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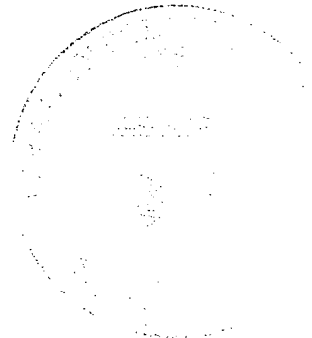
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SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICS AND US SECURITY

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SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICS AND US SECURITY

SUMMARY

The present Government of the Union of South Africa, which came to power in 1948 under Prime Minister D. F. Malan, represents mainly the isolationist and anti-British elements of the Afrikaans-speaking population, many of whom are bent on transforming the Union into an authoritarian Afrikaner state. In basic economic and strategic matters the Government is oriented toward the UK and the US, as any white South African Government must be, and it is violently anti-Communist in its politics. However, its racial and foreign policies provoke marked unfavorable reactions throughout the colonial and colored worlds, and its political and cultural antagonism to Britain weakens and embarrasses the Commonwealth. Moreover, its domestic policy of native repression, if persisted in, may well touch off a major social upheaval within the next decade. The present government is, however, almost certain to remain in office, without substantial change in character, at least until the expiration of its five-year term, and seems likely to obtain a new lease on power in 1953.

The Malan Government's foreign policy is aggressively nationalistic. Its efforts to expand the Union's territory and influence in Africa, and the intransigent attitude adopted by its representatives in the UN, have been a serious embarrassment both to the US and to the UK. This has been particularly evident in Malan's defiant repudiation of any responsibility to the UN for the mandate over South-West Africa which the Union received from the League of Nations, and his virtual annexation of the territory. Since the issue of colonialism arouses deep feeling among the Asian and Latin American states, such action by a

nation assumed to be a US ally handicaps the US in exercising international leadership.

International resentment directed against the Union is greatly intensified by the harshness with which Malan's Government has preached and practiced its racial program of *apartheid*, or stricter segregation—directed not only against the Union's eight million Africans but also against the mixed breeds and a smaller Indian minority. *Apartheid* has already produced an ominous increase in racial tensions, and South Africa's avoidance of a major social upheaval within the next decade seems to depend mainly on the disunity, economic weakness, and political apathy of the mass of the natives, which are still very great. The continuing threat of widespread racial disorders would certainly reduce the number of South African troops available for wartime service outside the Union, and might well eventuate in outbreaks that would interfere with the supply to the US of South African strategic raw materials. The latter consideration is not negligible, since South Africa produces significant quantities of nearly a third of the strategic materials listed by the US Munitions Board as so critical that stockpiling is necessary. Moreover, the rise in racial antagonisms encouraged by *apartheid* has already caused serious embarrassment for the UK in its African colonial territories and in its relations with the Asian Commonwealth countries.

The measures in Malan's program tending to transform the Union into an authoritarian Afrikaner state have been a divisive force within the comparatively small white community; and the police state mentality evident in some of these measures is, like the policy

Note: The intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Army, Navy, and the Air Force have concurred in this report. It contains information available to CIA as of 18 October 1950.

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of *apartheid*, a propaganda liability for the West as a whole.

At the same time, the Malan Government has been led by its views of national self-interest to adopt certain policies in the economic and military fields which are generally favorable to US security interests. Stringent import controls have not only remedied in large part a recurring deficit in South Africa's international payments but have also tended to give the country a better balanced industrial complex which would make it more use-

ful to the US and UK in time of war. These policies have also worked to the economic advantage of the UK. In military matters the government has been favorably disposed toward cooperation with the US and UK as part of its efforts to modernize the obsolescent South African defense forces. The usefulness of this cooperation is limited, however, by the Union's small military budgets, its preoccupation with internal security, and by political meddling with the armed services aimed at making Afrikaner elements dominant.

