

Central Intelligence Agency

Washington, D.C. 20505

OCA 88-3914

06 DEC 1988

The Honorable Edward M. Kennedy
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Kennedy:

The Director of Central Intelligence has asked me to respond to your request for declassification of a study concerning African voting behavior in the UN. By deleting sensitive portions of the study, we are able to provide it to you in an unclassified form. We ask that you not attribute this study to the Central Intelligence Agency.

We hope that this study will be useful to you in your planned presentation in the Senate.

Sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

✓ John L. Helgerson
Director of Congressional Affairs

Enclosure

Distribution:

Orig - Addressee

1 - DCI

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OCA/Senate [Redacted] (5 Dec 88)



L-231-11

African Group Voting Behavior
in the United Nations General Assembly

Summary

The African group comprises about half of the 101-member Nonaligned Movement (NAM) and wields considerable influence in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). The group has a strong record of supporting positions counter to US interests and shows substantially less support for issues considered priorities by the United States or the USSR. Among regional subgroups, the six southern Frontline States cast the largest share of votes in support of positions opposed by the United States.

- o During 1983-87, close to 90 percent of African votes were cast in support of resolutions on South Africa, controversial Third World development issues, and the Israel/Palestine problem. While the Warsaw Pact and NAM voting record correlated closely with that of the African group on these major agenda items, less than 10 percent of US votes were in support of these resolutions.
- o On issues identified by the State Department as important to the United States, almost 70 percent of votes cast by the African group in 1983-87 opposed the United States.

While the overall African bloc voting record in the UNGA tends to parallel the Soviet Union's, much of the high correlation between African and Soviet Bloc voting at the UN appears to reflect opportunistic Soviet bloc support for the agenda of the UN's Third World majority. Moscow has had limited success in garnering support at the UN for issues of real importance to it. In addition, Moscow's recent propaganda initiative, the Comprehensive System of International Peace and Security (CSIS), failed to win the support of a majority of African group members at the 42nd UNGA.

African Group Voting Behavior in the United Nations General Assembly

Introduction

The 50-member African group--which includes the 44 nations of continental Africa plus six island nations--makes up almost one-third of the 159-member United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and about half of the 101-member Third World Nonaligned Movement (NAM), the UN's largest political bloc.¹ Because of their size, the Africans wield considerable influence in the UNGA, which operates on a one-nation, one-vote principle. In addition, as NAM members Africans have been able to control a greater share of the UNGA agenda in recent years.

The African voting record appears to run counter to US interests and to be more supportive of Soviet interests.² For example, at the 42nd UNGA last year, the African group voted with the United States an average of less than 14 percent of the time, while it voted with the Soviet Union over 97 percent of the time. In addition, in recent years a large number of resolutions pertaining to Third World issues have been introduced with language that specifically condemns the United States or its allies. At the same time, criticism of the USSR or its allies has been infrequent despite numerous opportunities to direct criticism at the Soviets for human rights abuses, use of the United Nations for espionage purposes, and many other violations of the UN Charter and international law.

Profile of the African Vote

An examination of the African voting record during 1983-87 was done along two lines--votes cast on major issues debated in the UNGA and votes cast on resolutions Washington and Moscow considered important to their respective interests. In both cases, the African vote was compared across four major regional subgroups--the northern-tier Arab-African states, West Africa, East Africa, and the southern Frontline States. The African voting record was also compared with other major voting blocs at the UN, including the NAM, the Warsaw Pact, and the Western European and Others Group (WEOG).

¹For the purpose of this paper, South Africa is not considered part of the African group.

²Voting data used in this report is based on a database of UN voting information maintained by the US Department of State since 1978.

African Voting on Major Issues in the UNGA

During the period 1983-87 five major issues have been the focus of considerable UNGA debate--South Africa, Third World development, Israel/Palestine, disarmament, and human rights.

