Constructive Engagement for Angola?

It was important in terms of both western and specifically, American, interests that we engage constructively in Southern Africa. It is sometimes thought, I believe, that constructive engagement applies only to South Africa. It applies to the whole region. We’re seeking to engage constructively throughout Southern Africa.

Chester Crocker, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs in February, 1982 interview with the International Communications Agency

The Reagan Administration has embarked on a path of dialogue with Angola. However, the Angolan government is suspicious that this new course is an attempt to mask the administration’s policy of hostility toward its country rather than an effort to make progressive changes in US policy. Up until the present time, the policy of “constructive engagement” has meant developing and emphasizing closer bilateral relations with South Africa at the expense of other countries in the region. US relations with Angola, especially, have remained as contentious as they were when the MPLA assumed power in 1975 after Angola became independent. The first two US policy actions towards independent Angola were to set the tone for future relations. First, it supplied covert aid to South Africa and internal opponents of the MPLA attempting to topple the new government. It was only the entry of the Cuban troops at the request of the Angolans which prevented South Africa from achieving its goals. Secondly, the US refused to recognize the new government because of its Marxist ideology and the presence of Cuban troops in that country.

This policy of non-recognition was enunciated by President Ford and continued by the Carter Administration. When the Reagan Administration came to power with its overall policy objective of “countering Soviet expansionism,” the US attitude towards Angola became even more intransigent. Viewing Southern Africa through the narrow prism of East-West rivalry, the principal objective for the administration was the removal of the Cuban troops from Angola.

From the beginning, US interest in pursuing a Namibian settlement has been secondary and was forced upon it only when other members of the Contact Group (West Germany, France, Britain, and Canada) insisted (for their own pragmatic reasons) that efforts toward independence be continued. The US agreed, but insisted on linking any Namibian settlement to the withdrawal of the Cuban troops from Angola. The administration refused to recognize the important role the Angolans, the main backers of SWAPO, must play in bringing about a settlement. In fact, while the US grudgingly courted South Africa, its attitude towards Angola continued to be one of thinly-veiled hostility. The Reagan Administration’s first important Africa policy decision was to request repeal of the Clark Amendment which prohibited US covert aid to UNITA, the South African-supported guerrilla movement trying to destabilize Angola. Secretary of State Haig and President Reagan have made no secret of their support for Jonas Savimbi, head of UNITA. The administration also vetoed a UN Security Council resolution which condemned the August South African invasion of Angola, and refused to condemn South Africa for subsequent attacks. Further, it has refused to extend diplomatic recognition to Angola, demanding that the Cuban troops leave that country.

However, Angola is a vital piece of the political landscape in Southern Africa and US refusal to recognize it has made it no less a reality. There is now a dawning realization that bilateral talks with South Africa are not enough and that Angola must be “constructively engaged” as well to achieve US policy objectives in Southern Africa. The willingness to talk with the Angolans, however, represents more of a change in tactic than strategy.

Background to Talks

From January to September, 1981, no high-level contacts between Angolan and US officials took place and US preoccupation with Cuban troops in Angola had worsened relations. According to Gerald Bender, Angola scholar, Secretary of State Haig ordered US officials not to meet with the Angolans
in early September at the UN General Assembly. However, the other members of the Contact Group, becoming increasingly concerned about the prospects for a Namibian settlement, urged Haig to meet with Paulo Jorge, the Angolan Foreign Minister. In late September, both men met for two hours but nothing concrete materialized from the discussion.

The September meeting was followed by a brief meeting between Crocker and Jorge in October when Crocker visited Luanda attempting to nothing concrete between Crocker and Jorge in October when Crocker visited (see Washington Notes on Africa, Winter, 1981). Phase I calls for establishing constitutional guarantees and a new electoral plan based on one-person, two votes: one-half to be elected by proportional representation and the other half to be elected from single-member districts. The US sought Angolan approval but gave no indication of wanting bilateral talks.

Without any positive overtures from the US, Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos issued a call for bilateral talks on December 10th. The call came at a time when the continuing antagonism from South Africa and the US was increasing pressure on Angola. On November 30th, South Africa attacked an oil refinery near Luanda, causing extensive damage. On December 1st, UNITA's Savimbi travelled to the US where he was welcomed royally by top administration officials, including Secretary Haig. By more than coincidence, President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, who had been the conduit for CIA funding to UNITA in 1975, was also visiting Washington at that time. It was during the visit of these two opponents of the Angolan government that the administration intensified its lobbying efforts to have the Clark Amendment repealed. These developments naturally made the Angolans nervous. Faced with growing attacks from South Africa, the prospect of the repeal of the Clark Amendment and renewed aid to Savimbi was a cause of heightened concern for the MPLA government.

