia under any circumstances but all other means of helping the situation were possible. In the end of the meeting Smith asked if it would be possible to meet Carter before the former left the US to which Vance replied that under the current circumstances there was no need for such a meeting.²¹⁷

Carter's unwillingness to meet Smith sent a strong message not only to the Executive Council but to the Patriotic Front, Frontline Presidents and South Africa. Even though Smith was not invited to the US by the Carter administration it was clear that those who opposed Smith were not happy

²¹⁶ DeRoche 2001, 269–270.

²¹⁷ Telegram from the Department of State to Multiple Diplomatic Posts. 14.10.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 639–643.

that the visit was made possible by granting Smith a VISA. In the meeting with Vance and Young Smith's and Sithole's stance towards the all-party conference were in line with Muzorewa's in the latter's meeting with Vance two months earlier. Even though the fighting in Rhodesia had escalated it did not make the Executive Council more enthusiastic in abandoning the internal settlement which was evident of how Smith referred to the problems being caused by terrorists. Even though Vance and Owen had done their best in continuing to set up the all-party conference it seemed that they were no closer to the conference than they were after the Dar-es-Salaam meetings.

DeRoche notes that even though Smith did not initially agree to join the all-party conference, he and Sithole met again with Vance on the 12th and in the second meeting agreed to join the all-party conference if there were no preconditions to attendance. DeRoche questions Smith's true motives as the Southern Rhodesian army launched bloody raids to both Zambia and Mozambique in mid-October that led to hundreds of casualties with a majority of them possibly civilian. DeRoche argues that even though Smith accepted the invitation to the conference, the actions in Southern Africa made it more or less certain that the Patriotic Front would not join the conference in the after-math of the raids.²¹⁸ On the 25th of October Brzezinski sent Vance a memorandum containing Carter's concern that Smith's acceptance to join the all-party Conference could lead to the Congress removing the sanctions even without reaching an acceptable settlement. Brzezinski conveyed Carter's worries to Vance and ordered a short strategy paper on how to move forward in Rhodesia. The most crucial questions were that could the implementation of the Case-Janits amendment be avoided if Smith joined the all-party conference that did not produce results and what could be done to avoid that the new congress did not revoke the sanctions against the President's will. The ordered paper was delivered by the State Department to the NSC on the 14th of November but was not included in the FRUS documents.²¹⁹ The FRUS documents support DeRoche's argument there was possibly a hidden motive for Smith's acceptance to join the conference which was evident from Brzezinski's memorandum sent to Vance. The missing Department of State paper concerning Rhodesia would have possibly given insight to how realistically the Carter administration still pursued the all-

²¹⁸ DeRoche 2001, 270–271.

²¹⁹ Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to Secretary of State Vance. 25.10.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 644.

party conference after the latest serious setbacks but even without the missing memorandum it is evident that the US were not ready to abandon Rhodesia.

In late-November 1978 British Prime Minister Callaghan proposed a new initiative on Rhodesia to determine if the conditions were right for an all-party conference to be set up in early 1979. Callaghan asked Carter for support regarding the new initiative to which Carter and the State department agreed. The new initiative consisted of sending a high-level diplomatic convoy to the Frontline capitals, Lagos, Pretoria and Salisbury to assess and discuss the current state of events in the region. US Ambassador Low would take part to the British mission to Southern Africa. Based on the NSC memorandum on Rhodesia the next steps for the US would have been to send Young to three frontline capitals which were now postponed due to the new British initiative supplanting the American plan.²²⁰ On the 21st of December Ambassador Low sent the official full report of the British mission, coined the Hughes mission after the parliament member who led it, to Southern Africa to the State Department. The Hughes report contained grim news for the Anglo-American initiative: Hughes believed that an all-party conference could be set up in the near future but did not believe it could reach a successful outcome. Furthermore even if a failed conference could have some positive outcomes they would be overshadowed by the probability of negative consequences that were dire in nature. Overall Hughes recommended that Callaghan would not set up an all-party conference but both the UK and US should be ready to move fast if needed and continue to hold the Anglo-American proposal as a basis for future negotiations. The Executive council was to hold elections on the 20th of April 1979 and once the results came in it would be easier to evaluate the need and possible success of an all-party gathering.²²¹

DeRoche writes that after the failed mission in December to set up the conference the Anglo-American plan was practically abandoned and in January while addressing the House of Commons Prime Minister Callaghan stated that he would not hold an all-party conference in the near future. DeRoche continues that due to the failure of the latest initiative and more pressing international matters such as the SALT negotiations, Rhodesia became a low priority for the Carter administration which continued to defend the sanction against those who wished to end

²²⁰ Telegram from the Department of State to Multiple Diplomatic Posts. 22.11.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 645–646.