- o South African resolutions typically concern apartheid, Namibia, South African intervention in surrounding states, and Pretoria's alleged possession of nuclear weapons.
- o Third World development resolutions fall into two broad categories--those blaming the West for Third World development problems, and those relating to disaster or famine relief. The latter usually pass by consensus.³
- o Resolutions on the Israel/Palestine issue usually are in support of the "inalienable" rights of the Palestinian people and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). They also condemn the Israeli occupation of "Palestinian and other territories" and Israel's alleged possession of nuclear weapons.
- o Disarmament issues include resolutions usually promoting multilateral disarmament. The resolutions are often sponsored by such activist, nonaligned states as India, Yugoslavia, Sweden, Mexico, and Malaysia.
- o Human rights resolutions usually focus on violations by "pariah" states, such as Israel, South Africa, and Chile.

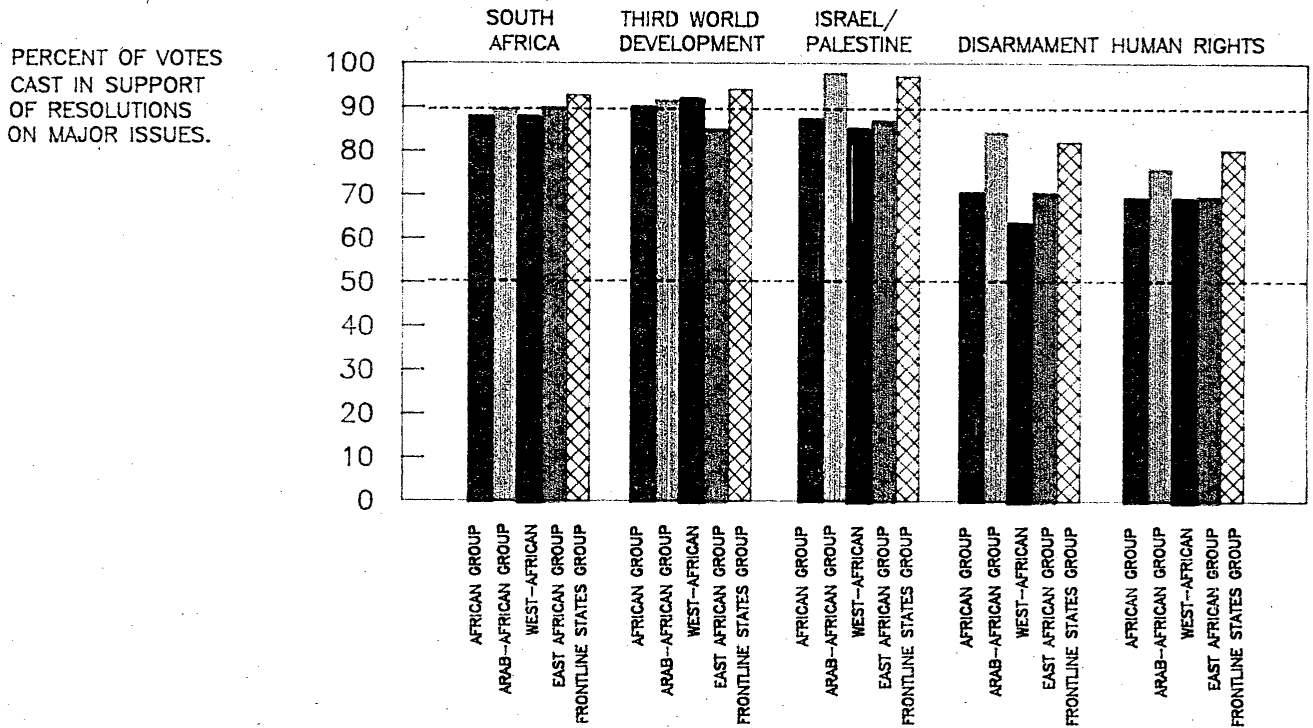
Several patterns were evident in comparing the African voting record across regional subgroups (figure 1):

- o Support for South African and Third World development

³For the purposes of this paper, economic development issues include only those resolutions passed in the General Assembly Second Committee--which handles Third World financial and economic problems--that were brought to a vote. Most development-related resolutions, such as flood or famine relief, are noncontroversial and are passed by consensus. A smaller number are forced to a vote because they are controversial, including those blaming the West for Third World economic problems or those authorizing funds for large-scale development projects of questionable merit. Since 1985, for example, Washington has objected to a resolution passed by the Second Committee condemning the US trade embargo of Nicaragua.