The US responded favorably to the dos Santos overture calculating that the Angolans were in serious enough trouble to soften their negotiating position. It was also becoming clear that bilateral talks with the Angolans were necessary to secure the removal of the Cuban troops and to win their support for the new Namibian plan. After the Angolan initiative, the US organized the first meeting which took place on January 15-16 in Paris between Jorge and Crocker. The talks lasted for a total of 15 hours. The Paris-based magazine Afrique-Asie reported that the talks were "brutally" honest—breaking into shouting matches at points. The chief agenda items for the Angolans were the normalization of relations, the Namibian settlement, and stopping the South African raids.

Crocker responded that if the Angolans accepted the US suggestions on the new plan, Namibia could be enroute to independence by the end of March. He added that the US was disposed to cooperate in Angola's national reconstruction and would organize a conference of donors after normalization of relations. Crocker insisted that "it is our sincere desire to re-establish peace and security in the region, but for peace to reign all nations must have confidence." He then went on to describe how Zaire lacked confidence because of Angolan-based Katangans revolutionaries which threaten it, and how South Africa lacked confidence because of the Cuban troops in Angola and the possibility of attacks by SWAPO and ANC. Furthermore, Crocker argued that the "legitimate UNITA movement" causes instability in the Angolan interior and therefore must be negotiated with to stabilize the whole region. At one point Crocker stated that the only reason the Cubans were in Angola was to protect the MPLA from UNITA.

The second set of talks were held in Paris on March 4th and 5th between Crocker and Jorge. According to both sides, the same set of issues were discussed but neither concrete proposals nor specifics were released at the end of the meetings. The next set of talks are scheduled for Luanda in early April. Crocker has stated that the talks will continue because "they provide an opportunity for a chance to go into much greater depth on all the questions that are on our respective agendas— their agenda and our agenda... the question of regional stability, and bilateral issues between us in terms of our commercial relations and the possibility of ultimate normalization of our bilateral relations."

Diplomatic Balancing

An implicit assumption of the on-going talks is that both sides see the possibility for achieving some of their objectives through bilateral negotiations. However, neither side can proceed within the strictly bilateral framework without bringing in the interests of others with whom they are allied. The Angolans are sensitive to the feelings of their friends and supporters and have attempted to play a diplomatic balancing game. They have insisted that Namibian independence be a central issue in its own right and not linked with the Cuban troop issue. Jorge has firm instructions from dos Santos that "SWAPO not be compromised in any way," according to an informed source involved in the negotiating process.

While Jorge was in Paris with Crocker in January, Lucio Lara, Secretary-General of the MPLA and the second most important man in the Angolan government, visited Moscow and signed a new ten-year economic cooperation agreement and a five-year trade, economic, and technical cooperation accord. In addition to increased economic aid, the Soviets also promised Angola further military assistance. The prospect of increased military aid has given the Angolans more leverage in their talks with the US by making them feel less vulnerable to future attacks from South Africa.

The Cuban Foreign Minister, Isidoro Peolis, visited Angola in an early February meeting with Jorge. At the conclusion of the talks, a joint communiqué was issued stating that the Cuban troops would be withdrawn from Angola "as soon as all signs of possible invasion by South Africa have ceased... Havana will follow without hesitation any decisions made by the Angolan government on the presence of the Cuban..."
forces." This statement seemed calculated to reaffirm to the US that there has been no fundamental change in the Angolan position. The visits also make it clear that, despite the severe problems the Angolans are experiencing, they are not prepared to give in to pressure nor allow the US to alienate them from their supporters.

**Angolan Objectives**

Given its circumstances, the Angolan government is clearly pursuing the bilateral talks for survival reasons. The continuing devastation of South African raids are proving disastrous for an Angolan economy already suffering from low world oil prices. Since the August invasion, the South Africans have continued to occupy southern Angola. They launched a series of attacks, occupying Angola from November 1st to 20th. On January 4th and 5th, another raid encountering Cuban troops took place. On March 17, they attacked a SWAPO refugee camp claiming it was a SWAPO base, and killed 201 persons, mostly women and children. There seems to be no end of this aggression in sight.

