High-Voltage Batons
Sent to South Africa
WASHINGTON, Sept. 20 (UPI) — The Reagan Administration said today that the issuance of an export license last April for the sale of 2,500 high-voltage batons — similar to cattle prods — to the South African police was owing to "administrative inadvertence."

Administration officials said the shock batons had already been shipped and there was no possibility of reversing the sale, as was done in the case of an export license issued Sept. 8 to South Korea for 500 of the batons. The batons, about the length and weight of a police nightstick, give a 3,500-volt shock to anybody touched by the instrument.

The State Department said it would have opposed issuing the license, but was not consulted and that the matter was under investigation. A memo prepared for members of Congress on the sale quotes a Commerce Department official as describing the approval of the license as "an honest mistake."

The 2500 shock batons are surely in use now — in South Africa for 'crowd control' — in occupied Namibia and southern Angola where South African Defence Force squads in the field can apply instant torture in interrogating prisoners and the civilian populace.

These items of police/military weaponry — under the thin disguise of 're-chargeable flashlights with self-defense capabilities' — may indeed be another triumph of American ingenuity (the cattle prods have an electric light bulb installed at the working end) — but their shipment to South Africa is a clear violation of the Export Administration Act. That law prohibits the export of 'crime control and detection instruments and equipment to a country, the government of which engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights'. The Pretoria regime belongs in this category. This is confirmed by reports of the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council, the International Commission of Jurists, the Organization of African Unity, Amnesty International, major church bodies, even the US State Department.

EXPRESS YOUR DISGUST. WRITE — Secretary of State George P. Schultz Washington, DC 20520
— Secretary of Commerce Malcolm Baldridge Washington, DC 20230

SUPPORT CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATIONS. WRITE — Rep. Clement Zablocki Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs 2170 RHOB Washington, DC 20515

Senator Charles Percy Chairman, Foreign Relations Committee 4229 DSOB Washington, DC 20510 ATT: Ms Alison Rosenberg
Policy Clash Develops on Shock Batons

By Richard M. Weintraub
Washington Post Staff Writer

A heated policy clash has developed between the State and Commerce departments over the foreign-policy implications of trade issues. The dispute was sparked by questions over the government's approval of the sale of electric-shock police batons to South Korea and South Africa.

The South Korean government has canceled its order for 500 of the batons, but a high-level review of this country's export-approval procedures is under way, fueled by the revelation that the Commerce Department approved the sale of 2,500 batons to South Africa in April without consulting the State Department.

The issue highlights one of those gray areas of government policy making where different agencies can have different goals. The Commerce Department is supposed to encourage sales abroad and, under the Export Control Act of 1979, it has the authority to grant licenses for the sale of certain items. In cases where there are foreign-policy implications to a proposed sale, however, Commerce is supposed to consult the State Department.

The South Korean case, Commerce had sought the views of State. Although State objected, citing continuing questionable human rights practices by the South Korean government, Commerce approved it. When protests developed, the license was put on hold. On Monday the South Koreans canceled the sale.

In the South African case, Commerce did not consult State. Paula Kuzmich of State's Human Rights Bureau said that, if State had been consulted, "We would have recommended denial. Through administrative inadvertence, the State Department was not asked for a recommendation."

Officials familiar with the case say a lower-level Commerce Department employee simply approved the sale without recognizing the foreign-policy implications and that it was not caught at the policy-review level.

Revelation of the sale comes at an embarrassing time for the administration, when it is trying to get the support of black African states for a settlement of the Namibian issue, the centerpiece of U.S. Africa policy under President Reagan.

"This will only feed growing perceptions throughout Africa and the world of the willingness of the United States to enter into a new accommodation with South Africa," Rep. Howard Wolpe (D-Mich.), chairman of the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Africa, said of the sale.

The State Department has embarked on what it calls a policy of constructive engagement toward the South African government, but the department's latest human rights report on South Africa makes it clear that that nation's apartheid policies continue to deprive blacks of basic human rights.

Wolpe wrote Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige Monday, asking for a full explanation of the sale to South Africa, and is in the process of scheduling hearings, which very likely could cover broader issues of export-administration policy.

The Korean sale also prompted a protest from Congress in the form of a letter signed by 19 members of the House criticizing the granting of the license as "clearly proscribed by . . . the Foreign Assistance Act."

". . . Our security can hardly be aided by an act which increases anti-American attitudes of the people of Korea who struggle for democratic reform," the letter said.

Commerce Department officials have cited an earlier State Department approval of a sale of shock batons to South Korea in September, 1981, as a precedent for their decision, but it remains unclear why State's foreign-policy objections were rejected in the latest case.