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24. National Security Council Report¹

Washington, August 23, 1957.

NSC 5719/1

NOTE BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL ON U.S. POLICY
TOWARD AFRICA SOUTH OF THE SAHARA PRIOR TO CALENDAR YEAR 1960

REFERENCES

- A. NIE 72–56²
- B. Memo for NSC from Acting Executive Secretary, subject: “Report to the President on the Vice President’s Visit to Africa”, dated April 22, 1957
- C. NSC 5719³
- D. NSC Action No. 1778⁴

The National Security Council, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the Director, Bureau of the Budget, at the 335th Council meeting on August 22, 1957, adopted the statement of policy on the subject contained in NSC 5719, subject to the amendment thereto which is set forth in NSC Action No. 1778–b.

The President has this date approved the statement of policy in NSC 5719, as amended and adopted by the Council and enclosed herewith as NSC 5719/1; directs its implementation by all appropriate Executive departments and agencies of the U.S. Government; and designates the Operations Coordinating Board as the coordinating agency.

Also enclosed, for the information of the Council, are Annex A (“Areas Included in Africa South of the Sahara”), Annex B (“United States Exports to and Imports from Africa, by Country”), Annex C (“Gold and Foreign Exchange Holdings of African Territories and Countries South of the Sahara as of December 31, 1956”), and a Financial Appendix.⁵

At the 335th meeting the Council also (NSC Action No. 1778–c):

Noted the statement by the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, relative to paragraphs 19 and 20 on page 13, affirming the desirability of periodically surveying the strategic importance of Africa South of [Page 76] the Sahara.

James S. Lay, Jr.⁶

[Enclosure]

STATEMENT OF U.S. POLICY TOWARD AFRICA SOUTH OF THE SAHARA PRIOR TO CALENDAR YEAR 1960

Prefatory Note

1. Many of the problems of Africa South of the Sahara are long-range in nature. Appreciable progress toward their resolution will in some instances require a generation or more. The policy guidance contained in this paper is addressed to those actions which the United States can usefully take in the immediate future. Moreover, the projection of specific policies beyond this period is not feasible because of the marked political changes probable in the area after 1960.

The Nature of U.S. Interests

General

2. There is a growing awareness in the world that Africa is emerging as an area which will have an increasingly important influence on the course of world events and that the political alignment of the present and future independent nations of the continent will be deeply affected by the policies which

Western nations, including the United States, pursue in the future.

3. The United States is concerned that Africa South of the Sahara develop in an orderly manner towards self-government and independence in cooperation with the European powers now in control of large areas of the continent. We hope that this transition will take place in a manner which will preserve the essential ties which bind Europe and Africa—which are fundamentally complementary areas. Africa depends on Europe not only as a source of the normal imports of undeveloped countries but also as the major supplier of investment, both public and private. Europe in turn needs the African market, as well as Africa's minerals and agricultural products. The United States, therefore, believes it to be generally desirable that close and mutually advantageous economic relationships between the [Page 77] European powers and Africa should continue after the colonial period has passed.

4. We wish to avoid in Africa a situation where thwarted nationalist and self-determinist aspirations are turned to the advantage of extremist elements, particularly Communists. We also wish to avoid the deprivation of African markets and sources of supply to Western Europe, and the economic dislocations that could result from the termination of the social and economic development programs of the metropolitan governments in the dependent areas (which currently average \$300 million annually in excess of ordinary budget expenditures).

Specific

5. *Economic.* American economic interests in Africa are important although not to be compared with other areas. Total American investment in Africa South of the Sahara is now about \$500 million, the majority in the Union of South Africa. The area is a predominant source for the United States of such strategic materials as asbestos, cobalt, columbite, corundum, industrial diamonds, tantalum ore, palm kernel oil, and chemical chromite. The United States also imports many other agricultural and mineral products (including uranium) from the area. Our exports to the area, although limited in almost all parts of the area by governmental restrictions which discriminate in favor of the metropolitan powers, are important to the countries concerned. Total U.S. trade with Africa South of the Sahara now equals more than \$1 billion annually. It is in our interest to promote and support as appropriate the sound economic development of the area, both as an end in itself and as an important factor contributing to democratic political evolution.