FIGURE 1

AFRICAN REGIONAL SUBGROUPS: VOTING PATTERNS ON MAJOR ISSUES DEBATED IN THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY 1983 - 1987



issues was consistently high across regional subgroups.

- o All subgroups rendered high support to resolutions on the Israel/Palestine issue, with support of the Arab and Frontline States particularly high, at close to 98 percent of votes cast.
- o Support was more varied across regional subgroups on human rights and disarmament, with the Arab and Frontline States delivering higher support than the countries in West and East Africa.

In comparing the African group with other voting blocs, the record shows that: (figure 2):

- o The African group voting record correlated closely with that of the Nonaligned Movement on all five issues.
- o There was a wide disparity between African group voting behavior and the voting of the United States on all five major issues. There was a significant, but lesser, disparity between the African group and the WEOG.
- o A close correlation existed between the voting patterns of the African group and the Warsaw Pact on South Africa and Third World development. On Israel/Palestine and disarmament issues, the Warsaw Pact and African group voting records show less variance than the WEOG and African group voting patterns.

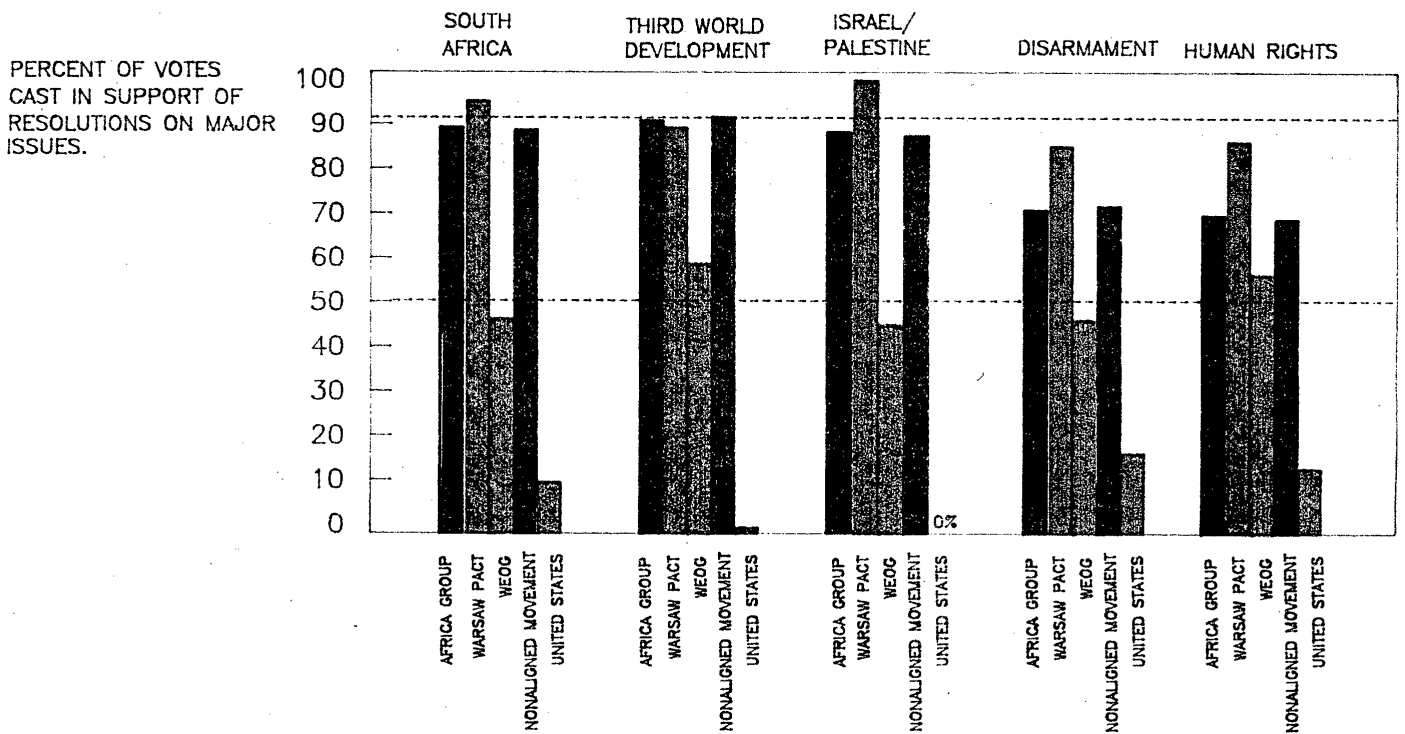
African Voting on Issues of Concern to the Superpowers

