On April 1, the United Nations began to implement UN Resolution 435, a plan to bring self-determination and independence to Africa's last colonial territory, Namibia. Agreements to implement 435 and to withdraw Cuban and South African troops from Angola were signed in New York on December 22 by Angola, South Africa and Cuba. As South Africa withdrew its troops from Angola and Cuban soldiers started their journey home, hopes for peace and a genuine settlement of the Namibian question soared. But the UN's unleashing of South African forces to fight SWAPO have added fresh grounds for fear, skepticism and even cynicism about the plan.

Resolution 435 was developed initially in 1978 by the Western Contact Group (the United States, the United Kingdom, France, West Germany and Canada), as an alternative to a Security Council resolution adopted in 1976 that would have put the United Nations firmly in command of Namibia and the self-determination process. South Africa refused to accept the resolution. The Security Council then proposed sanctions to compel it to do so, which the United States, Britain and France vetoed. Resolution 435 was based on the concept that South Africa could be persuaded to withdraw voluntarily from Namibia. The United Nations' role was reduced to monitoring and supervising elections that South Africa would run. A UN Special Representative would be responsible for implementing the plan, assisted by a team of 7,500 military and 1,500 civilians.

Initially, South Africa was not opposed to 435, but obstacles and objections soon appeared. In spite of further Contact Group concessions, South Africa continued to build up its military presence in Namibia and to renew and escalate its war against Angola.

According to the Reagan Administration's chief diplomat on Africa, Assistant Secretary of State Chester Crocker, the solution lay in reassuring South Africa by making further concessions. Chief among these was to link South African withdrawal from Namibia to withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. Many states pointed out that such a linkage was wrong. Angola had a legitimate right to call on Cuban help in defending itself against South African aggression. South Africa had no right to remain in Namibia under international law since the World Court had ruled in 1971 that it had forfeited its trusteeship of the territory because of gross human rights violations. In spite of the continued South African military presence in their country, Angola was prepared to see the Cuban troops withdrawn over a period of time if its national security could be assured and if genuine independence for Namibia could be attained.

For eight years Dr. Crocker carried on relentless but unfruitful mediation. It was finally the increasing costs of war, a deteriorating economy, sanctions, and political isolation which made South Africa more flexible. The costs of the continuing war in Angola continued to mount for all of the parties involved. And so the peace accords were signed.

The Accords

Fourteen broad principles, adopted on July 20, 1988 in Geneva, are the foundation of the agreements. These include cooperation by South Africa in implementing 435; Cuban troop withdrawal; respect for the sovereignty, equality and independence of all states; non-interference in internal matters; and no threat or use of force against other states or allowing others to use their territory for war, aggression or violence against others.

Tense negotiations followed over a schedule for withdrawal of Cuba's 50,000 troops. At length, in December it was agreed that:
1. 3,000 men would be withdrawn by April 1, 1989.
2. By August, all Cuban troops would move north of the 15th parallel (close to Lubango and Cuito Cuanavale).
3. By November, half the Cuban force would be gone and the other half would be north of the 13th parallel (just south of Lobito).
4. By April, 1990, 66%, by October 76%, and by July 1991, all Cuban troops would be gone.

Meanwhile, in accordance with 435, South Africa is to reduce its troops in Namibia to 1,500 by July of this year and by November, when elections are to be held, all of them are to be gone.

What 435 Provides

The central provision of 435 calls for "free elections for the
whole of Namibia as one political entity" in order to "elect representatives to a Namibian Constituent Assembly which will draw up and adopt the constitution" for Namibia. A year after the UN arrives, Namibia is scheduled to become independent, i.e., by April 1, 1990.

The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Martti Ahtisaari of Finland, is to assure that the election will be free and fair. The South African Administrator General, Louis Pienaar, is to run the elections. But 435 gives Mr. Ahtisaari no mechanism for resolving differences with the South African administration and very few powers to make certain that the elections will be free and fair. His only real weapon is to call off the process. But political pressure to avoid such a course is enormous. The principal reassurance of free and fair elections was to be provided by a UN team of military and civilian monitors, called UNTAG (United Nations Transition Assistance Group).

Eight hundred election supervisors are to assist in seeing that every adult Namibian will be able to vote, campaign and stand for election without discrimination or fear of intimidation. They are to see that all parties and persons can participate freely in campaigning. Discriminatory or restrictive measures that might interfere with a free and fair election are to be repealed. Political prisoners and detainees are to be released. All Namibians in exile may return peacefully if they so desire.

In addition, 500 professional, "highly mobile," police are to monitor the conduct of the 6,000 or so South African-controlled police who are responsible for "law and order."

The most costly and controversial aspect of UNTAG is the military component. The 1978 plan called for 7,500 military personnel: 7 infantry battalions (5,000 men), 200 unarmed military observers and 2,300 support staff. They are to monitor the ceasefire, the withdrawal of South African forces and watch the long borders in order to prevent infiltration.

