



THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Nkomo, Mugabe, and the All-Parties Conference (APC) (U)

(C) State Department and CIA reporting from southern Africa suggests that Joshua Nkomo, President of ZAPU, is unlikely to join an APC because he represents a minority ethnic group and is not confident that he could win a free election. He seems more confident of his military option, based on continued military support from the USSR and Cuba, and on the personal loyalty of President Kaunda in Zambia (ZAPU's safe haven). Nkomo is also depicted as a personality who does not wish to share political power. The other leaders, including Robert Mugabe of ZANU, all of whom represent the ethnic majority, apparently fear and distrust Nkomo and probably are not anxious to share power with him.

(C) The field reporting also seems to indicate that Mugabe, because of his relatively weak political and military positions, might be willing to attend an APC without Nkomo. It is possible that Mugabe's chief supporters--Tanzania, Mozambique, and China--might endorse an APC without Nkomo because they are uncomfortable with the Soviet influence they see in ZAPU.

(S) If all of this is true, I think we should consider a "Mugabe option" of supporting an APC despite the possibility that Nkomo would not come. The other four nationalists would be representative of the majority in Rhodesia. The disadvantage of a settlement without Nkomo would be his continued pursuit of a military solution with Soviet/Cuban support. However, there would, I think, be a good chance that the prospect of being left out plus the pressure from the front-line Presidents would then bring Nkomo to join an APC; if so, so much the better.

Office of the Secretary of Defense ^{Successa}
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS
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Harold Brown

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