On examining African votes on issues of concern to the superpowers, the group's support for these resolutions was much lower than for the issues above. Many African states abstained or absented themselves during votes on resolutions directly related to US or Soviet interests. For example, on UNGA resolutions considered to be of concern to Moscow and Washington in 1987, 30 percent of the African group abstained or was absent. By contrast, on all resolutions last year, less than 20 percent of the group abstained or was absent. Because of the ambiguity of absenteeism and abstentions in judging a member's support for a particular resolution, a calculation was made of member votes against major interests of the United States or total votes cast. Based on this calculation, the record indicates:

- o On issues of concern to the United States, almost 70 percent of votes cast by the African group in 1983-87 opposed the United States. West African opposition was a little less--65 percent--than the group average, while Frontline States' and Arab-African states' opposition

FIGURE 2

UNITED NATIONS BLOCS: VOTING PATTERNS ON MAJOR ISSUES DEBATED IN THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY
1983 - 1987



was higher at over 85 percent and 75 percent respectively (figure 3).

- o Members of the African group opposed Moscow on Soviet priority resolutions at about the same rate as it opposed the United States on its priority resolutions. Within the group, West African and Arab states cast a greater share of votes opposed to Soviet priorities--about 70 percent--while the East Africans and the Frontline States share was lower at about 55 and 45 percent respectively (figure 4).
- o The East African and Frontline States opposed the United States more than they opposed the USSR; the Arab-African states cast a similar percent of votes in opposition to both the US and Soviets on priority issues (figures 3 and 4).
- o Voting patterns of the NAM and the African group on superpower priority issues in the UNGA were similar--approximately 70 percent of their votes were cast in opposition to resolutions of US or Soviet concern (figures 5 and 6).

Influences on African Voting

The African voting record on UNGA votes suggests that the group is motivated primarily by African and Third World interests and less frequently by the interests of the Soviet Bloc or the West. The group also closely votes with its NAM colleagues in supporting overall Third World interests.

The Nonaligned Movement

Solidarity with the Nonaligned Movement (NAM) appears to be an important factor behind much African bloc voting. The anti-Western tilt of the NAM agenda has forced moderate NAM members to choose between supporting Nonaligned and African solidarity or voting with the West. The impact of the NAM comes through in meetings as diverse as a NAM ministerial to UN-related committee meetings. For example:

- o At a Nonaligned Ministerial meeting held in Havana in May of 1988 African group members backed NAM strategy--forged by India and supported by other radical NAM states--for the Third UN General Assembly Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD-III), according to press reports. UN records indicate that the staunchly anti-United States NAM approach spelled out at the ministerial was adhered to by its members at SSOD-III and led to the breakdown of the session.

FIGURE 3

AFRICAN REGIONAL SUBGROUPS: VOTING PATTERNS ON ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE TO THE UNITED STATES DEBATED IN THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY 1983 - 1987

OPPOSITION SCORES:
Percent of votes
cast supporting
resolutions opposed
by the United States
or against resolutions
favored by the United
States.