Each new raid produces new refugees and causes new destruction. The raids have created critical food shortages by disrupting agricultural productivity. There are now 130,000 refugees in southern Angola suffering from lack of food and medicine. South Africa's targets are increasingly Angolan towns and civilians, despite its claims that it is after SWAPO bases. US refusal to condemn South Africa for the raids have encouraged the frequency and boldness of the attacks.

While South Africa applies the stick to Angola, the US waves carrots. It has consistently discussed the possibility of large aid packages to Angola, at one point offering it aid "that would equal or surpass that given to Zimbabwe." Given its current economic problems, the aid offer is very tempting.

The talks also offer Angola an opportunity to lobby against continued US support for UNITA. News reports hint at US material support for UNITA, despite the Clark Amendment prohibition. Savimbi noted in a January interview: "Material help is not adequate on, nor limited by, the Clark Amendment. A great country like the US has other channels. The Clark Amendment means nothing." In addition, the pro-government South African newspaper, the Citizen, reported in December of US support for 2,000 armed rebels assembled in Zaire for the purpose of overthrowing the Angolan government. In early January, Holden Roberto, leader of the Front for the National Liberation of Angola (FNLA), and Francisco Lubota, leader of the secessionist Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC), both opponents of the MPLA government, visited Washington. The magazine, West Africa, also recently reported on a secret meeting held at Kitona military base in Zaire last July with representatives of UNITA, FLEC, COMIRA (a new opposition force based in Zaire), and the US government. "At this meeting the US representative is reported to have outlined his government's determination to 'change' the regime in Luanda and install Savimbi as President of Angola," the magazine reports. "The plans discussed included the provision of arms to the anti-government forces." South Africa was to be responsible for "the special military force," according to leaked documents from the meeting. It is widely suspected that the US is funding UNITA and other factions through aid to third-party countries.

**US Objectives**

The Reagan Administration is desperately looking for a foreign policy success and Southern Africa offers the best chance with the achievement of a Namibian settlement. Although Crocker stated earlier that the US would back out of the Namibian negotiations if they bogged down, he now views the US as the principal actor and has assumed major responsibility for producing a settlement. That settlement continues to elude him. The administration had boasted that approval of Phase I of its new plan would be all wrapped up by New Year's Day. However, the talks have hit an impasse as SWAPO and the Frontline States have criticized the new plan as designed to work against SWAPO's advantage. Crocker confirmed these suspicions in a recent hearing stating: "We have sought through our diplomacy certain general guidelines, if you will, or constraints concerning the future constitutional development of Namibia." Limiting SWAPO's influence is a key US objective. Still, the plan has yet to be approved. Removing the Cubans from Angola has been even more elusive, and Crocker noted in the same hearing that the purpose of the current dialogue with Angola was to "induce that government to face for it what are very difficult decisions concerning the role of the Cubans."

Thus there is no indication that the talks signal a significant change in US policy toward Angola. The US still refuses to recognize it and to condemn the continuing South African raids. And there is the lingering suspicion that the US is still supporting UNITA or other anti-MPLA forces. If there is any change reflected by the talks, it is that the administration is finally dealing with the political realities of the region. Although the State Department still insists that the Namibian issue and withdrawal of Cuban troops are "closely related," it has backed off insisting that withdrawal be a precondition for movement on Namibia. Crocker now explains: "The word 'precondition' has been misunderstood. You don't get very far in diplomacy by laying down public preconditions to anybody." It was not so much the question of diplomatic expediency that caused the administration to drop the "precondition" clause, however, as it was the Angolans' refusal to discuss the issue within that context.

Another reality facing the US is the possible decline of support for UNITA from other sources. Senegal dropped its support when it officially recognized Angola in February. Besides South Africa, it was the only African country to withhold support since independence. Angolan officials also visited Gabon on December 20th, a country which they have privately accused of giving support to UNITA. By decreasing the support UNITA receives, the MPLA can limit the rebels' leverage in any possible future negotiations for power-sharing. Consequently, the Reagan administration is anxious to secure a legitimate political base for its friend UNITA and this issue has been a hot agenda item at the talks. Savimbi stated in an interview that Crocker had delivered a message to Jorge about UNITA's willingness to enter into discussions with the MPLA.
The US has long advocated a government of national unity between the MPLA and UNITA. In February, the Portuguese proposed that UNITA sever its ties with South Africa to facilitate such a union. After those discussions, Savimbi secretly visited Capetown for talks with Prime Minister Botha and other members of the South African cabinet.