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SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICS AND US SECURITY

1. General Character and Position of the Malan Government.

The government of the Union of South Africa has been conducted since May 1948 by a coalition of the Nationalist and Afrikaner parties, having a present parliamentary majority of 86 to 73. Despite the form of a coalition it is for practical purposes a Nationalist Party Government, with the Nationalist leader, Dr. D. F. Malan, holding the premiership and the nine-vote Afrikaner Party represented in the cabinet only by Finance Minister N. C. Havenga. For some time after the election of May 1948 (in which it won only a minority of the popular vote) the Malan Government's hold on power was precarious, but there is now virtually no doubt that it will live out its normal five-year term without substantial change in character. The weakness of the only important opposition group, the United Party, was demonstrated in the August 1950 elections in South-West Africa; and the recent death of General Smuts, on whose prestige and skill the United Party had long depended, also makes it seem probable that the Nationalists will continue in power after 1953.

The Malan Government, as any white South African Government must be, is generally oriented toward the West, being well aware of the Union's economic dependence on the UK and US and of the military dangers of its isolated location. It is an intensely anti-Communist government, but one also permeated with certain strongly anti-democratic tendencies. A number of its policies—notably the racial policy of *apartheid*, the aggressively nationalistic foreign policy, and the policy on military cooperation with the West—have implications for US security interests, and in most cases these implications are unfavorable. All these policies have their roots in developments long preceding the accession of the Malan Government, but the special emphasis given them is due in large part to the nature of Malan's supporters and to the tensions re-

cently generated by South Africa's racial and cultural conflicts.

One of the basic conditions of the Union's existence as an autonomous state has always been the working compromise between Afrikaners and British that is expressed in such things as the official use of two languages, two national anthems and two national flags. The British, comprising less than 40 percent of the total white population but economically the more powerful group, are on the whole content with this situation, and many Afrikaners favor its continuance. Both the major political parties claim voters in both cultural groups, and the balance is still so delicate that Malan has publicly declared he would not attempt realization of the basic Afrikaner ideal of an independent republic except after a new electoral mandate.

Nevertheless, Malan's Nationalist Party is in overwhelming majority an Afrikaans-speaking party and its main inspiration is the *Herrenvolk* spirit of the Afrikaners. Most Afrikaners look back admiringly to their Boer ancestors of Dutch, German, and French Huguenot extraction, and feel themselves dedicated to the early *Voortrekker* ideals of racial purity (free even from British admixtures), republicanism, and a patriarchal society founded on the Calvinist teachings of the powerful Dutch Reformed Church. They feel, moreover, that they have a political mission to realize these ideals in present day South Africa. Afrikaner nationalism is exclusive and anti-British. Historic antagonisms long antedate the Boer War, taking the form of Boers versus Britons, Calvinists versus Anglicans, old settlers versus immigrants, farmers versus urbanites, isolationist republicans versus British Empire men, and so on.

Partly because of authoritarian concepts implicit in the structure of their ideal society and partly in a simple effort to reduce the influence of their opponents, the Nationalists

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have already commenced encroaching with arbitrary executive authority on traditional Anglo-Saxon civil liberties. The freedom of the press has been threatened by a series of official attempts to make both domestic and foreign journalists present South African affairs in a light favorable to the Government. The Minister of the Interior has been voted authority to refuse all citizenship applications without appeal from his decision to a court of law, and the Minister himself has announced that passports will not be granted to citizens who would unfavorably criticize South Africa while overseas. Furthermore, the legislative ban on the Communist Party, enacted at the end of June 1950 was so drawn as to give the Government very wide powers to suppress other activities it considers prejudicial and to withhold certain normal judicial safeguards from persons prosecuted under the law.

There have also been various moves toward making Afrikaner influence dominant in the military and civil services and in the educational system. Some of these, though strongly resented by English-speaking South Africans, do not go beyond ordinary spoils-system politics and the settling of old scores from World War II days, when Malan and many of his party opposed South African participation. Other measures are mainly ridiculous, as for example the order that Afrikaans is to be used exclusively in Union Defense Force headquarters in alternate months. The Education Act (Language) Amendment Ordinance passed 29 November 1949 by the Nationalist-controlled Transvaal Provincial Council does, however, raise fundamental considerations concerning the rights of the citizen and concerning Nationalist acceptance of the basic constitutional principle of equality for the two cultures. By this measure no more dual-language schools are to be opened, and all Transvaal children are to be sent to a single-medium school, with the decision as to whether this is to be an Afrikaans or an English school resting not with the parents but with the local school superintendent.