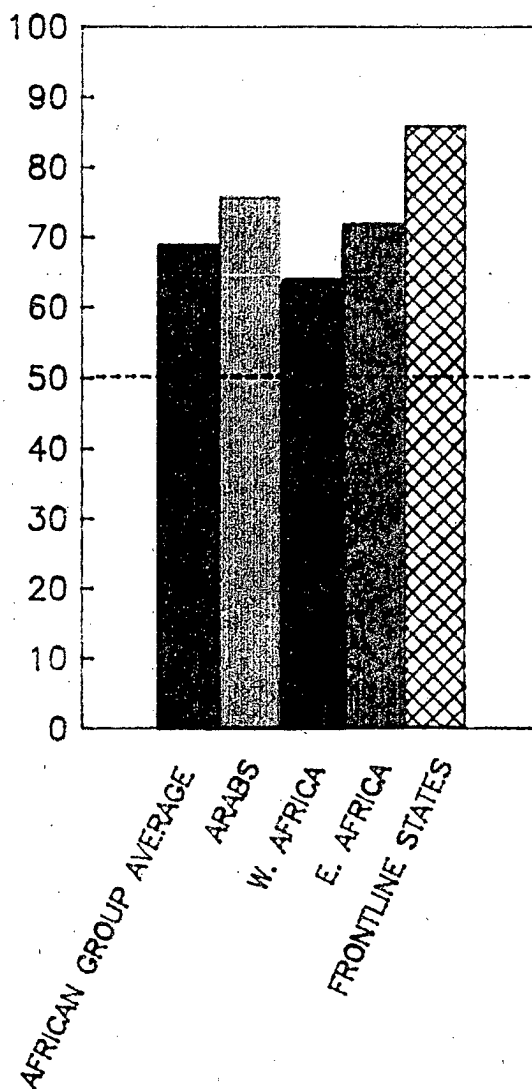


FIGURE 4

AFRICAN REGIONAL SUBGROUPS: VOTING PATTERNS
ON ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE TO THE USSR DEBATED IN
THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY
1983 - 1987

OPPOSITION SCORES:
Percent of votes cast
supporting resolutions
opposed by the USSR
or against resolutions
favored by the USSR.

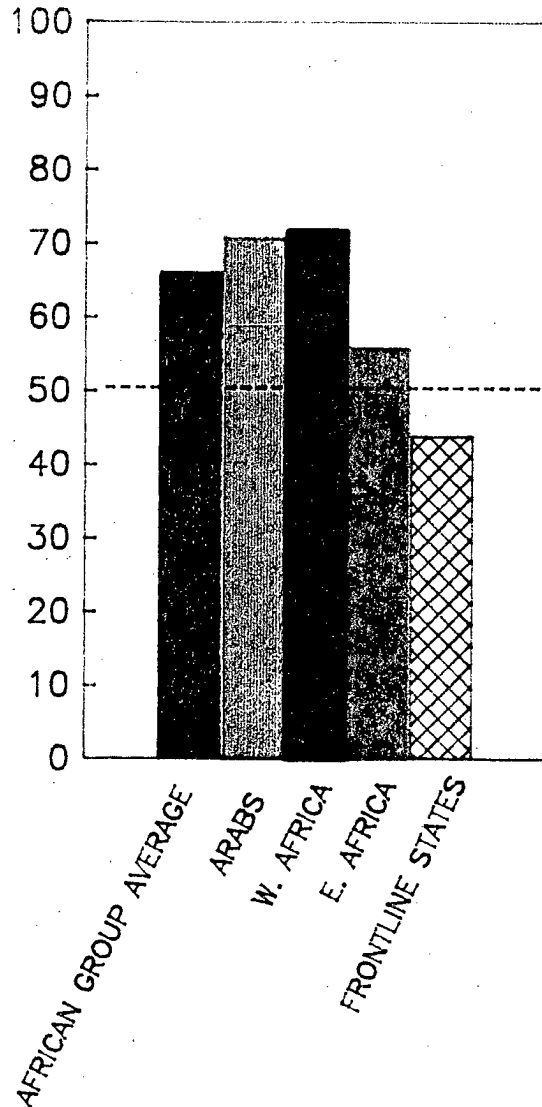


FIGURE 5

UNITED NATIONS BLOCS: VOTING PATTERNS ON
ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE TO THE UNITED STATES DEBATED
IN THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY
1983 - 1987

OPPOSITION SCORES:
Percent of votes
cast supporting
resolutions opposed
by the United States
or against resolutions
favored by the United
States.

