

American Committee on Africa

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October 22, 1970

Dear Friend:

The Nixon Administration is moving steadily toward increasing U.S. ties and commitments to South Africa and Rhodesia while ignoring Africans committed to change in southern Africa. This shift in policy must be challenged vigorously and at once. A new incident has come to light between the preparation and mailing of this material: the failure of the White House to implement an arranged meeting between President Nixon and Zambian President Kenneth D. Kaunda with the Organization of African Unity delegation who were in the United States for the United Nations Twenty-fifth Anniversary celebrations.

The enclosed memorandum deals with the recent Administration decision to license the sale of aircraft to South Africa and to allow the importation of stockpiled Rhodesian chrome. Both represent serious backward steps in African policy. The need to expose and oppose these policies is the more urgent because they contradict the continuing vocal stance of an antiapartheid, anti-colonial policy.

Secretary Rogers' 1969 goodwill trip to Africa; some aid to Botswana; discouragement of investment in Namibia while avoiding enforceable action; are window-dressing or camouflage. Behind it, the U.S. has appointed the sympathetic Texan, John Hurd, as Ambassador to South Africa; has not only failed to condemn French and proposed British sale of arms to South Africa but has announced the licensing of plane sales; and has moved ahead of the British Conservatives toward a new Rhodesian policy. The status quo of military alliance with and support to Portugal continues.

Portests should be organized on the basis of the information attached. Individuals and organizations should let local officials and especially members of the House and Senate know that you support the liberation of southern Africa and oppose the increasing aid to colonialism and racism that the Nixon Administration is preparing.

Telegraph or write to President Nixon and Secretary of State Rogers →
Visit your Congressmen, home for the campaign, and query candidates
Write to newspapers when reports of such actions are published
Tell us what you are doing and what response you get

Venceremos,

George Houser
American Committee on Africa

Enclosure

U.S. MOVES TO AID SOUTH AFRICA BY LICENSING SALE OF PLANES

The United States has contradicted its supposed anti-apartheid sympathies by relaxing restrictions on planes for South Africa at a time when the arms embargo on South Africa has become a major issue at the United Nations. The September 17 statement of Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs David Newsom, made to Chicago businessmen, that the United States "would consider licenses for limited numbers of small unarmed executive civilian type aircraft" to South Africa must be analyzed in context. In his speech, it is preceded and followed by statements of support for the arms embargo against South Africa and includes the broader specification: "We intend to continue to treat civilian type items in this way." (i.e. to authorize licenses for additional items) The speech also includes concessions to U.S. businesses with Rhodesian interests, stated to be within the terms of U.N. sanctions against Rhodesia, as the planes are within the U.N. arms embargo.

The clearest thing about this Janus policy is that the Administration is not trying to see how much it can do to strengthen the United Nations policy of opposition to apartheid, but rather to see how much it can get away with under varying international interpretations of the embargo, while maintaining a legally defensible position.

The planes to which Newsom refers, (rumored to be Lear jets) and whatever similar type items he had in mind, are not the only current questionable military transactions between the United States and South Africa. The Congressional Record for October 15, 1970 contains a record of military export sales for the fiscal years 1962-69, entered by the Hon. H. L. Coughlin, Pennsylvania Representative. Sales to South Africa for the 62-69 period, taken as a unit, include years both before and after the embargo.

(This was embodied in a Security Council resolution of August 7, 1963. The Government of the United States, in a letter to the Security Council dated October 2, 1963, announced its intention of ending sale of arms, ammunition, and vehicles to the Government of South Africa by December 31, 1963. Contracts previously made were to be honored, and this would account for some subsequent sales.)

However, \$3.1 million in Pentagon sales to South Africa is listed for fiscal 1969 and that cannot be explained away so easily. Did it include only Mr. Newsom's civilian type items which the Defense Department automatically classifies as military (because, for instance, it uses the same light planes for military reconnaissance itself?) Replying to a query from the American Committee on Africa, the State Department said that the Congressman's statement was correct and that the U.S. was complying strictly with the embargo. The Department thought that spare parts and nonmilitary supplies such as radio receivers and test equipment probably made up the total.

In the long run, the United States has strengthened South Africa in far more deadly respects: helping it into the status of nuclear power; introducing it to space techniques; contributing know-how to its first missile launch; allowing the U.S. motor industry to train it in self-sufficient production, and the like. But the importance of this new U.S. statement at this time is that the question of the arms embargo has again been raised in international politics, with Britain's Conservative Party on record as favoring renewal of the sale of arms. Other nations, especially France, have broken the embargo all along. For the U.S. to volunteer light planes while saying it supports the embargo, is to aid South Africa at a moment when lines are drawn sharply on this very question.

In South Africa, it is so well understood that the U.S. is filling military orders that the press there paraphrased the Newsom speech: "He announced that executive jet aircraft would be available to the South African Defence Force and that a R2,000,000 (\$2,800,000) chrome ore deal with Rhodesia would be allowed." (emphasis ours) This is no doubt what was requested and what will result.

The purpose and structure of the South African defense forces have bearing on the blurring of lines between civilian and military usage. This is usual in highly militarized countries of course, but it is essential in South Africa. South Africa's serious armament program and attempt at self-sufficiency (now nearly complete) started after the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960 when it decided to cope with a hostile majority with potential outside support by violent suppression. As the Defence Minister said in 1961, "In the same way as the world powers are continually preparing for war, South Africa intends to be ready for internal trouble." Although that has meant that the primary objective of the South African Defence Forces is defense against a domestic majority, the fears of so precarious a minority have given its foreign policy an aggressive cast. One of the anxieties about a possible independent South West Africa (Namibia) was that it might be a basis for attack against apartheid; now South West is incorporated, the anxiety turns to countries to the north, and an "outward policy" develops looking toward a South African co-prosperity sphere.