6. *Strategic.* The strategic value of Africa South of the Sahara, which is limited at present, stems principally from the area's geographic location athwart alternate air and sea routes to the Far East, and from its strategic materials. In the event of war or loss of Western access to the Mediterranean, control of the area's air and sea communications could be of considerable importance. Under present conditions, our primary strategic interest is to deny the area to Communist control. From bases in certain areas of Africa South of the Sahara, the Communists could pose a serious threat to communications in the Atlantic, the Indian Ocean, and the Red Sea, as well as to our important North African strategic facilities, the Mediterranean littoral, and the flank of NATO. Denial of the area to Communist control is also important in order to prevent both economic dislocations to Western Europe and Communist access to strategic materials.

7. *Political.* Despite the remoteness of this area from the Soviet periphery, its political stability [Page 78] is important to the United States. Many African leaders look to us to support indigenous desires for self-government, and the colonial powers look to us to support their varying policies. Should serious disorders develop in the area, there might be a further military and economic drain on some of the more important NATO powers, such as has been the case in Algeria. Furthermore, our major European allies would be adversely affected both economically and strategically by the denial to them of Africa South of the Sahara. We have, therefore, a very real interest in orderly political evolution in Africa South of the Sahara.

8. *Social and Humanitarian.* The United States has a long record of humanitarian work in Africa through missionary and similar organizations. Much of the good reputation we enjoy results from this type of activity.

Broad Lines of Present Policy

9. Our present policies, which must by the size of the area and the differences in people and forms of government vary considerably from place to place, are designed to encourage an orderly development of the whole area based on a mutually advantageous accommodation between the forces of nationalism and the metropolitan powers. This policy manifestly has its limitations, but for the foreseeable future it will remain the only logical and correct course of action to follow. The United States has, of course, a very great interest in promoting, wherever possible, the development and maintenance of the closest possible mutually-beneficial political and economic relationships between the emerging African peoples and the peoples of Western Europe.

10. Within this framework, we are attempting to bring our influence to bear through:

- a. Welcoming and extending political support to new states, such as Ghana, as they emerge.
- b. Technical and economic assistance.
- c. Working directly with the metropolitan powers, through loans to them for specific projects in their African areas, participation in international conferences called by the powers in question, and informal exchanges of views.
- d. Working through the United Nations, particularly where the Trust and other non-self-governing territories are concerned.
- e. Supporting and encouraging constructive nationalism and reform movements in colonial areas in Africa, when convinced they are likely to become powerful and grow in influence; while publicly acknowledging steps taken by Western European powers toward indigenous self-government. Such support and encouragement can take the form of public statements by senior American officials, visits of prominent Americans to the area, an exchange of persons program, [Page 79] and general public and private sympathy in the United States for the desires of dependent peoples for a greater degree of self-government.
- f. Opening new diplomatic and consular posts, strengthening the staffs of existing posts, and increasing leadership, educational exchange, informational and cultural programs.

11. Our future policy must be guided by the fact that in the long run the orientation of Africa South of the Sahara will depend on where the leaders and the peoples feel their best interests lie. To a considerable extent, the African is still immature and unsophisticated with respect to his attitudes towards the issues that divide the world today. The African's mind is not made up and he is being subjected to a number of contradictory forces. This pressure will increase in the future. The African is a target for the advocacy of Communism, old-fashioned colonialism, xenophobic nationalism, and Egyptian "Islamic" propaganda, as well as for the proponents of an orderly development of the various political entities in the area in question, closely tied to the West. The eventual political orientation of the emerging African states will probably be determined by what the leaders and peoples conceive best serves their own interests, measured primarily in terms of "independence" and of "equality" with the white man. Our policies therefore must be designed to convince the African that by association with the West he can best achieve his goals in a manner which in the long run will be most to his advantage. These policies cannot be effective if the African feels he is merely a pawn in a power struggle.

Major Problems and Issues

Nationalism vs. Colonialism

12. Nationalism vs. colonialism is the great issue in Africa today. At the moment, all others, no matter how important, are subordinate to it. Our policies in any field will be of little or no value if we ignore this issue. The problem is enormously complicated and no pat answers are possible. The colonial powers follow different policies, from the Portuguese to the British (in West Africa) extremes. Furthermore, the peoples themselves now under colonial direction are different in culture, history, race and degrees of development. But sentiment and pressures for self-government are everywhere increasing at an accelerated rate. Premature independence would be as harmful to our interests in Africa as would be a continuation of nineteenth century colonialism, and we must tailor our policies to the capabilities and needs of each particular area as well as to our over-all relations with the metropolitan power concerned. It should be noted that all of the metropolitan powers are associated with us in the NATO [Page 80] alliance or in military base agreements.

