

June 14, 1976

**Report on Dr. Hilgard Muller's and Brand Fourie's
Reaction to 'Yesterday's meeting,' and
Accompanying Memorandum**

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Summary:

South African opinions on situation in Rhodesia as well as prospects of external involvement in the conflict

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They are very despondent and obviously hoped we would be more forthcoming. They are not enthused by the line we wish them to take with Kissinger. They say Friend (Vorster) tried for two years to sell (Smith)'s sincerity of purpose to Kaunda and colleagues but he could not do it now. A large section of Congress has already written off Rhodesia. The basis we set out yesterday will do nothing to alter this and we should not deceive ourselves that the expressions of support we get from certain American and other right-wingers will change things in our favor. They do not feel the Americans, French or Germans will be persuaded to talk to Farmer (Smith) as 'they know what to expect'. Vorster's aim at the meeting was to find out (Smith)'s position. Our response when he raised the issue of parity brought them to despair. They thought we were too sanguine about the possibility of Russia using Cubans or Satellites in Southern Africa. The more success we have in countering terrorism the more likely it is that neighboring African states might seek external intervention. At present those states thought Africans could win by themselves. (Vorster) had put RSA attitude politely but he had made it clear that RSA would not come to Rhodesia's aid. First, because it would give others the excuse to intervene; secondly, if African states sought external intervention, the West would 'cut South Africa off' if she then attempted to participate in our battle.

They thought our air strike on Espungabera only 12 days before Kissinger meeting was unfortunate. Outsiders would say we had done it to torpedo talks. They were incredulous over our claiming success in previous negotiations. Even if we thought they were naïve the people they were going to see were not... They were "shattered" we had not thought about the minimum terms for settlement. (Smith) had said we intended to move to a certain goal. The US view "responsible government" would be diametrically opposed to ours. Did we believe the evolutionary process would go on forever? He wished to know because he would be asked what brief he had from Rhodesia to support his statements. We had replied that could go along but we could not be specific on the franchise or the time limit. Vorster said that the idea would be if we could say that we were moving along a certain path and we would get there in X or Y years. This is what he had hoped for. Something must be held out to show Rhodesia was prepared to move towards her goal in a practical way.

They thought (Smith) misread South Africa in two ways. First he thought the Friend was trying to dictate to him. Second, when the Friend listened sympathetically and quietly he took it as indicating agreement with what he was saying. He was wrong.

They had thought they saw how some use could be made of the American initiative and had begun to hope this could be exploited. Yesterday dispelled this.

For Gaylard only from ADR, Re "your query about military equipment if terrorism continues on eastern border".

I have pointed out to contacts that was sticking point and we must know what assistance we might get... it is a matter of life and death. (Rhodesian) Cabinet needed assurances.

(The message from Vorster is) "as of this moment we have not applied boycotts of any nature against Rhodesia. Therefore no boycott is conceivable after sanctions have been lifted. In other words this type of thing could only become easier and nobody should think otherwise". Short said Vorster could not admit in front of Kissinger that he was supplying us and would go on doing so. He had always evaded the charge, saying Rhodesia bought on the black market etc...

David Scott drafted immediate signal which he showed me, emphasizing our problem and urging that we be given some assurance. He said Labour Government were chary on arms supplies to any country but it was manifest(ly necessary) since aim was to set up anti-communist government that they and others should be ready to assist.

Told him what Kissinger had said on position re arms supplies.