South Africa's Permanent Force is small, including about 18,000 men in Army, Navy, and Air Force. But with their civilian adjuncts, some 120,000 men can be mobilized within days. South Africa's defense force is composed entirely of whites, with the exception of one Coloured Corps (622 men on administrative detail) and laborers. The all-white Citizen Force was composed of volunteers and citizens selected by lot until compulsory military training was introduced in 1967 for all males from the age of 17 except those in the Permanent Force, Police, or Prisons, a revealing interpretation of essential defense in South Africa. The number of trainees at any one time now is about 25,000 and the total reserve, 60,000. Another civilian force (if they all use civilian equipment, that could include quite a nonmilitary import order) is the Commando, volunteers and able-bodied citizens who have not been members of the Permanent Force, the Citizen Force, or either reserve unit, who are trained in combat and in the use of weapons, and subject to call over a twenty-year period. Commando strength was 60,000 in 1965.

Of particular relevance to the U.S. policy of supplying light aircraft may be the Air Commandos. Established in 1964, it is made up of private pilots and planes commissioned in times of emergency or war and includes about 240 pilots and planes.

Air force equipment according to a U.N. report dated June 1970 includes 25 Cessna 185 Skywagon jet reconnaissance aircraft purchased from the United States in 1962 before the embargo. This description is, however, typical of the function of light aircraft that will now again be made available. The 1969 White Paper on defense contemplates acquisition of light reconnaissance aircraft.

Reconnaissance is not only an essential and normal military function. It could have the most strategic function in terms of the search for guerrillas - South African liberation forces entering the country from independent Africa or functioning within it. This reconnaissance is not limited to South Africa's own territory. South Africa's major anti-guerrilla and reconnaissance base has been built a thousand miles from the borders of South Africa itself in the Caprivi Strip. This is part of South West Africa (Namibia) which South Africa is specifically prohibited from fortifying under terms of the League of Nations mandate which it once recognized (but which the U.N. terminated because of violations). The strip borders Angola, Zambia, Botswana, and Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and reconnaissance based there covers areas in those countries - and people trying to leave South Africa as well as to enter.

Nor is reconnaissance the only military act contemplated by South Africa. In Angola, Mozambique, and Rhodesia, its armed forces already back up the settler minorities against the liberation forces. And in a September statement to the South African House of Assembly, Prime Minister Vorster warned that South Africa would fight terrorism (the South African euphemism for guerrilla forces) in any country where it was permitted to do so and "if the threat was realized and if terrorists attacked South Africa from countries which allowed them to do this, South Africa would fight them and pursue them right into the countries from which they came." This is not the first threat to Zambia and Tanzania, the primary targets, and of course it would include other border states like Botswana.

The American Committee on Africa has received reliable information from South African sources about the ~~air~~ commandos and the use of light planes including U.S. planes for military purposes, particularly the training of military personnel. This cannot be directly attributed because South African laws prohibit such communication, i.e. the Official Secret Amendments Act (1965):

Any person who has in his possession or under his control any sketch, plan, article, note, document, or information which relates to munitions of war or any military or police matter and who publishes it or directly or indirectly communicates it to any person in any manner or for any purpose prejudicial to the safety or interests of South Africa, shall be guilty of an offense and liable on conviction to a fine of 750 pounds or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding seven years, or to both such fine and imprisonment.

Nevertheless, "the fact that American light aircraft are used for these political and military purposes (military and police training) is open knowledge in South Africa, as is the fact that some of the aircraft were supplied on the specific understanding that they would not be used for such purposes."

Flying is for whites only in South Africa, and one informant was a pilot himself who found fellow pilots at the Baragwanath air field near Johannesburg not at all reticent about discussing their training and their role in the air commandos. Many of their planes were Cessnas and Pipers sold following the 1964 embargo supposedly for normal private flying.¹ Their two-weeks-a-year training camp instruction included radio cooperation with police groups and mobile police striking forces, army and air force cooperation, practice bombing with grenades (he heard that light bomb racks had been installed but hadn't seen any), and general cooperation with police in maintaining internal security in both South Africa and South West Africa. When political prisoners have escaped, commando squadrons participated in reconnaissance over borders into Botswana, Swaziland, and Lesotho, to intercept possible flight abroad.

In civil war, which the South African situation is even though all forces are concentrated on one side, the distinction between military and civilian blurs beyond recognition. The question the Government of the United States must answer is not whether or not it should allow light planes to be sold to South Africa, but whether it should strengthen a Government whose very existence rests on the subjection of the majority by force. This is not a game of diplomatic niceties but of life and death for whole populations. If the answer is yes, it should be rejected by the people of the United States. If the answer is no, planes would not even be considered. The problems for consideration would always be ways to stop the enormous amounts of aid, governmental and private, that goes continuously to help maintain the apartheid state.

Recently measures to strengthen the embargo have been recommended to the United Nations and they deserve support:

- 1) military patents and other military knowhow should not be transferred by government or private agencies.
- 2) foreign capital which goes into South Africa's armaments industry should be cut off.
- 3) skilled technicians should be discouraged from emigrating to South Africa.
- 4) special training should not be offered to military and police who come here for it.

¹ A recent Star article (10/3/70) shows 1970 Cessna commercial twin-jet aircraft on a South African airfield and mentions that the line is being expanded to include the fanjet-powered Cessna Citation business jet.

- 5) cooperation in the nuclear and space fields should be ended.
(This would include the removal of U.S. tracking stations from South Africa.)
- 6) spare parts and repairs should not be supplied to maintain equipment sent prior to the embargo.
- 7) items suitable for both military and civilian use should be embargoed. In particular, motor vehicles should be included.

Resolutions, however, will not do the job. Resolution to end apartheid is needed.

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