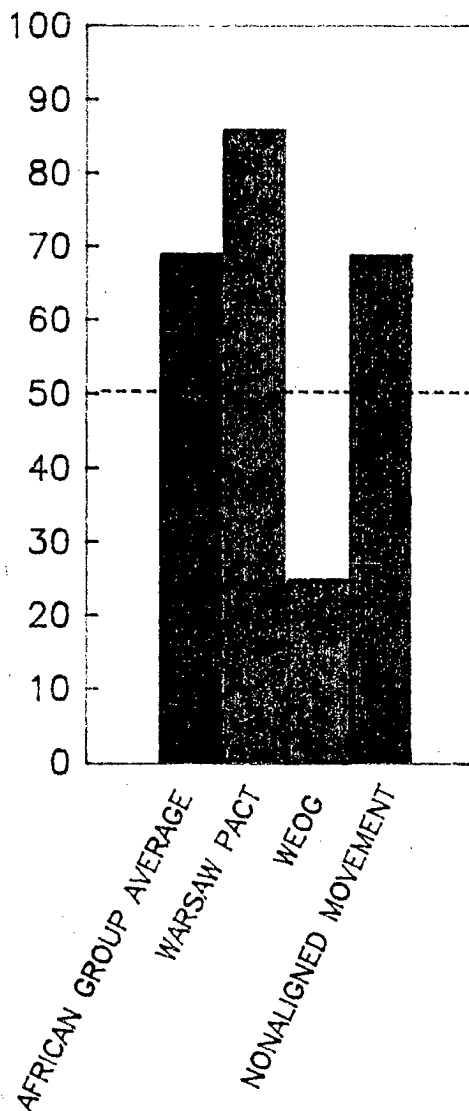
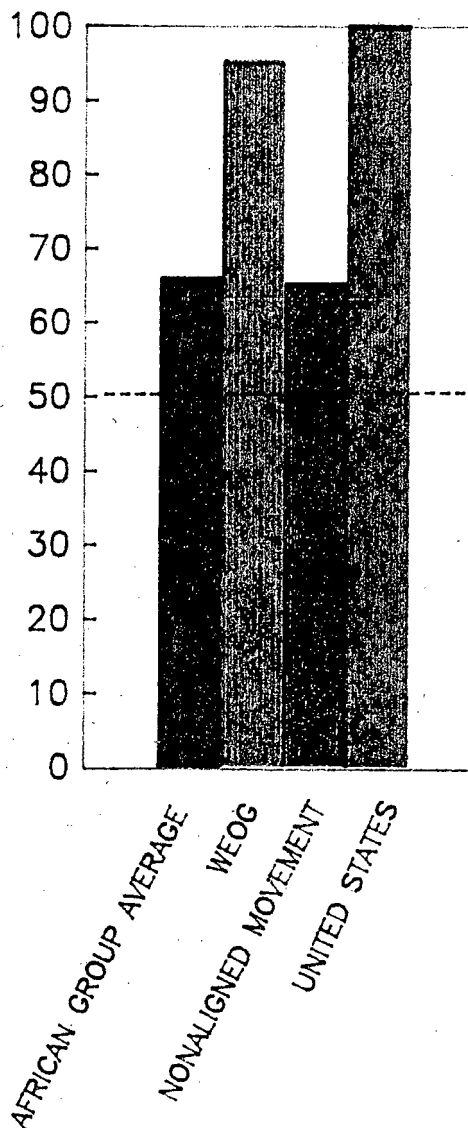


FIGURE 6

UNITED NATIONS BLOCS: VOTING PATTERNS ON ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE TO THE USSR DEBATED IN THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY 1983 - 1987

OPPOSITION SCORES:
Percent of votes cast
supporting resolutions
opposed by the USSR
or against resolutions
favored by the USSR.



- o The record shows that the African group along with its NAM colleagues backed Cuba at the UN Human Rights Commission (UNHRC), in February of 1987 and 1988, and at the UN General Assembly, in 1986-87, in countering a US-sponsored resolution condemning Cuban human rights abuses. Cuba succeeded in defeating US-sponsored resolutions on this topic at the UNGA in 1987 and 1988, and at the UNHRC in 1987.