²²¹ Telegram from the Embassy in Zambia to the Department of State. 21.12.1978. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 647–653.

them. DeRoche points out that Young continued to support the Anglo-American plan but admitted that a negotiated settlement did not look probable and that the Case-Janits amendment could force Carter to end the sanctions against Rhodesia if the elections in April were deemed free and fair.²²² The results of the Hughes mission to Southern Africa and Callaghan's statement to not pursue the all-party conference brought the Anglo-American active attempts in reaching a solution in Rhodesia to an almost complete halt for the first time since the spring of 1976. Although the Carter administration did not abandon Rhodesia their primary goals of gaining peaceful transition to majority rule and creating stability in the area did not seem achievable in the near future anymore. The fighting in the region had escalated continuously while at the same time the two sides seemed farther away from each other than at any point during the US involvement to the transition process. The next big event concerning US foreign policy towards Rhodesia and the future of the whole region in general was the upcoming elections in April and their legitimacy and outcome.

On the 23rd February 1979 members of the State Department, NSC and congressman met with former US Ambassador to the UN Allard Lowenstein who had been in contact with several parties in Southern Africa. Lowenstein believed that during his conversations he had come up with a formula to prevent a civil war in Rhodesia or at least give the impression to the international community that the US had attempted to prevent a civil war. Lowenstein's proposal was that Ian Smith would resign before the April 20th election, the current election should be called the "transitory election" and the newly chosen government would renegotiate the terms and conditions for the next set of actual elections which should be supervised by the UN. A new constitution would also be drafted and sent to a large referendum. Lowenstein emphasized that the plan would work only if executed swiftly and the Carter administration had nothing to lose since even if it failed it had resulted in the stepping down of Smith and elections that had been called "transitory". Lowenstein was well aware of the Case-Janits amendment and the threat of congress forcing Carter to lift sanctions if the elections were deemed fair and free. Lowenstein explained in detail why he believed that the plan could work with the major risk being that the black leaders chosen in the "transition" election would be unwilling to accept a second round of

²²² DeRoche 2001. 272.

elections.²²³ A CIA information cable sent on the 2nd of March stated that Ian Smith's recent waffling on when he would resign was partly caused by Lowenstein's meeting with Smith. The cable concludes that South African foreign minister Botha had been able to convince Smith to step down before the election and only after meeting with Lowenstein on the 29th of January Smith had begun to reconsider his resignation. The senior Rhodesian security officials mentioned in the cable believed that when Lowenstein offered that the sanctions could be lifted if Smith retired early which gave Smith the idea that "he could delay his planned resignation and bargain for a major western concession in return for resigning."²²⁴ Horne describes Lowenstein as a "self-proclaimed liberal" who wished to help lift the sanction against Rhodesia fearing the communist ties of the Patriotic Front and who endorsed the elections in the spring of 1979.²²⁵ Horne does not mention the Lowenstein formula and only refers to Lowenstein as one of the prominent US citizens who supported the lifting of sanctions. DeRoche does not mention Lowenstein or the formula at all while recapping the events of the spring on 1979. The Lowenstein formula in itself would not have been extremely noteworthy for this study since it did not become a part of official US foreign policy but the CIA cable stating that Lowenstein's actions might have influenced Smith to reconsider early resignation makes it significant.

As the Anglo-American initiative had halted and the all-party conference would not be held before the elections, the next big question concerning the Carter administration was the elections in April and the Case-Janits amendment which could be used to force Carter to lift sanctions if the elections were deemed free and fair. Vance sent Carter a memo where the former recapped the situation and suggested that the Government should not send observers to the elections but would not oppose if the congress chose to send observers. However Vance also suggested that the administration should make their position on observers clear at the congress hearing of the issue.²²⁶ Congress representatives wishing to keep the sanctions on Rhodesia sent President Carter a letter asking for his support in regarding bill to send observers to the Rhodesian election

²²³ Memorandum of Conversation. 23.2.1979. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 661–666.

²²⁴ Central Intelligence Agency Information Cable. 2.3.1979. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 668–669.

²²⁵ Horne 2001, 164.