The general administrative competence of the Malan Government should not be underrated, however, as is demonstrated by the ef-

fectiveness with which it has dealt with the country's economic problems. A system of stringent import controls, initiated by the government in late 1948, has now largely remedied a recurring deficit in South Africa's international payments, and has also tended to give the Union a more diversified industrial establishment, less dependent on the single industry of gold-mining. The Government has been less successful in its attempts to cope with slow rises in unemployment and in the cost of living; but in February 1950 it negotiated with Britain a mutually advantageous financial agreement assuring South Africa of the continued availability of sterling capital. It has also had some success in floating hard currency loans. The country still needs development capital (estimated at some 300 million pounds over the next few years) and it must also be noted that, with the whole economy based upon a cheap, inefficient, and increasingly restive labor supply of non-Europeans, solution of South Africa's other economic problems ultimately depends on the avoidance of any serious and prolonged racial outbreaks. Here the economic problem, like so much else in the Union, comes back to the racial problem and the Malan Government's much emphasized program of *apartheid*.

2. The Program of Apartheid.

The racial problem dominates South African affairs. Of a total population of 11.5 million, some 68 percent is native, 8 percent "colored" or mixed breeds, and 3 to 4 percent Indian. Over this majority the 20 percent of European descent superimpose themselves as a master race, maintaining a rigid color bar and a monopoly of virtually all political, social, and economic opportunity. The national economy is based on the exploitation of cheap non-European labor, much of which is migratory between the exhausted rural native reserves and the poverty-stricken urban "shanty-towns." Except for the "coloreds," who have long enjoyed a considerable share of the privileges of white men, the non-Europeans have for the most part been given only rudimentary social services and the most elementary sort of education. They have become increasingly restive, and the problem of

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racial adjustments has for many years grown continually more pressing and more difficult.

It is the declared policy of the present Government to solve the problem by depriving non-Europeans even of those scanty privileges within South African society which they had previously been granted, moving the natives as much as possible to their own native reserves where they are to progress under the tutelage of an absentee white government, and reducing contacts between Europeans and non-Europeans in normal society to the barest essentials. In theory the natives will be given some compensating economic and social opportunities; in fact the Government has initiated no action on this aspect of the matter, and has confined its attention almost entirely to measures of deprivation. The natives, for example, have already lost such benefits as unemployment insurance and school-feeding for children.

The "Cape Coloreds" or mixed breeds, who have taken great pride in the extent of their Europeanization, have been rendered bitter by the enforcement of Jim Crow laws against them. One act passed by the Malan Government forbids marriages between whites and non-Europeans; another requires the registration of all South Africans according to race, thus making the color line virtually impossible to cross. The coloreds, along with the other non-European races, resent also the Group Areas Act of 1950 which authorizes total geographic segregation of the various groups in their residences and places of employment. The Indians, who live chiefly in Natal, are disliked both by Europeans and by natives and are frequently made the object of native racial resentments, as in the Durban riots of January 1949. The Indian Government has made frequent efforts to improve the lot of the Indians in the Union; but the Malan Government will discuss solution of the problem only on a basis of repatriating the Indians, and since 90 percent of them are South African-born and do not wish to leave, this solution is quite impracticable.

This policy of *apartheid* nevertheless enjoys wide support among the white community. The Government owes its electoral successes of 1948 and 1950 partly to its espousal of this

program; it expects to succeed in future elections by the same means. Even the Opposition, though disagreeing on certain aspects of the policy, still accepts the basic concept of a well-defined color line, and has been unable to formulate an alternative to *apartheid* which has any prospect of electoral appeal. Inevitably, perhaps, the white population fears the enormous non-white majority within which it lives; and as anti-European discontent increases, the conviction strengthens among Europeans that increasingly repressive measures will be the only practicable safeguard of white supremacy.