The administration is also being urged by international capitalist interests to normalize relations with Angola. David Rockefeller, after a February visit to Luanda, called for US recognition of Angola, declaring that Cuban troops there had no direct bearing on US business. Gulf Oil has also been active in trying to normalize US-Angolan relations. US oil corporations were largely responsible for persuading the US Export-Import Bank to extend $85 million in credit to finance off-shore drilling equipment in Angola last July. These corporations realize that the instability in the entire region reduces their profit level and threatens their operations, and they have conveyed these concerns to the administration. Haig stated in a recent interview, "I've been in close touch with David Rockefeller on the Angolan question."

The corporate interest in Angola continues to grow. On March 24th, the conservative Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies hosted a one-day seminar for business representatives from 60 corporations to talk with Angolan officials, including the Angolan Governor of the Central Bank, the Minister of Petroleum, and the First Secretary to the Angolan Mission to the UN. Crocker and his deputy, Lannon Walker, gave short presentations at the seminar and Fred Wetterling from the National Security Council was also in attendance. Later that evening, Crocker hosted a reception for the Angolans at the State Department.

The reception was a small but significant carrot tossed at the Angolans and suggests the US might be moving towards formalizing relations. The State Department is investigating the possibility of establishing a US interest section in a third country embassy in Luanda which can be done without extending formal recognition. Actual recognition of Angola and establishing an embassy, however, still seem to be far off.

**Destructive Engagement?**

For Angola, "constructive engagement" has not been nearly as diplomatically profitable as it has been for South Africa. So far, the Angolans have received none of the carrots which the South Africans have obtained from their bilateral talks with the US, and there is little evidence that the US intends to change its policy towards Angola in a "constructive" manner. At the same time, however, the US knows that the Angolans cannot continue these bilateral talks without movement towards a Namibian settlement. To do so would raise questions among Angola's allies about its intentions. Furthermore, the continuing South African raids put pressure on the Angolans to quickly produce some tangible results from the talks. It is within this context that the April 1st meeting between Crocker and SWAPO representatives in Luanda should be viewed. Although this meeting may represent movement towards a Namibian settlement, it clearly is an attempt to pressure SWAPO into accepting the new plan. The US has used the bilateral talks with Angola to have Luanda put pressure on SWAPO to agree.

The real problem, however, is that the Angolans are being strung along with promises of small carrots while South Africa continues its attacks, thereby reducing their negotiating leverage in the talks. "Constructive engagement" may turn out to be "destructive engagement" for Angola and for the whole of Southern Africa.

**Reagan Weakens Arms Embargo**

Despite widespread opposition, the Reagan Administration has lifted restrictions on certain exports to the South African military and police. This policy, announced February 26, reverses a four-year-old policy instituted by the Carter Administration. The decision moves the Reagan Administration toward a closer alliance with the Pretoria regime and weakens US compliance with the UN arms embargo against South Africa.

Among the items no longer prohibited for export to the South African military and police are food, non-military clothing, personal hygiene items, chemicals, word processors, "personal computers," calculators, electronic copy machines, and personal communications equipment.

The proclamation also formally lifts restrictions on exports of medicine and medical supplies and equipment to the South African government. Most likely, the Commerce Department will grant approval of a pending sale of six to ten Beach Aircraft Super King 200C twin engine turboprops—defined as "air ambulances"—to the South African Air Force.

The new regulations also state that computer exports to the South African Ministry of Cooperation and Development, the Department of the Interior, the Department of Community Development, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Manpower would be considered favorably on a case-by-case basis "unless the computer would be used to enforce the South African policy of apartheid." This restriction is meaningless, however, given the fact that the raison d'être of these South African governmental agencies is to enforce apartheid.

While arms and ammunition exports are still prohibited, the new regulations allow more leeway to export equipment that increases the efficiency of the apartheid machine.

The February decision was foreshadowed by previous administration approvals for exports of this type. On June 30, 1981, the Commerce Department approved the export of medical supplies and equipment to the South African police and airport metal detectors to the South African military.

The administration went one step further in October when the Commerce Department licensed the export of a Sperry Univac 1100 series computer for the Atlas Aircraft Corporation of South Africa. Atlas Aircraft is totally owned and controlled by ARMSCOR, the government-controlled South African armaments parastatal. Other computer sales permitted have been: an IBM 4341 computer and a Data General MV8000 to companies in the Barlow Rand group which have close ties with ARMSCOR; and another Data General MV8000 to the National Institute for Telecommunications Research, a branch of the state-run Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), responsible for developing defense communications and radar.

