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THE BATTLE FOR AFRICA

When are the American people going to wake up to two faraway facts which nevertheless impact ferociously on our national security? (1) Africa is a prize of tremendous power and wealth because it is a storehouse of essential strategic minerals, and (2) the battle for control of Africa is a conflict of black and white versus Red, not black versus white or even black versus black.

Africa has a population more than twice that of the United States, but its people are divided into 55 countries and 2,000 tribes of different language and customs. Tribal warfare is still a way of life; five million blacks have been killed in tribal warfare in the last few years.

After the end of World War II, "colonalism" became an epithet of opprobrium which was effectively used by the left-wing media to drive the Western ruling class off the continent of Africa. Yet colonialism was the system which had kept the warring tribes from killing each other, and had given Africa civil order, western medical progress, and modern agriculture.

The exit of colonalism turned black Africa into an economic disaster. In 1950, Africa exported grain; by 1980 Africa had become a grain importer and now one-fourth of the people are facing starvation.

What replaced colonalism was a system of "rule or be ruled." Black African politicians have the attitude, "Once I'm in power, I'm boss for life." Forty African countries are ruled by one man, one party, or a military junta. There have been 55 coups in the last few years. Western democracy and power-sharing through political coalitions simply don't work in black Africa.

To any extent that it is possible to measure "public opinion" in a continent so diverse as Africa, it appears that the people admire a strong man image. Idi Amin was appalling to Westerners, but he would have been an easy winner of a "most admired man" poll in Africa where the exercise of raw power is respected.

Unfortunately, Russia has the "strong man" image in Africa today while the United States has a weak man image. In addition, the Soviets have a plan for taking over Africa, while U.S. policy has been soft, contradictory, self-defeating, and has even assisted the Communists in taking over a number of countries.

For example, the pro-Western government of Ian Smith in Rhodesia was betrayed and the nation turned over to the Communists by the mistaken policies of Henry Kissinger and Margaret Thatcher. Instead of the pro-Western government of Ian Smith, Zimbabwe is today a Marxist one-party state torn by terrorists and by warring black factions, enduring the presence of Russian, North Korean and East German troops, and watching the final flight of the whites.

The Communists are kept in power in Angola by tens of thousands of Cuban, East German and Russian troops, plus the revenues that flow from the Chase Manhattan Bank and Gulf Oil enterprises there.

Funny thing, we don't see any demonstrations on college campuses demanding "divestiture" of Gulf Oil in Angola. All the "divestiture" demands are against U.S. investments in South Africa.

The real battle for South Africa is not over treatment of the blacks but over whether Communists or non-Communists will control this minerals treasure chest plus the sea lanes around the Cape of Good Hope through which pass 90% of NATO's oil. If South Africa's treatment of the blacks is so bad, how is it that none of the blacks wants to leave the country, while a half million blacks every year are trying to get into South Africa?

South Africa has the sixth largest military establishment in the world and probably has nuclear weapons, so the Russians cannot attack directly. But the Russians can make all kinds of trouble for South Africa through terrorists, spies in the civil service, propaganda, radical agitation in the universities and the churches, and the use of United Nations funding.

The Reds already control about half of the African continent. The United States cannot afford to continue to allow our money, prestige and diplomacy to assist the Communists to take over the rest of Africa.