From a Western perspective, the record on African voting patterns is mixed. On the downside, the voting record suggests that few African countries appear supportive.

- o Egypt has sponsored resolutions in the UNGA over the past five years criticizing Western capitalism for exploiting Africa economically. Of the 50 members of the African group, Egypt ranked 18th in its support of the United States on all UNGA votes in 1987.
- o Of the 15 African states that received the largest amount of US developmental assistance in the previous year, none voted for two UNGA resolutions in 1986 that were strongly opposed by Washington--one condemning the United States for its April 1986 raid on Libya and the other condemning the United States for its policy toward Nicaragua.
- o British bilateral assistance failed to influence African nations to oppose a resolution, introduced annually since 1982, calling on the United Kingdom to negotiate the future of the Falkland Islands with Argentina. In 1987, 43 African nations supported this resolution, while only one--the Gambia--voted negatively.

Only France appears to have influence over some African members who enjoy cultural, historical, and economic links to Paris. France has been able to convince an increasing number of African states to withhold support from resolutions proposed by the South Pacific states and backed by the NAM calling on Paris to hold free elections in New Caledonia. While resolutions on this question narrowly passed at the last two UN General Assemblies, Paris was successful in significantly reducing the number of African votes in support of the resolution last year (table 1).

Table 1: Declining African Support for Resolutions on the
New Caledonia Question, 1986-87

Vote on Resolution Calling on France to Hold Free Elections in New Caledonia				
YEAR	yes	no	abstain	absent
1987	34%	26%	24%	16%
1986	52%	22%	18%	8%

The West

Some African states appeared to be tiring of anti-Western rhetoric and exhibit an increased willingness to work with the West at the UN.

- o Senegal--a UN Security Council member--assisted US efforts at the 42nd UNGA to eliminate direct condemnations of the United States in resolutions on apartheid and Namibia.
- o Ivory Coast, Zaire, Liberia, and Morocco also have used their influence with the African group during the last three UN General Assemblies to push moderate language and limit direct condemnations of the United States in resolutions dealing with apartheid and Namibia.
- o Cameroon, despite sharp disagreement with the United States over UN reform issues, played a crucial role in US efforts to discredit Moscow's controversial Comprehensive System of International Peace and Security Initiative at the 42nd UNGA.

The Soviet Union

Much of the high correlation between African and Soviet Bloc voting at the UN appears to reflect opportunistic Bloc support for the agenda of the UN's Third World majority rather than vice-versa. Despite Soviet efforts to influence African voting in the General Assembly, UN records suggest that African support for anti-Western rhetoric in UN resolutions is self-initiated and generally has little to do with Soviet Bloc lobbying efforts. In trying to influence the African vote, the Soviets have used their influence with Third World clients in the NAM to sell Soviet policies to the Third World and to influence NAM debate. India aided the Soviets in 1983 when it was chairman of the Nonaligned Conference, joining Vietnam and Afghanistan in an attempt--which proved unsuccessful--to prevent the new Grenadian government from being represented at the 38th UNGA held that fall.

Appendix

Voting Categories, Groups, and Methodology

Data used in this memorandum are based on final votes taken on resolutions passed during the 38th-42nd sessions of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 1983-87. Procedural motions, amendments, and resolutions passed by consensus--which tend to be on noncontroversial subjects--were excluded. The resolutions examined fell into five broad categories of issues, representing approximately two-thirds of all final vote resolutions debated during this time. Within the African group, voting behavior was compared among four regional subgroups:

- o The southern Frontline States include Zambia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, and Tanzania.
- o The northern Arab states consist of Djibouti, Mauritania, Somalia, Sudan, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco.
- o The West African states comprise Senegal, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Gabon, Mali, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Sao Tome and Principe, and Niger.
- o The East African states include Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Madagascar, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Comoros, and the Seychelles.

The African voting record was also compared as a group with three other major UN voting blocs.

- o The Nonaligned Movement, (NAM) which includes 101 Third World countries--Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Cuba, Cyprus, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Laos, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Korea, North Yemen, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, PLO, Qatar, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, South Yemen, Sri Lanka, Saint Christopher and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syria, Tanzania,

Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Vanuatu, Vietnam, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The PLO and North Korea are members of the NAM but are not full members of the UN.