Even more serious was the March 26 decision to allow the export of a Control Data Cyber 170/750 computer to CSIR. Control Data's application for export has been held up for over a year because of fears in the Pentagon and other agencies that this sophisticated computer would greatly enhance South Africa's cryptography and nuclear weapons capability.

These computer sales highlight the important role US advanced technology plays in propping up the apartheid government. This fact was supported in testimony by Tom Conrad of the American Friends Service Committee, presented before the House Subcommittees on Africa and Economic Policy and Trade in a February 9 joint hearing on the subject. Conrad called for US government action to restrict the export
of technology such as computers, electronics, and communications equipment to the South African government. "Although exports in this category are generally considered 'non-lethal,'" Conrad testified, "many of them have direct military application. In all likelihood, the flow of high tech equipment to South Africa is much larger than the flow of weapons. In the long run, exports of this type are probably more significant and pernicious than trafficking in actual arms because they contribute to South Africa's entire infrastructure of repression." Other witnesses at the hearing supported this statement and testified about the dangers of lifting the regulations and the need to strengthen them if the US is to comply fully with the UN arms embargo.

**Opposition in Congress**

Critics of the administration policy on Capitol Hill also voiced their opposition to loosening the controls. Rep. Howard Wolpe (D-MI), chairman of the House Africa Subcommittee, called the decision, "a very tragic foreign policy mistake." He told the Washington Post, "It will be taken by the Afrikaners in the South African regime as a further sign that they can continue to reinforce the repression that has been escalating recently. It will also be taken throughout the African continent as further evidence of abandonment and betrayal of what this nation has historically stood for."

Rep. George Crockett, Jr. (D-MI), another member of the House Africa Subcommittee, declared: "If the administration has not in fact violated the letter of the UN embargo by promulgating these new trade restrictions, it certainly has seriously undermined the spirit of the arms embargo."

Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) called the decision "the equivalent in our foreign policy of the administration's blatant recent attempt to give tax exemptions for segregation in the US."

To reinforce their opposition, legislators have introduced non-binding resolutions to express the "sense of the Congress" that such exports should not be allowed. Senators Kennedy, Paul Tsongas (D-MA), Rudy Boschwitz (R-MN), and Larry Pressler (R-SD) introduced S.Con.Res. 77 on March 24 which calls for, in part, a denial of all export license applications "for items controlled for national security purposes and any helicopters or airplanes destined for South African military and police entities. The resolution defines "South African military and police" to include ARMSCOR subsidiaries and CSIR. A similar resolution in the House, H.Con.Res. 304, was introduced by Wolpe and Rep. William Gray (D-PA). The House resolution also calls for the halt of all computer sales to South African government agencies which regulate apartheid. Both resolutions were drafted to also include objections to recent Commerce Department regulations on sales to Syria, Iraq, and South Yemen in order to gain wider support in the Congress.

**A Very Shaky "Rock of Gibraltar"**

Despite these recent decisions, the Reagan Administration insists that its support for the arms embargo against South Africa is firm. As one State Department official put it, "The arms embargo is solid as the Rock of Gibraltar." But, according to a recently published 46-page staff report from the House Africa Subcommittee on violations of the arms embargo by the Space Research Corporation (SRC), US compliance with the arms embargo has gaping holes in it.

The detailed report, which the subcommittee staff researched for over two years, charges that the US government allowed the Space Research Corporation of Vermont and its financier, the First Pennsylvania Bank, to ship to South Africa from 1976 to 1978 approximately 60,000 155 mm. extended-range artillery shells, and at least four 155 mm. guns, "including three advanced prototypes, technology and technical assistance to establish its own 155 mm. gun and ammunition manufacturing and testing capability, and other military equipment." Almost all of the equipment sent to South Africa was acquired in the US, mainly from US Army plants and supply stocks.

The study also reports that the State Department's Office of Munitions Control gave SRC a letter which indicated that it might be legally possible for the corporation to ship unfinished artillery shell forgings out of the US without an arms export license. The Office of Munitions Control made no attempt to check SRC's claim that its technology was not of US origin and therefore did not need an export license. Officials of the First Pennsylvania Bank have said that, without that letter, they probably would not have financed the project.