13. *Policy Guidance:*

- a. Support the principle of self-determination (self-government or independence) consistently and in such a way as to assure that evolution toward this objective will be orderly; making clear, however, that self-government and independence impose important responsibilities which the peoples concerned must be ready and able to discharge.
- b. Encourage those policies and actions of the metropolitan powers which lead the dependent peoples toward responsible self-government or independence.
- c. Avoid U.S. identification with those policies of the metropolitan powers which are stagnant or repressive and, to the extent practicable, seek effective means of influencing the metropolitan powers to abandon or modify such policies.
- d. As appropriate, cooperate with the metropolitan powers in the development programs of their dependent territories, making it clear that we are not trying to supplant the metropolises.
- e. Emphasize through all appropriate media the colonial policies of the Soviet Union and particularly

the fact that the Soviet colonial empire has continued to expand throughout the period when Western colonialism has been contracting.

Racialism

14. Racialism is, of course, closely allied to the colonial question but is most acute in the Union of South Africa² and, to a lesser extent, in Central and East Africa.

15. U.S. influence is restricted by the extremely distorted picture Africans have been given concerning the race problem in the United States.

16. *Policy Guidance:*

- a. Emphasize U.S. progress in the field of race relations through all available media.
- b. Encourage, where practicable, a more liberal approach in the areas where extremism is now the order of the day.
- c. Point out on appropriate occasions the inevitability of violence as the result of rigid racial policies.
- d. Seek to influence any consideration in the UN along constructive lines.

The Communist Threat

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17. By and large, Communism has not been a major problem in Africa South of the Sahara up to the present, but its potential influence is a matter of growing concern. There is a discernible Communist influence in African and Indian political groups in the Union of South Africa and penetration of labor unions in West Africa. African students in Europe, furthermore, are assiduously cultivated by local Communists and many have been subverted. Soviet pretensions to being anti-colonial and non-European tend to be effective in Liberia and Ghana, and these governments are flattered by Soviet attempts to cultivate them.

18. *Policy Guidance:*

- a. Cooperate locally with security organizations to combat Communist subversive activities to the extent that this can be done without assisting in the repression of responsible non-Communist nationalist movements.
- b. Seek to prevent or at least curtail formal representation of Sino-Soviet Bloc countries in Africa.
- c. Seek to provide constructive alternatives to Soviet blandishments but avoid trying to compete with every Soviet offer.
- d. Give general support to constructive non-Communist, nationalist, and reform movements, balancing the nature and degree of such support, however, with consideration of our relations with our NATO allies.
- e. In areas where trade unionism develops, guide it toward Western models by working with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, by direct advice and assistance, and by an exchange of persons program.

Military and Strategic Value

19. The limited military and strategic value of the area arises from its geographic location and strategic materials.

20. Policy Guidance: No immediate action appears called for. The area should be kept under periodic survey to determine any changes in our strategic requirements.

Economic Potential of the Independent States

21. The economic potential of the Union of South Africa is great and its development is steadily increasing. Ghana is prosperous but depends on a one-crop economy. Liberia, with which U.S. prestige is historically associated, requires external capital for its further economic development. Other states as they become independent may require investment capital and technical aid—in amounts varying with their several needs—which the metropolitan powers may no longer be either willing or able to provide. Successful U.S. programs in such countries can demonstrate to Africa the sincerity of our friendship and help to prevent them from falling under Communist influence. [Page 82]

22. *Policy Guidance:*

- a. Continue and expand U.S. technical assistance to Ghana. Be prepared to extend to Ghana development project loans which are consistent with relevant policy considerations, and to support proposals by international lending agencies for similar loans.

- b. Provide such amounts of technical and economic assistance to Liberia as may be necessary to assist in the maintenance of a reasonable degree of economic stability and as are within its capacity to absorb.

Economic Potential of the Dependent Areas and the Capabilities of the Metropolitan Powers

23. There is wide variation in the economic potential of the dependent areas and in the capability of the metropolises for contributing to their economic development. The Belgians appear in the best position to continue the economic development of their dependent area, the Congo—a rich area in its own right. British and French capabilities are limited by their internal financial difficulties. Both countries have invested large amounts in economic, social and educational programs in their dependent areas in Africa South of the Sahara. The extent to which they can or will continue similar investments in the future, and the possibility of investment and assistance by other powers, requires thorough study. A number of the British territories have substantial foreign exchange holdings. The European Common Market plan, which offers an investment program for certain dependent African territories, may be of considerable help in the future.⁸ Furthermore, the possibilities of a Colombo-type plan for Africa, which is already under discussion by the metropolitan powers, merit consideration.⁹

