



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

SECRET/EYES ONLY

September 22, 1979

TO: AF - Mr. Moose
Mr. Hare
Mr. Macfarlane
INR - Amb. Bowdler
Miss Frisa
IO - Mr. Maynes
OES - Mr. Nosenzo

FROM: S/AS - Allen W. Locke

SUBJECT: South Africa

Attached is a first draft on how the U.S. should respond to a South African nuclear test. It will be discussed at the meeting in Mr. Moose's office on Sunday, September 23, at 8:30 A.M. As revised at that meeting, the paper will be provided to Under Secretary Newsom and Ambassador Smith for use at the White House meeting scheduled for 11:00 A.M.

Attachment:

As stated.

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ISSUES AND OPTIONS REGARDING USG REACTION TO A NUCLEAR TEST IN THE REGION OF SOUTH AFRICA

Contingencies

In the present state of uncertainty, we should consider several possible outcomes regarding our degree of certainty on the significance of the nuclear "event":

- We are unable to conclude from further evidence whether or not a nuclear test occurred.
- Further information establishes with certainty that a nuclear test did not occur.
- We establish that a nuclear test occurred, but we are unable to determine whose test it was or exactly where it occurred.
- We conclude that South Africa has tested a nuclear device.

All of these contingencies pose issues of whether and how the U.S. should react, and if so, whether publicly or privately. In either of the first two contingencies, we are not in a position, nor is there an established need, to engage in diplomatic maneuvers for African or nonproliferation policy reasons. There is the likelihood, however, that our original intelligence information will leak to the public and/or to other governments. The effect might be to place the U.S. under accusation that it had information that a test had occurred but had covered it up.

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The third contingency (test of unknown national origin) is a difficult one. Many in the U.S. and abroad would be disposed to accuse South Africa, and to expect the U.S. to mount an appropriate response. Yet for the USG to do so on the basis of inadequate information leads us into a situation where our diplomacy and our credibility in general could suffer.

The fourth contingency (South Africa test) is the least complicated intellectually but requires the most vigorous U.S. response. It is also the situation in which the U.S. can least afford to remain silent or immobile for more than a minimum time after we have established the facts. For that reason, this first look at possible U.S. responses concentrates on this contingency.

Aspects of a U.S. Response

Two lines of U.S. foreign policy intersect at a South African test: our African policy and our global nonproliferation policy. The tendency of both is to require a strongly negative official reaction to South Africa's action. This may, and probably should, be manifested in various ways.

1. U.S. Public Posture

It is virtually certain that intelligence conclusions on an event of this magnitude cannot be kept secret. Moreover, a test by South Africa should lead us to conclude that we have

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nothing to gain by further efforts to encourage South African nuclear "good behavior" through quiet diplomacy. Furthermore, the virtually inevitable leak of our information would make us vulnerable to accusations that we were covering up for South Africa, and even that we had assisted or acquiesced in South Africa's nuclear plans.

These considerations dictate that we should assume a public posture on the event, and that we be prepared to do so quickly enough to stay ahead of any leaks. At the same time, we risk damage to our relations with key states with whom we have cooperated on the South Africa nuclear problem if we do not give them advance warning of our imminent public posture (this is treated in 2 below).

Imperatives of both affected U.S. policies suggest that our public reaction be a strong denunciation of South Africa's action. Under the circumstances, a special message by the President would not be inappropriate. Variants include statements by the Secretary of State and by our Ambassador to the UN. A draft statement is at Tab A.

Ancillary activities in the public arena could include a special message by the President to the Congress, a call for an emergency session of the UNGA (if it is not in session), or a call for Security Council consideration of the problem. Actions of this nature would imply or inevitably

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lead to broader U.S. or international actions.

2. Consultations with Other Nuclear Supplier States

In any contingency that involves the possibility that South Africa conducted a test, and especially if we know South Africa tested, we should arrange urgent consultations with key nuclear supplier states. A South African test would be a major event for our nonproliferation policy. Nuclear suppliers would expect to be consulted, and our failure to do so could militate against future effective working relationships with them. In this connection, the French are a special case because of their commercial and diplomatic exposure on the South African nuclear problem. Another special case is the UK, because of the significance of Southern African issues in current British foreign policy. A third special case is the USSR, in part because of our past reasonably cooperative relationship on the South African nuclear problem and in part because of the Soviets' almost inevitable tendency to make maximum political capital out of the episode -- preferably at our expense. These three governments should probably receive the earliest and most careful consultation. We would want to review our evidence (to the extent possible) and our conclusions, and signal to the degree possible our intended public and diplomatic postures.