The report also contends that John J. Frost, a "defense consultant" who was enlisted by the CIA to procure surplus US weapons in Thailand and Taiwan in 1975 to be sent to anti-MPLA forces in the Angolan civil war, "planned with South African Government officials shipments of US-origin arms to South Africa for use in Angola. He also informed the South Africans (representatives of ARMSCOR, the state defense production and procurement agency) that they could obtain superior 155 mm. artillery from SRC. Much of this planning and discussion took place after the US Government had decided not to ship arms for Angola via South Africa and not to respond to an official South Africa request for 155 mm. artillery from SRC. At the very least, this episode suggests serious negligence on the part of the Agency. At most, there is a possibility that elements of the CIA purposely evaded US policy."

SRC officials who pleaded guilty in March 1980 to charges of violating the arms embargo served minimal sentences and the corporation was fined $45,000.

Howard Wolpe, who introduced the report at a subcommittee hearing March 30, condemned the State Department's laxness in enforcing the arms embargo. He said the administration's decision to loosen the export controls "undermine the increasing need to indicate our dissatisfaction from apartheid by strict enforcement of the US and UN arms embargoes against South Africa."

The report recommends the establishment of a new State Department office to enforce the embargo; increased resources for staff and technical training for the Office of Munitions Control; and Congressional investigations on the CIA's role in attempts to evade the arms embargo.

(continued on page 8)
Denton Attacks ANC and SWAPO in Subcommittee Hearings

"Our purpose has been to determine, through the testimony of witnesses and the scrutiny of documents, the extent to which the USSR has successfully penetrated and come to control the African National Congress [ANC] and the South- west African Peoples Organization [SWAPO]. This has served to illustrate once again the Soviet Union's support for terrorism under the guise of aiding struggles for national liberation. The evidence that we have reviewed is deeply disturbing. It suggests strongly that the original purposes of the two organizations have been subverted, and that the Soviets and their allies have achieved alarmingly effective control over them."

With these remarks, Senator Jeremiah Denton (R-AL) ended five days of hearings before his Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism on "the role of the Soviet Union, Cuba, and East Germany in fomenting terrorism in Southern Africa." The hearings were part of Denton's general program of exposing what he considers is the Soviet policy of "training, supporting, and equipping terrorists around the world." Worried about American complacency concerning the "international Communist and terrorist threat," Denton proclaimed at the subcommittee's first hearing last April: "If we continue to ignore the threat or define it away by academic gymnastics, the sand in which we bury our heads will eventually bury our nation."

The liberation movements and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), however, saw the hearings as one more attempt to spread South African propaganda to the American people as the Reagan Administration moves to ally itself closer to the apartheid regime. "We have never made a secret that we get arms from the Eastern [European] countries," explained a representative of the SWAPO mission to the UN. "Instead of investigating the crimes of the South African government against the South African and Namibian people, they are investigating the Namibian people themselves. This is completely turned around. The question is not communism but colonialism."

The ANC National Executive in Lusaka charged that the Subcommittee "set out on a course intending to deny the legitimacy of the struggles of the peoples of South Africa and Namibia [and] deny that SWAPO and the ANC are the authentic representatives of their respective peoples...." It added that the Subcommittee's intent was to "justify increased and open intervention in Southern Africa by the US administration to help destroy the ANC and SWAPO, to help destabilize and subvert the anti-racist governments in the region, and, consequently, to strengthen the Pretoria apartheid regime and insure its hegemony over the peoples of South Africa, Namibia, and the region as a whole."

The African Group at the UN called the hearings a "hostile act designed to hoodwink American and international public opinion, as well as to prepare the stage for further military collaboration with racist South Africa against the oppressed people of Southern Africa."

The Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism was created in December, 1980, by the new Republican leadership in the Senate. It clearly is a throwback to the old witch-hunting Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, Senator Joe McCarthy's Permanent Investigations Subcommittee, and the House UnAmerican Activities Committee, all of which sought to expose "Communist subversion." The present subcommittee's limits of jurisdiction seem to be purposely hazy in order that Denton may have as broad a platform as he wants to denounce "terrorism."

Denton's plans for full-scope hearings on the ANC and SWAPO first became known in mid-January when it was reported in the South African Rand Daily Mail and Newsweek that his two key staff aids, Joel Lisker and Bert Milling, were in South Africa and Namibia investigating "Soviet links with the ANC and SWAPO." Lisker, a former FBI agent, had previously been to South Africa in the late 1970s in his investigation for the Justice Department of South Africa's influence-buying in the US. A January 15 South African radio broadcast added that Lisker was sympathetic to the South African regime's contention that it is being subject to a "total onslaught" from "the USSR and other enemies." Lisker explained when he returned to Washington that his delegation briefed US embassy officials in South Africa, received a briefing by South African intelligence, and, upon its return to Washington, was debriefed by Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker. Denton confirmed the South African Government's role in the hearings, saying, "the Subcommittee's investigators would not have been able to produce the body of evidence to be presented in these hearings without the cooperation of the South African Government."