24. The prospect of adequate economic development support from the metropolitan powers will of course be heavily influenced by factors other than their financial capabilities. One very important factor will necessarily be a metropolitan power's appraisal of the likelihood that it will be able to maintain close political and economic ties with a particular colonial territory, either through an extension of the colonial relationship itself or through the development of a mutually-satisfactory new [Page 83] relationship, which could include continuation of trade discrimination in favor of the metropolitan powers. Should one or the other relationship fail to develop, the incentives of the metropolitan powers to provide financial or economic support, either through public or private investment, are likely to suffer rapid deterioration. Thus our success in attaining the previously-stated U.S. objective of preserving the essential ties between Europe and Africa, will probably have an important impact upon the rate of Africa's economic progress, while lessening Africa's reliance on U.S. assistance.

25. Policy Guidance:

- a. Continue present policies as set forth in paragraphs 10–b and –c above, avoiding an impression in presently dependent areas that the United States is prepared to underwrite their eventual independence.
- b. Support the European Common Market plan for investment in dependent African areas if, when operative, it is consistent with the U.S. interests set forth above.
- c. Examine any joint plans for coordinated assistance to Africa South of the Sahara to see whether the United States should participate.
- d. Attempt, as appropriate, to have removed discriminatory laws which discourage private American investment.
- e. Undertake a long-range study, with respect both to the independent states and the emerging colonial areas, to determine:
 - (1) The mobilizable resources of the African areas.
 - (2) The prospects for continued investment by the metropolitan countries.
 - (3) The factors controlling the rate of economic development.
 - (4) The possibilities of international arrangements, such as the European Common Market or a Colombo-type organization, to contribute to beneficial interdependence between Europe and Africa.
 - (5) The role which the United States should assume in promoting economic growth in Africa.

Education and Training

26. Education is a crying need of the African and one of his most sought-for goals. American opportunities for assistance vary with the policies of the metropolitan powers concerned and the resources of the independent countries. Without increased educational opportunities it is impossible to expect any early advancement of most African peoples to the point where they are capable of running their own affairs.

27. Policy Guidance:

[Page 84.]

- a. Encourage private American institutions and foundations to interest themselves in the fields of health, education and public administration in Africa South of the Sahara.
- b. Assist the educational institutions in the area with teachers, books, visual aid media and, as

resources are available, funds.

- c. Promote and assist surveys of the educational requirements of the area.
- d. Where existing facilities are inadequate for training both Americans for work in Africa and potential African leaders for increasing responsibility, consider the steps available to the U.S. Government to expand or improve them.

Detribalization

28. Although detribalization remains one of the major problems of the area, little positive action by the United States is possible. The tribal and family traditions of the people in question are such that they remain, despite the many advances that are currently being made, extremely primitive in many of their social outlooks. These traditions, while breaking up at an accelerated pace, remain strong, and even the urban African looks for a source of authority to replace the head of the tribe or family. Until some new loyalty is provided, the detribalized African will be an easy target for elements eager to exploit his traditional need for leadership and guidance.

29. *Policy Guidance:* No immediate tangible action seems possible. In general, support the work of Western-oriented labor organizations, educational institutions and, in some cases, government leaders in a position to influence the African looking for a new source of allegiance.

Cooperation Within the Area and With the Metropolitan Powers

30. The Balkanization of Africa is undesirable even though full consideration must be given to the vast differences found in the area. Neither the metropolitan powers nor the independent states have shown any great desire to work together. The issuance of invitations by the Government of Ghana to the other independent African states, including those of North Africa, to attend a future conference may be a beginning.¹⁰ Periodic secret conversations between the metropolitan powers take place from time to time and are increasing in frequency, although no tangible achievements are yet visible.

31. *Policy Guidance:* [Page 85]

- a. Encourage intra-area cooperation among all concerned in the economic, scientific and cultural fields. If inter-area conferences are held, consider what role the United States should play in connection with such conferences.
- b. As an antidote to the blandishments of Egypt and the Soviets, encourage the North African states to exert influence in the area, without engaging in irresponsible irredentism, if practicable in the light of our relations with France.
- c. Coordinate our technical assistance programs with any effective and satisfactory regional technical cooperation entity which may be established in the area.