²²⁶ Memorandum from Secretary of State Vance to President Carter. 1.3.1979. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 667–668.

to which the President's assistant for Congressional affairs responded on the 22nd of March. The letter expressed appreciation for the congressmen's stance towards sending observers to the Rhodesian election and emphasized that sending observers would in many ways be harmful to the interests of the US and the Southern African region. The administration recognizes the independent authority of the congress but hoped that no observers would be sent as it would undermine the US attempts to negotiate peace to the region. The assistant assured that the Carter administration sought to come up with a settlement that stopped the war and would not be harmful to the people of Rhodesia or US foreign political interests in Africa.²²⁷

On the 6th of March Vance sent Carter a memo regarding US strategy for Rhodesia which had to address key issues regarding the elections, the threat of being forced to lift sanctions and how the US was viewed in trying to find a solution to the conflict. Vance admitted that it was unlikely that any Anglo-American initiative can succeed at this point but they needed a strategy to "weather the storm". Vance suggested that they should propose a process of UN-supervised elections, that at least the concept of the elections should be accepted prior to the 20th of April elections and the Carter administration would support the lifting of sanctions once the transitional process leading to the UN supervised elections had begun. The main goal of the US administration would now be the UN supervised elections attended by all parties, including the Patriotic Front, and not the immediate resignation of Smith. Vance noted that the Carter administration had to still prevent the Congressional lifting of the Sanctions via the Case-Javits amendment if the elections had not met the requirements. Carter agreed to the proposals and Vance was to start consultation with the British regarding the new strategy.²²⁸ Vance sent Carter another memo on the subject on the 26th of March regarding the progress of the proposed US strategy. Ambassador Low had visited Salisbury on a few days earlier and came up with the conclusion that there was no current support for the UN-supervised elections but at least Muzorewa and Sithole mentioned leaving the door open for future negotiations. Smith continued his political involvement which was largely accepted in Salisbury and Vance feared that not only would the war continue but escalate. Carter replied to the letter asking for a better assessment of how to act if the elections turned out

²²⁷ Letter From Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations (Bennet) to Representative Thomas Downey. 22.3.1979. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 675-676.*

²²⁸ Memorandum from Secretary of State Vance to President Carter. 6.3.1979. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 672-674.*

good.²²⁹ Vance delivered Carter the detailed assessment on the 30th of March which focused on the Case-Javits amendment and that Carter would have to determine if the elections were free and fair after they were held. Vance restrained from prejudging the outcome of Carter's determination but from the points he presented for Carter to consider it was evident that Vance did not support lifting the sanctions after the interim elections. Vance noted that whatever Carter chose to do, it would have an effect on future US policy options which Vance briefly summarized. Vance remarked that the US government had done the right thing by embracing the new strategy which would help the US save face however the April election played out.²³⁰

The Case-Javits amendment was far more favorable to the Carter administration than the original bill that would have lifted all sanctions on Rhodesia due to the internal settlement but it still was a hindrance that could force the administration to aggressively lobby the congress if it wished to hold sanctions on Rhodesia after the April elections. Although there was no further mention of the Lowenstein formula in the FRUS documents, Vance's proposition for a new American strategy had many similarities to the formula. The Case-Javits amendment, the breaking down of the Anglo-American initiative and the April 20th elections made it difficult for the Carter administration to seem credible to the international community while at the same time living under the threat that congress would force carter to lift the sanctions.

Before the elections in Rhodesia British Prime Minister Callaghan lost a vote of confidence in the parliament and a new election was to be held in May with conservative Margaret Thatcher being the expected next Prime Minister of Britain. DeRoche points out that Thatcher sent five observers to the April 20th elections and she might recognize the independence of Rhodesia if the elections met the set criteria. Muzorewa won the April 20th elections with over 60 percent of the eligible black voting and the inauguration of the new government was planned for the 31st of May. The Patriotic Front condemned the elections and Ambassador Low added that the high participation process was partly caused by the military intimidating people to vote. According to DeRoche Young argued that recognizing Muzorewa lead to more fighting and heighten the risk of

²²⁹ Memorandum from Secretary of State Vance to President Carter. 26.3.1979. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 676.

²³⁰ Memorandum from Secretary of State Vance to President Carter. 30.3.1979. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 677-681.

Soviet or Cuban involvement to the conflict.²³¹ On the 16th of May Vance replied to a letter sent by Muzorewa to Carter requesting immediate lifting of sanctions and recognition of the new Zimbabwe-Rhodesian government. In his reply on behalf of Carter Vance recapped how the US had viewed the conflict in Rhodesia and that the violence does not only threaten the people of Rhodesia and the neighboring countries but also the stability of the whole region. Vance pointed out that Carter was required by the Case-Javits amendment to make a determination no later than 2 weeks after the new government of Rhodesia was appointed if the prerequisites for the lifting of sanctions had been met. Vance concluded that the US would continue the process to get a broader agreement by all the major parties in Rhodesia and hoped that the new government of Rhodesia shared this goal and would continue the dialogue to bring peace to the region.²³²