Non-Europeans look upon *apartheid* as a method of transforming South Africa into a state whose benefits are reserved for Europeans only, and their resentment grows as the policy becomes more repressively applied. Since the Durban riots of January 1949, racial tension has erupted into violence with growing frequency and with evidences of increasingly competent organization on the non-European side. In mid-1950, moreover, the small Communist Party succeeded for the first time in recent years in inducing several important native organizations to stage joint protest meetings with it. Though the great mass of the natives still continue unorganized and uninterested in much beyond tribal concerns and their hand-to-mouth struggle for existence, the heightening racial tension gives increasing scope for the efforts of agitators and correspondingly lessens the influence of all moderating forces among the Europeans. As things now stand, the active forces all work inexorably toward a worsening of the situation, and South Africa's chance of escaping a major social upheaval within the next decade seems to depend on these factors of native disunity, economic weakness, and political apathy.

Even if the Union itself should escape such an upheaval, however, the *apartheid* policy will still have created serious problems for the UK in its Commonwealth and colonial relations. To the Malan Government *apartheid* is not merely a domestic program but almost an ideology of universal application, affecting its relations with the Asian Commonwealth countries as well as its attitude on purely

African matters. Correspondingly, many native leaders in colonial Africa, observing South African racial policies, are further prejudiced against the spread of white influence in Africa, and fear that the UK may not prevent the export northward of *apartheid* but may, on the contrary, modify its own policies to mollify the Union. Nor are these native apprehensions entirely groundless. There are parallels to the *apartheid* attitude among white settler groups in British East and Central Africa; and in deciding in 1949-50 the difficult question of whether or not to confirm in his chieftainship Seretse Khama, the Bechuanaland native who had married an Englishwoman, the UK Government obviously had its hand forced by the need to consider the political repercussions in South Africa.

3. Nationalistic Foreign Policy.

Current South African foreign policy is the product of four not entirely compatible factors: (1) the fact of South Africa's dependence on the support of larger powers, economically and strategically; (2) a deep-rooted isolationism, growing out of the country's geographical remoteness and particularly strong in the Afrikaner part of the population; (3) a touchy national pride that is quick to scent affronts to the country's rather recently acquired sovereignty; and (4) an imperialistic belief in the Union's manifest destiny to absorb certain territories and to extend its influence to the north. No South African Government can disregard any of these factors in framing a foreign policy; in general Malan's emphasis has been very much on the last two of them.

So far Malan has shown himself well aware of the dangers of isolation, an attitude derived partly from South Africa's economic difficulties and partly from apprehensions of Indian "imperialism" in Africa, but mainly from fear of Communism as an explosive force both internationally and at home. For this reason, as well as for domestic political considerations, he has to date played down the traditional Afrikaner demand for a republic wholly independent of the British Commonwealth. The ideal of a republic has been by no means abandoned by Government leaders, who even now are fond of referring to Britain as "a foreign

country"; but the Union continues to be represented at major Commonwealth conferences and to cooperate with the UK on such economic, military, and police matters as directly involve South Africa's immediate interests.

In general, Malan has tended to emphasize those issues of external affairs to which the electorate responds as South Africans rather than as Britishers or Afrikaners; and a favorite means of thus appealing to the national pride has been the adoption of an intransigent attitude in the UN. The Government of India's protests there against the Union's treatment of its Indian minority have occasioned various South African denunciations of UN "interference"; and on the question of the Union's accountability to the UN for the League of Nations mandate of South-West Africa the Malan Government has been openly defiant. It has not only proceeded to the virtual incorporation of South-West Africa in the Union but, after agreeing to the International Court of Justice's issuing an advisory opinion on the status of the territory, it made it plain, in almost contemptuous language, that the Government would ignore the finding if unfavorable to South Africa, as proved to be the case. "In no circumstances," announced Malan on 28 November 1949, "are we going to throw South-West Africa to the wolves." Despite its threatening phrases, however, the Government has never reached the point of withdrawing from the UN; and indeed, on the Indian minority issue it has indulged in the gesture of agreeing in the February 1950 tripartite conference with India and Pakistan to hold joint discussions on the question as recommended by a resolution of the UN General Assembly. The Government has shown no indication, however, of allowing UN recommendations to alter in any significant way its action on this or any other question.