Other nations with whom we would consult could

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include remaining members of the Namibia Contact Group (Canada, FRG), Australia, and Japan. We might also consider convening an emergency meeting of the Nuclear Supplier Group under the aegis of Article 14 of the Nuclear Supplier Group Guidelines. Involvement of the NSG would be useful to maximize the effect of nuclear sanctions against South Africa. It could also serve as a useful precedent for any subsequent proliferation cases.

3. United Nations

A public announcement by the U.S. that South Africa has tested would lead to an extremely strong reaction by African States and undoubtedly a call for sweeping sanctions against South Africa. We could hardly place ourselves in opposition to some form of sanctions, although our preference as to their severity might be conditioned by the degree to which we thought we might walk South Africa back from its new nuclear posture. We might consider introducing a resolution of our own, both for the added political benefit of having taken the initiative, and in the interest of controlling a resolution to conform with our objectives. In practical terms, however, we should assume that any UNSC response to a South African test will be driven by the mood in the General Assembly. A resolution, therefore, is likely to be very sweeping, calling for severing economic, commercial, and possibly diplomatic relations.

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It would be advantageous to build into a resolution an automatic termination under defined conditions. Such conditions presumably would be, at least, South Africa's immediate pledge of no further testing, adherence to the NPT and placement of all its nuclear facilities under international inspection. A stiffer resolution would "outlaw" South Africa until it had dismantled all nuclear facilities of military significance and permitted international verification of its action.

A resolution with such a provision would give the South Africans a way out of their situation and some incentive to take far-reaching actions of nonproliferation significance. It is arguable whether the South Africans would take advantage of such an opportunity. Sanctions of unlimited duration, however, would confirm for South Africa that its place in the world community is untenable; this would reduce any prospect of a change of course in Pretoria.

4. US-South African Relations

The dynamics of the UN situation, outlined above, might well be the pacing element in any modification of our relationship with the SAG. Absent UN action, or in advance of it, we might take decisions on curtailing further what is already a limited relationship. We could for example sever trade ties. We could refuse to handle South African uranium

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in the U.S., even when its ultimate destination is a third country. We could curtail diplomatic relations.

In advance of any of these actions, or even in advance of a public U.S. response to the nuclear test, we should confront the South Africans with our information. The purpose here would be to ensure that the South Africans understand that they bear the onus for anything that happens next, to learn what we can of South Africa's motive in testing, and to obtain information on South Africa's future intentions and whether there is the possibility for reversal of its present course. It is most unlikely that such a discussion with the SAG would lead us to abandon proposed actions described in earlier sections. We might, however, wish to temper our actions if our reading of the situation in South Africa so warranted.

U.S. Objectives

As indicated earlier, two lines of U.S. foreign policy intersect at a South African nuclear test. Our first-order objective should be to preserve the effectiveness and credibility of both policies. Both policies dictate that we eliminate every opportunity for accusations that we condone what South Africa has done. At the same time, implementation of these policies over the longer term might best be served by our reacting to a test in a more measured way than the needs of the present situation might indicate.

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With respect to our nonproliferation policy our interests would be served by an outcome in which South Africa formally abandons its nuclear explosives program, accepts full international control over its nuclear facilities, and undertakes to or is prevented from exporting nuclear explosive or other sensitive technology abroad. Short of these attainments, we would wish to make manifest to the world that South Africa's action (and similar action by any other prospective proliferator) is a violation of international norms and leads inevitably to harsh retribution by the international community.

With respect to our African policy, a judgment must be made as to whether our Southern African objectives require the continued existence and cooperation of the present South African government. If that judgment is negative, South Africa's nuclear test might afford an opportunity to discredit the SAG not only abroad but at home (the latter assumes that the test has not rallied white public opinion behind the present government). In such a case, U.S. public and diplomatic action may tend to be more extreme and irrevocable. If it is judged that we ultimately need the help of the white South African government in other areas (peaceful transition in South Africa, other Southern African initiatives), we should clearly incline toward a less extreme posture.

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TAB A

PROPOSED U.S. PUBLIC STATEMENT

The American people are shocked at the irresponsible action by the Government of South Africa in exploding a nuclear device. By this action, the South African authorities threaten to unleash the horror of nuclear holocaust on the African Continent.

We call upon all nations of the world to join us in expressing outrage over this act. The world community must come together in opposing South Africa's pursuit of its reckless course, and in taking every action necessary to dissuade it from doing so.

The United States Ambassador to the United Nations will today call upon that body to take cognizance of South Africa's action and to take such action as is appropriate to counter this threat. In addition, the United States is in urgent diplomatic contact with other nuclear supplier states to ensure that South Africa is quarantined from any conceivable form of outside assistance to its misguided nuclear program.

U.S. companies doing business in South Africa are called upon to review their relationships there. There must be no doubt that the regime in Pretoria cannot be sustained in its present course with any form of American financial or industrial support.

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