In the aftermath of both Rhodesian and British elections Vance met traveled to London to meet with members of the new administration. On the 21st of May Vance met with new British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington and they discussed how the new government would handle the post-election Rhodesia. Carrington believed that the April elections in Rhodesia had ended the long process to achieve majority rule in Rhodesia and the Anglo-American initiative that had worked to achieve it. He mentioned the British report of the elections coined them being “as free and fair as possible under the circumstances”. Muzorewa was now the new Prime Minister and he was soon ready to form the new government with Smith included as a minister without portfolio. Carrington acknowledged the international implications on how to proceed in Rhodesia but he said the Tory government feels it is time to remove sanctions and recognize the independence of Rhodesia. He claimed this feeling was the popular opinion in the UK and not only that of the Tory party. The British added that Muzorewa had been in contact with the Front Line Presidents and was still willing to offer amnesty to the guerillas and was willing to work with the Patriotic Front. Vance assured that Washington appreciated the new reality in Rhodesia and Carter had to soon decide over the Case-Javits amendment within two weeks after the new government was appointed. Vance warned that lifting sanctions could lead to the escalation of the war and Soviet or Cuban intervention and promoted a new possible solution with partially accepting the April elections and planning for a revision of the constitution, some form of an all-party meeting and

²³¹ DeRoche 2001, 274–275.

²³² Telegram From the Department of State to the Consulate in Cape Town, 16.5.1979. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 689–690.

new elections after such meeting. Carrington believed that neither the Salisbury government of the Patriotic Front would find the proposition attractive. The meeting failed to produce a new strategy that both sides agreed and the general formula agreed to would be easy to explain domestically for the US and to convince congress on the matter.²³³

DeRoche points out that while the pro-sanctions lobbyists in the US were hard at work, those who supported the lifting of Sanctions did not believe they needed much lobbying anymore hoping for support from the new British Conservative government. DeRoche notes that although Thatcher was in favor of the Internal Settlement and Muzorewa, she wanted to stop the armed conflict and refrained from recognizing the internal settlement in May. Of the meeting with Vance on the 21st DeRoche concludes that even though inconclusive, it was informative and showed that the new British Government would take a more prominent role concerning Rhodesia. DeRoche writes that during the meeting Carrington had warned Vance that Thatcher would not fight to maintain sanctions on Rhodesia but the new government would proceed carefully and take in to account the opinions of the US and prominent African states such as Nigeria.²³⁴ After the meeting between Vance and Carrington it was evident that the Anglo-American initiative on Rhodesia had come to an end. As DeRoche noted, the meeting was informative in that the role of the US as an active player in trying to solve the Rhodesian issue had ended and the new British government would take the lead once again in trying to end the Rhodesian armed conflict. Although the new Rhodesian government was far from what was described in the Anglo-American plan, it was majority ruled and chosen by the majority of Rhodesian blacks. Under different circumstances this would have been a natural time for the Carter administration to pull away from Rhodesia without losing face and letting the Thatcher government continue. However due to the Case-Javits amendment Carter had to determine if the US would lift the sanctions with both outcomes having major impact on the region.

A week after the meeting with the British on the 1st of June Brzezinski sent Carter a memo going thru two possible negative determinations regarding the Case-Javits amendment. The two options were titled option A “conditional acceptance” and Option B “conditional rejection” where

²³³ Draft Memorandum of Conversation. 21.5.1979. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa*, 690–694.

²³⁴ DeRoche 2001. 276–277.

the former set specific conditions to be met before the lifting of the sanctions and the latter much more general conditions. Brzezinski summarizes the main objectives of the US concerning Rhodesia at this point which include retaining good relations with African states, maintaining a neutral stance, strong leadership in Congress to prevent lifting of sanctions, possibly put some distance between the US and UK without damaging relations and forcing the UK to own the sanctions issue. The US should also show that it recognizes the changing circumstances and could be flexible concerning a negotiated settlement. Brzezinski noted that both options could reach the set objectives with option A being more effective in achieving the goals except flexibility and option B preferred by the British. Brzezinski recommended that the final announcement of the determination would be given on June the 7th based on talks and drafts made on the 5th of June consistent with option A.²³⁵ The determination on the Case-Javits amendment did indeed come on the 7th of June when Carter announced that lifting the sanctions was not at the moment beneficial for the interests of the US or the people of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia and that the elections were not free or fair. According to DeRoche Carter and Vance did not specify when the sanctions would be lifted but a new constitution decided by an all-party conference sponsored by the UK was set as a prerequisite for the lifting of sanctions.²³⁶ The FRUS documents do not specify which option Carter chose or contain the announcement by Carter but based on what DeRoche wrote of the conditions it seems to be a modified version of option A with specific goals to be matched before sanctions could be lifted. The shift in the Anglo-American relations concerning Rhodesia was evident from Brzezinski's memo naming that one of the major objectives was to distance the US from the UK regarding Zimbabwe-Rhodesian matters.