A second pervasive note in Malan's foreign policy is the imperialistic one of expanding the Union's territory and generally asserting its hegemony over a large part of the continent. By legislation regarding South-West Africa in March 1949 and by holding elections there for the Union Parliament in August 1950, the Government has already in effect added to the Union a fifth province larger in area than any

of the other four. In November 1949 Malan moved toward the acquisition of additional territory by announcing that the UK would be asked to cede the three native territories of Basutoland, Swaziland, and Bechuanaland which adjoin the Union and are economically dependent on it. The latter development was clearly envisaged in the British Parliament's South Africa Act of 1909; but in the meantime the Union has become so widely associated with the idea of oppression of native races by Europeans that the UK would find it almost impossible to reconcile cession with its claims to champion native rights in its African colonies and to ensure a fair deal for black and white alike. The demand also stimulated some apprehension among British settler groups in the neighboring Rhodesias, which already have sizable Afrikaner minorities within their borders. After his initial move Malan did little further to press his demand; but the possibility remains that in the event of war, acquisition of the three territories might be made a condition of the Union's full cooperation.

The extension of its political influence in Africa has probably been one of the Union's motives in participating in several projects for Pan-African technical cooperation. It clearly figured largely in Malan's proposal of 8 April 1949 for an African Defense Pact. This, as he outlined it, would be tied in with the North Atlantic Treaty and would consist mainly of an agreement between the Union and the other African Governments (except Ethiopia and Liberia) to preserve the continent against Communism and other threats to Western civilization. Closer examination of the proposal made clear, however, that these "other threats" included India, and the policy of using black combat troops; and none of the other powers involved has yet indicated serious interest in the Pact. The Union, nevertheless, is still pushing the idea and trying to make military cooperation with the UK in time of war conditional on the conclusion of a comprehensive pact which, the Nationalists believe, would encourage South African rather than British leadership on the continent.

4. Military Cooperation with the West.

The primary fact in any consideration of the Union's potential effectiveness as a military ally is that South African military planning, to a degree unknown in North Atlantic Treaty states, focuses on the basic requirement of internal security. As internal pressures have increased in South Africa's explosive multi-racial society, the Malan Government's concern with this requirement has grown; but at the same time there has been an increasing official apprehension over the Union's strategic isolation in a critical world situation. Both concerns have occasionally taken rather ridiculous forms, such as organizing a militia of nearly 90,000 "Skiet Commando" riflemen, and informally requesting the US for several B-29 bombers, reportedly for the purpose of defending Africa against the Indian Navy. In the main, however, the Union continues to follow standard British military methods and has been making an attempt to modernize its obsolescent defense forces for both offensive and internal security purposes. The defense forces are currently maintained at a strength of about 9,000, with a reserve of over 20,000. Morale is low, however, chiefly because of the government's political meddling with personnel assignments and of the general military and administrative ineptitude displayed by Defense Minister Erasmus and Chief of Staff Du Toit.

In the Korean war the Government, after considerable delay, authorized a contribution of one fighter squadron (but without equipment) and the men were scheduled to arrive in Japan towards the end of October. The Government has similarly approved the commitment of one armored division with air support for service outside Africa in defense of the African continent (i.e. in Middle Eastern operations) if a general war should break out; but General Du Toit has stated that complete equipment would have to be furnished this division from outside sources. South African military bases would presumably be made available for US and UK wartime use, and a plan has been drawn up for the Union to build up a navy that could gradually take over the naval responsibilities of the British South Atlantic Squadron with a view to the eventual

transfer of the Simonstown naval base from the UK to the Union. In return, of course, South Africans expect military equipment from the UK in amounts greater than they have received to date, and they are perhaps even more anxious to obtain US military equipment. They will probably try to get as much as possible as a free grant. It is likely that two immediate ends in Malan's mind in proposing an African Defense Pact were the preparation of domestic public opinion for a rearmament program and the provision of a mechanism by which this rearmament could be partly financed from abroad.

5. Implications for the US.

For reasons going back in most cases to the complex South African racial situation, the Malan Government's policies have consequences for US security interests that are both more varied in nature and greater in extent than might be expected from so small a country. Not all of these consequences are bad. The Government's economic policies have tended to give South Africa a better balanced industrial complex which would make it more useful to the US and UK in time of war. These policies have also worked to the economic advantage of the UK.