Islam

32. Islam is spreading rapidly in Africa, although there is resistance to it in those areas where all Moslems are considered Arabs and all Arabs slavers. Up to the present, it has been reasonably free of anti-Western overtones, but its use by the Egyptians cannot be overlooked. Islam is more attractive to pagan Africans than Christianity since it is more adaptable to their traditional customs (e.g., polygamy) and way of life.

33. *Policy Guidance:*

- a. No immediate action seems warranted. Islam is not necessarily hostile to the United States. On the contrary, in many areas it has proved to be a strong barrier to Communism. Unless its proselytizing forces are captured by hostile elements, no action by the United States would seem to be called for.
- b. As noted above, encourage the Moslems of North Africa to exert an influence in the area as a counter-weight to the Egyptians.

Annex A

ii

AREAS INCLUDED IN AFRICA SOUTH OF THE SAHARA

(For purposes of this paper)

Independent Countries

Liberia
 Ghana
 Union of South Africa
UN Trust Territories
 Cameroons (British)
 Cameroons (French)
 Togoland (French)
 Ruanda Urundi (Belgian)
 Tanganyika (British)
 South West Africa (South African Mandate)
British Possessions, Protectorates, etc.
 Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland
 Nigeria
 Sierra Leone
 High Commission territories in South Africa (Swaziland, Basutoland and Bechuanaland)
 Zanzibar
 Kenya
 Uganda
 Gambia
French Overseas Territories
 French West Africa
 French Equatorial Africa
 Madagascar
Other European Dependencies
 Belgian Congo
 Angola (Portuguese)
 Mozambique (Portuguese)
 Rio Muni (Spanish)
 Portuguese Guinea

Various insular dependencies of all the European powers

The following countries and territories are excluded:

Sudan
 Ethiopia

The Somalilands (including the trust territory of Somalia and British and French Somalilands)

All three of these countries have common borders and common problems (notably Nile waters in the cases of Sudan and Ethiopia) with the area covered by this paper. They all have sizeable Negro minorities which give them a certain affinity with the area.

At the same time, these countries tend in their political, cultural and economic outlooks to be oriented much more towards North Africa and the Middle East (and towards each other) than they are toward tropical Africa. Thus the Moslem populations of Sudan and the Somali area look primarily towards their coreligionists in the other Arab states, while Christian Ethiopia looks to its religious ties with the Coptic Church in Egypt and the Orthodox churches elsewhere. All are highly dependent on the Red Sea waterways. All are concerned about Egypt's ambitions in the area. These and other considerations tend to give these countries a potential cohesiveness among themselves and to direct their attentions and energies northwards instead of to the south. We have, in fact, recognized this officially by [Page 87] including Ethiopia and Sudan in the general area of the Middle East for the purposes of the American doctrine.

In short, all of these countries exert an influence on—and are themselves influenced by—events to the south. For the foreseeable future, however, they will continue to be oriented towards North Africa and the Middle East, and our policy consideration should take that fact into account.

The Union of South Africa is included in the paper in view of its preponderant African population and the fact that racial problems are endemic in all of South and East Africa. Moreover, the South African approach to the problem of its African majority is basically colonialist in the worst sense of the word. Finally, events in South Africa are likely to have profound effect on the stability of the areas to the north and vice versa.

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1. Source: Department of State, S/S–NSC Files: Lot 63 D 351, NSC 5719 Series. Secret.↵
 2. Document 14.↵
 3. See footnote 4, supra.↵
 4. See footnote 8, supra.↵
 5. Neither Annex B, Annex C, nor the Financial Appendix is printed.↵
 6. Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.↵
 7. There was some feeling in the Office of Dependent Area Affairs (ODA) that this paper offered insufficient guidance in respect to policy toward South Africa. While there was general accord that continued pressure was required, ODA was predisposed to work through the United Nations whereas the Office of Southern Africa Affairs (AF/S) preferred to concentrate on bilateral talks. (Memoranda from McGregor to Walmsley, August 22; Department of State, IO/ODA Files: Lot 62 D 225, Africa—General)↵
 8. The European Common Market plan calls for investment over a 5-year period of the sum of \$581,250,000 in French, Belgian, Italian, and Dutch dependent areas in various parts of the world. It will come into effect in the near future following ratification by the signatory powers. Of the territories covered by this paper, French West Africa, French Equatorial Africa, French Togoland, Madagascar, the Belgian Congo and Ruanda Urundi will benefit under this program to the extent of approximately \$530,000,000. [Footnote in the source text.]

↵
 9. See Document 22.↵
 10. See Document 21.↵
 11. Confidential.↵