In early July Muzorewa visited Washington attempting to persuade the Carter administration to lift sanctions. Even though the Anglo-American cooperation had quieted down since Thatcher's election, the new Prime Minister had been in contact with the US and asked for the US to make it clear to Muzorewa that the UK was closely working with the US regarding Zimbabwe-Rhodesia. Muzorewa should be made known that the UK was the one they should do the negotiating with and make it clear the British recognition of Rhodesia would not necessarily mean the rest of the

²³⁵ Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter. 1.6.1979. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 696-697.*

²³⁶ DeRoche 2001, 279.

international community lifting sanctions if the established criteria had not been met.²³⁷ Muzorewa met with Carter in Camp David on the 12th of July where Carter brought up the points suggested by Thatcher and refrained from speaking of new elections or a constitutional reform. On the return helicopter trip back to Washington Muzorewa asked if it was enough to lift the sanctions if the blocking power of whites was removed which Vance declined saying that the changes should real and that the US government support the process but it must be worked out between Muzorewa and the British.²³⁸ The Muzorewa talks with Carter and Vance were now different then their many previous talks over the years and the meeting failed to produce any results. The most significant aspect of the meeting was that the US had now clearly moved away from active participation to the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia issue and despite the restrained relations to the UK. They continued to coordinate their moves with the British but made it clear to Muzorewa that the UK was now the only faction to do the serious negotiations with.

The UK invited the parties to an all-party meeting at Lancaster House that first convened on the 10th of September in London lead by Lord Carrington. The Lancaster Conference eventually led to a deal in December followed by elections won by Mugabe in February. DeRoche points out that the US did not take part to the conference but the Carter administration supported the UK initiative and continued to fight the lifting of sanctions in congress.²³⁹ The beginning of the Lancaster Conference marked the end of active US participation regarding the Rhodesian question.

²³⁷ Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Brazil. 17.7.1979. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 705.

²³⁸ Telegram from the Department of State to Multiple Diplomatic Posts. 12.7.1979. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1977-1980, VOL XVI Southern Africa, 708–709.

²³⁹ DeRoche 2001, 283–285.

Conclusions

This thesis closely followed the diplomatic process of the United States in attempting to achieve a transition to majority rule in Rhodesia. The three main chapters answered the main research questions as well as the sub-questions in the core text.

The US first became interested in promoting majority rule in Rhodesia to prevent the crisis from escalating and leading to a Cold War confrontation with the Soviets and Cubans similar to the one in Angola. Kissinger pursued this goal by cooperating with the UK to set up a constitutional conference and to find a peaceful solution to de-escalate the armed struggle. Kissinger and his staff were in close contact with the Frontline Presidents and the South African Prime minister before meeting with Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith or the Zimbabwean Nationalists. For Kissinger the Anglo-American relations were crucial as he let the UK take charge in the process and especially the Geneva Conference which Kissinger did not attend. The Cold War was the main reason why Kissinger chose to pursue Rhodesia in the first place, although plans regarding the transition to majority rule in Rhodesia were drafted as early as 1970.

There was a lot on continuation in how the Carter administration pursued Rhodesia compared to the Kissinger lead mission in 1976. The Carter administrations also shared its predecessor's interest in avoiding a Cold War confrontation in the region but the new President paid more attention to the human rights aspect of the transition. This was evident from how the Carter administration was stricter towards the South African government and the Smith regime and in more contact with the African nationalists including the Patriotic Front and its leaders. The Carter administration continued to co-operate close with the British through their Anglo-American initiative in which the two countries were much closer to equals than a year before when it was clear that the UK led the effort regarding Rhodesia. The Carter administrations approach was in many ways similar to Kissinger's in that it consisted of frequent communication with all the parties and high level meetings which were usually executed together with the British.

This study was able to answer all the research questions on the United States interest toward majority rule in Rhodesia. However there is still plenty of room and need for research regarding United States and Rhodesian relations. Many of the files missing from the FRUS collection could be located from the various Presidential Libraries in the United States as well as other private collection. The CIA also keeps declassifying and releasing new documents which could contain new information of how the United States acted in the region and if it covertly operated in Rhodesia or the neighboring region.

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