Similarly, in military affairs, the Government has made a number of decided moves toward better cooperation with both the US and the UK and has shown itself eager, within the limits of small military budgets, to modernize its defense forces. Nevertheless, political considerations have been allowed to interfere with military efficiency—notably in the appointment of less competent Afrikaner officers to important posts, in clumsy attempts to push the use of the Afrikaans language, and in curtailment of the cooperation formerly existing with the UK in training facilities. The objection to arming natives expressed in Malan's African Defense Pact proposals would not mean a refusal on the Union's part to enter defense arrangements with the European colonial powers, but does indicate a point of possible friction with them and serves as a reminder that only white combat troops could be stationed in South African territory.

The Government's repressive racial policy and the unrest it has encouraged clearly have adverse implications for US security interests. In case of war, the internal security requirements of South Africa would be such as seriously to reduce the number of troops that might otherwise be contributed to the common cause. Any outbreak of racial violence, whether Communist-instigated or not, would interfere with the supply of South African strategic raw materials to the US. (The latter consideration is of importance since the Union produces significant quantities of nearly a third of the strategic materials listed by the US Munitions Board as so critical that stockpiling is necessary; in four of these commodities the Union in 1949 accounted for proportions of total US imports that ranged from 75 to 99 percent.) Moreover, the rise in racial antagonisms elsewhere encouraged by *apartheid* has already caused serious embarrassment to the UK in its African colonial territories and in its relations with the Asian Commonwealths. *Apartheid* is also a ready-made invitation for propaganda from the Communist bloc directed against both the Union and the countries associated with it.

Still other consequences unfavorable to the US have been produced by the Union's aggressively nationalistic foreign policy, and in particular by its intransigence in the UN. For this intransigence has been exercised on those issues of colonialism and human rights which possess an appeal even for long established states like those of Latin America, and a particularly great appeal for the newly independent peoples of Asia whose favor is now being sought by both the Soviets and the West. Attacks on their policies by India raise no great problem for the South Africans, and indeed seem mainly to reassure them of the essential rightness of those policies; but such attacks do raise a serious problem for the US. The US has repeatedly committed itself to a policy of encouraging the progressive development of non-self-governing peoples toward eventual self-government; and US ability to exercise leadership among the Asian and Latin American members of the UN depends in part on their belief in the sincerity of this commitment. At the same time, the US cannot en-

tirely disavow a country so firmly within the Western camp as South Africa is. Despite such compromises as US representatives have been able to work out, the effect on US prestige with the anti-colonial bloc is inevitably detrimental, and the task of the Soviet propagandist is correspondingly facilitated.

The Nationalists' domestic policy of attempting to make the Afrikaner element dominant in South Africa also has certain unfavorable implications for the US in that it tends to put the most isolationist elements in the ascendant and constitutes a divisive force within the relatively small white community. The police-state mentality evident in some of these measures is also, like *apartheid*, a propaganda liability for the West as a whole.

Those policies of the Malan Government which are favorable to US security interests will almost certainly remain in effect, since they have not been undertaken in deference to US views but to serve South Africa's own immediate interests. Those policies adverse to US interests are so deeply rooted in popular emotion that the likelihood of their alteration seems slight.

Nevertheless, South Africans do display a certain sensitivity to world public opinion; it is chiefly seen in the irritability with which they respond to outside criticism. The convictions of their own unusual importance as a nation and of the essential rightness of their views are not vulnerable to direct attack but are in some degree subject to a very gradual process of erosion, in part through South Africa's widening circle of international contacts in the UN and elsewhere. Such a change would, of course, be a matter of the rather distant future and the other forces operating may not allow time for it to occur. Within the Union itself the underlying sense of insecurity over the worsening racial problem, increased by fears of an expanding Communism, occasionally finds expression, even in Government circles, in some small hesitations over the racial program and in more pronounced indications of concern over South Africa's ties with the West. There is thus some slight prospect that South African policies adverse to US interests might change in response to currents of outside opinion, but such a modification at best promises to be a very slow process.

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