In a telephone interview, Lisker explained that he and Milling were in Southern Africa for eight days in early January and while there, interviewed over twenty people who claimed to be former ANC and SWAPO members. A few of those interviewed came to Washington to testify before the Subcommittee. According to Lisker, the hearings were to have four points of focus: 1) to assess the degree of Soviet and East German involvement in the ANC and SWAPO; 2) to trace the ties between the Communist Party and ANC and SWAPO, and to assess the amount of "control" the Communist Party has in these organizations; 3) to assess the effect of ANC and SWAPO "propaganda" on the US media; and 4) to look into the connections between US domestic groups and ANC and SWAPO, particularly in the area of fundraising. During the five days of hearings, Denton and his witnesses dwelled on the first two points, barely mentioned the third (although Denton's belief that the US media is "soft on Communism" seems to be an obsession with him), and never mentioned the fourth.

Senator Jeremiah Denton (R-AL)
Crocker and Denton Have Few Differences

The hearings took place on March 22, 24, 25, 29, and 31 under extremely heavy security. The public had to enter the hearing room through a metal detector and there was an abundance of Capitol police, US Marshals (to protect the witnesses from supposed assassination), and FBI agents. Despite this security extravaganza and the subcommittee’s desire for recognition, Denton was the only Senator in attendance during the five days of hearings, except for a brief appearance by Senator John East (R-NC) on the first day, and the hearings received little press attention in the US media.

The first day of the hearings was the most significant in terms of US policy toward Southern Africa. Chester Crocker testified and the subsequent interrogation by Denton and East was probably the most extensive public questioning of an administration official ever on the ANC and SWAPO.

Crocker testified that there has been a "substantial increase in Soviet interest and involvement" in Southern Africa, and that the Reagan Administration’s policy is "one calculated to meet head on the intentions that the Soviet Union may have in Southern Africa." He also told of Communist support for ANC and SWAPO, but explained: "We proceed on the basis that the Soviet Union does not have a grand design for Southern Africa, but that it is, in fact, taking advantage of targets of opportunity that present themselves to act counter to Western interests." He added that "in seeking to encourage South Africans to resolve their problems through peaceful, evolutionary change, we strip the Soviet Union of any justification that it may put forth to justify its efforts to fan tensions within South Africa itself into a racial war..."

Although Crocker attempted to set a "moderate" tone for the hearing, the subsequent question and answer period was instructive in showing the thin line between his position and that of Denton and East, representatives of the far right-wing of the Republican party. For example, when Denton asserted that the Soviets "do have a grand strategy but they are not pursuing it by the capabilities they have to direct activities within the movements there," Crocker responded: "I think there’s no question that the Soviets have long term policy objectives. If one wants to call it a strategy, they have a strategy..." Crocker went on to state, however, that he did not think the Soviets have a "detailed blueprint" for controlling Africa. However, when Senator East later subjected Crocker to a long harangue, asking "Is it too much to say that the Soviets have a grand design?..." Crocker told East their differences were "just a matter of semantics..."

Also testifying that day was Peter Vanneman, a professor of political science at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. Vanneman, a former consultant to the Department of State Intelligence Division and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and touted as an expert on the Soviet Union, has been on a year’s sabbatical in South Africa. It was later revealed by the Rand Daily Mail that Vanneman’s airfare to the United States from South Africa was paid for by Richard Mellon Scaife, a right-wing millionaire, through the Heritage Foundation. It was primarily from Scaife’s money that the Heritage Foundation was established. Vanneman’s testimony supported Denton’s contention that "Soviet subversion in Southern Africa" is extensive.

The subsequent four days of hearings were spent listening to and questioning witnesses who claimed to be former members of the ANC and SWAPO. Nkomono Delphine Kave, Jeffrey Motutuzele Bosigo, Ephraim Mfalanipita, and Bartholomew Hlapane all testified to being former ANC members and explained the training and education they received in Eastern Europe and the connections they had with the South African Communist Party (SACP).