- o Warsaw Pact members are the USSR, Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria.
- o The Western European and Others Group (WEOG) is made up of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Canada, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Finland, West Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Australia, and New Zealand.

Group support on the major issues was determined by taking the percent of votes cast in support of each resolution in the major issue category. For example, in 1983-1987 over 80 resolutions pertaining to South Africa were passed by the UNGA. The number of affirmative votes was calculated on these resolutions as a percent of total votes cast to arrive at a group figure of support for South African issues at the UNGA.

The annual list of priority UNGA votes for the United States drawn up by the State Department was used to establish issues of importance to the United States. In 1983-87 over 500 votes were considered priority issues for Washington, including a 1983 resolution condemning US intervention in Grenada, a 1986 resolution condemning the US raid on Libya, and a number of resolutions criticizing US policy in the Middle East or in southern Africa.

Soviet priorities were determined by including all UNGA resolutions sponsored by a Warsaw Pact country or these resolutions strongly opposed by the Soviet Bloc, such as the annual resolutions condemning the occupation of Afghanistan and Cambodia. Using these criteria, only 13 votes in 1983-87 qualified as Soviet priority issues. Because Soviet bloc voting tends to follow the lead of the Nonaligned Movement at the UN, identifying issues of importance to Moscow is more difficult than for the United States. In addition, few resolutions contained negative references to any member of the Soviet bloc.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

ROUTING SLIP

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Date

Remarks

D/OCA plans to prepare a response for his signature.

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HS
Executive Secretary
16 Nov '88

Date

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2013/12/05 : CIA-RDP90G01353R001400130017-9

NOV 1988

From: John Helgerson

We plan to prepare an
answer for your signature.

We plan to prepare an
answer for my signature.

No answer expected or required

John, I prefer to Sign

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2013/12/05 : CIA-RDP90G01353R001400130017-9

EDWARD M. KENNEDY
MASSACHUSETTS

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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 15, 1988

The Honorable William H. Webster
Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

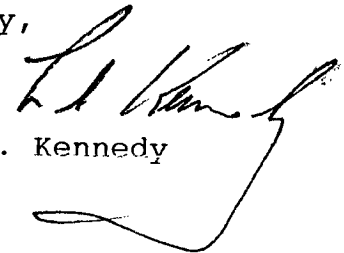
Dear Bill:

~~Thank you for sending over a copy of the C.I.A. study -- African Voting Group Behavior in the United Nations General Assembly --~~ and for giving Greg Craig of my staff a chance to read it.

In Greg's view, there is a good deal of interesting information and analysis that has a bearing on legislation that I am planning to introduce this coming year. ~~I would be grateful if this study could be declassified since I would like to use the study in the course of my presentation on the Senate floor. Any hope?~~

Thanks for anything you can do to help.

Sincerely,



Edward M. Kennedy

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L-231-IR

TO:

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Remarks To # 13: For direct response, please.

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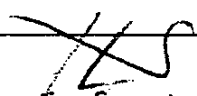
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 Executive Secretary
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EDWARD M. KENNEDY
MASSACHUSETTS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 4, 1988

Mr. William Webster
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Director Webster:

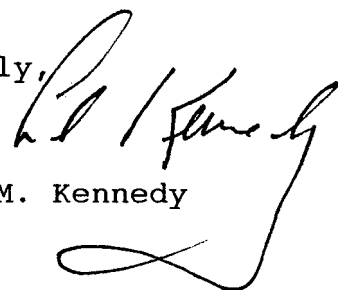
It is my understanding that the C.I.A. has completed a study entitled "African Voting Group Behavior in the United Nations General Assembly." I am preparing legislation on the President's Report to Congress on Voting Practices in the United Nations, and I believe that this study may be useful.

I would appreciate receiving a copy of the study at your earliest convenience. The Senate is scheduled to adjourn on Friday, and I am hoping to introduce this legislation within the next two days.

If at all possible, I would like to use this study in the course of my presentation. I would hope there are no classification problems.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Edward M. Kennedy



L-231-1R