Also testifying before the Subcommittee were Dickson Namolo and Emanuel Hashiko, both of whom claimed to be former SWAPO members. Hashiko said he was captured by the South African Security Forces in February 1980, and Namolo said he was captured in March 1981. Given the general South African practice of incarcerating and torturing—if not killing—SWAPO prisoners, especially those captured in combat situations (as both witnesses testified they were), it is extremely suspicious that these men were flown to the US to testify at these hearings. Their testimony and that of the other witnesses flown from South Africa are suspect given the obvious South African involvement in granting them passports to travel to Washington. There was speculation that the South Africans paid for the witnesses’ airfare to Washington, although the Judiciary Committee claimed it paid for all but two of the airfares.

The final day of the hearings brought Jariretundu Kozonguzi, "Roving Ambassador" of the South African-supported Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) (which paid for his airfare to Washington) and an official in the Council of Ministers (the so-called government of Namibia set up by South Africa); Andreas Shipanga, president of SWAPO-Democrats, a group that split from SWAPO; and Andreiano Francisco Bomba, formerly of the Mozambican Armed Forces, who flew his way to fame last year when he landed a Mozambican Mig in South Africa, denouncing the Mozambican government.

Both Kozonguzi and Bomba went out of their way in describing the "Communist threat" to Africa posed by the Soviet Union and its "surrogates," SWAPO and the states of Angola and Mozambique.

Shipanga’s testimony differed from the others, however. He condemned the South African occupation of his country and refused to say that SWAPO was controlled by the Soviet Union. He also focused on the role of US multinationals in exploiting the Namibian people and supporting the South African occupation. Although testifying before the subcommittee could be politically costly to Shipanga’s hopes to run in future Namibian elections, he was astute enough not to align himself too closely with the South Africans.

It was revealed in the Boston Globe two days earlier that Lisker had tried to tell Shipanga what to say in his testimony. The Globe report stated that: "According to Shipanga, when he phoned Lisker to ask about his air ticket, ... Lisker said, ‘Have you got paper and pen? I want you to include the following points in your memorandum: First, you are on record as having said that Sam Nujoma is not capable of understanding Das Kapital. You must not say that but you must come and testify conclusively before the committee that Nujoma is a communist. Second, that SWAPO is controlled by the Soviet Union, East Germany and Cuba.’" When Shipanga...
Throughout his writing, former church groups and anti-apartheid activists. Herbert protested, saying “No one has ever put words in my mouth. I’ll come and say what I know about SWAPO,” Lisker withdrew the invitation to testify.

Lisker denied telling Shipanga what to say, but according to the Globe, “sent a cable to Shipanga telling him that there must have been a misunderstanding and that he would be welcome as a free witness.” Shipanga accepted.

The Globe story is supported by Denton’s and Lisker’s actions throughout the hearings. Denton continually put words in the witnesses mouths during the question and answer periods. More than a few times, Lisker, who always sat next to Denton during the hearings, would brazenly nod his head yes or no to signal the witness which way to answer a question.

The hearings have ramifications both domestically and for US policy towards Southern Africa. Domestically, the hearings helped solidify the ties between the Reagan Administration and the Republican right-wing, of which Denton is an im­portant member. The right-wing has been extremely critical of the Reagan Administration’s foreign policy despite the hawkish positions taken by the State Department. The right-wing newspaper, Human Events, which has supported Reagan for two decades, has even called for Secretary of State Haig’s resignation. Crocker has been in serious trouble from the very beginning when Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC) tried to block his confirmation. His situation grew more precarious when secret State Department memos written by Crocker were leaked to the press in May. Denton and Helms have always been critical of Crocker for “negotiating with Communists.”

Nickel Confirmed

On March 29, the US Senate confirmed Herman Nickel, former editor of Fortune magazine as the new Ambassador to South Africa. Nickel has consistently supported US investment in South Africa as contributing to an “evolutionary process of change.” He is best known for his 1980 Fortune article, “The Corporation Haters,” in which he launches a scathing attack on the Nestle infant formula boycott and its church supporters. Throughout his writing, Nickel has condemned church and anti-apartheid activists, while never explicitly condemning apartheid. Nickel’s appointment was strongly opposed by church groups and anti-apartheid activists. Herbert Will, former national labor director for the NAACP, summed up Nickel, stating: “He simply has no credentials that justify this except that he will celebrate racial superiority and overseas exploitation in the name of anticommunism.”

South African apartheid. Unfortunately, the Reagan Admin­istration has chosen to weaken this twenty-year policy in the vain hope of bringing South Africa to a Namibia settlement. The recent loosening of the export controls and the lax monitoring of the arms embargo, however, are policies that move the Reagan Administration closer to Pretoria and further away from bringing peace and stability to Southern Africa.