The December Surprise

No sooner had the peace accords been initialed than the five permanent members of the Security Council (United States, United Kingdom, France, Soviet Union and China) unveiled the December Surprise. They demanded that the size of UNTAG be cut to less than half in order to save money. They alleged that the three infantry battalions would be enough. The OAU, the Non-Aligned States and SWAPO lodged an immediate and shocked protest. The buildup of South African military strength since 1978 demanded more troops, not less, to fulfill UNTAG's immense responsibilities. The Council of Churches in Namibia declared that the Big Five's position was "beyond our understanding." Namibians had already paid a "terribly high price." The Soviet Union seems to have retreated from their support of African liberation movements in favor of collaboration with a U.S. plan that might wipe out the victories won by Cuban and African sacrifices. What the Third World thought and felt seemed not to matter any more.

In a final compromise, the cost of the peace-keeping was scaled down to $416 million, of which the U.S. share will be $129.5 million. UNTAG will have 4,650 troops, not 7,500. The balance of UNTAG troops will be held in reserve to be used if needed. In spite of the UN arms embargo, South African military equipment, vehicles and personnel will also be used in order to cut costs.

Will It Work? Cause for Concern

The registration process. Probably the most important single issue in the election program is registration of voters.

More than 80,000 Namibians are in exile in SWAPO refugee camps. Others are in the SWAPO army, PLAN. South Africa will control immigration and will determine how and where exiles may enter. Will South Africa use this opportunity to arrest SWAPO people on various pretext, intimidate them or force them into indoctrination centers? Will they be denied registration?

Churches report that already Angolans who are part of UNITA are entering northern Namibia and being given Namibian identity cards. South Africa will probably register them as Namibian voters. There are other possibilities; South African soldiers in civilian clothes, police and civil servants, and German passport holders might be transformed into Namibians in order to undercut the strength of SWAPO in the November elections.

Residents of Walvis Bay or Namibians born in Walvis Bay could be denied registration on the ground that South Africa claims Walvis is not part of Namibia. They were denied registration in the South African-orchestrated Namibian "elections" of 1978. The United Nations has called for the re-integration of Walvis Bay into Namibia but is it prepared to make it a necessary condition of the election process being free and fair? South Africa may try to use existing registration rolls which are not centralized or arranged alphabetically.

Unlike Zimbabwe, which had a population of 8 million at the time of its 1980 elections, Namibia is sparsely populated. It has only 1.3 million people in a country twice the size of California. Fraud that wouldn't count for much in an election where the numbers are big can make a huge difference where numbers are small and monitoring thin.

Intimidation is a real possibility. The most feared "security forces" in Namibia are the "Koevoet," a counter-insurgency force of 3,000, with a reputation for extreme aggression, murder, rape and torture. Ostensibly, they have been disbanded but, in reality, they have been reintegrated into the regular police, who are in charge of election "security."

35,000 troops of the South West Africa Territorial Force (SWATF) have been theoretically disarmed and disbanded but they continue to draw their pay and have access to their weapons. 3,000 new conscripts were enrolled in March, 1989, a sign that South Africa may expect to organize the army of a new Namibia.

South Africa is to withdraw from Namibia but to where? The correct procedure would be to withdraw below the Orange River into what is clearly South Africa. But if they withdraw into Walvis Bay, a major South African military base, what will the UN do? Such an action would be a major breach of the accords since the UN has stated that Walvis Bay is part of Namibia.

Another unresolved issue is what happens after a constitution is adopted. How does it get ratified? Will the elected assembly turn itself into a legislative assembly or will there be further elections? If ratification and more elections are held, will the UN
UN Ineptness and South African Brutality
Mark Beginning of Resolution 435

We still don't know exactly what happened in northern Namibia during the week of April 1, when South African troops attacked and killed over 200 SWAPO guerrillas. But, the dismal role of the United Nations is certain. The conflict clearly highlights the failings of UN Resolution 435 and demonstrates the insensitivity of the major world powers towards the Namibian people.

The United Nations Special Representative in Namibia, Martti Ahtisaari allowed the illegally occupying power, South Africa, to "police" the northern Namibian area in search of SWAPO combatants that reportedly came across the border from Angola into Namibia after April 1. SWAPO was reported to be in "violation" of the December 22 peace accord between Angola, South Africa and Cuba. Furthermore, they were being accused of "invading" their own country.

The key point of this dispute lies in unclear stipulations about SWAPO forces within two documents: UN Resolution 435 and the Tri-Partite Peace Accord. Resolution 435 has several "Agreements" between SWAPO, the UN, or South Africa attached after the initial passage of the measure in 1978. One of those agreements states that SWAPO forces inside Namibia are to be confined to base under UN supervision after the beginning of Resolution 435. South Africa, which has always tried to deny the presence of SWAPO combatants inside Namibia, refused to agree to this arrangement. Kurt Waldheim, then the UN Secretary-General, sent a series of communications to the South Africans insisting on the fact that SWAPO combatants are inside Namibia and any independence plans must make provision for that point. This issue was left unresolved with language within 435 which is open to the interpretation that SWAPO guerrillas inside Namibia were to be confined to "base" under UN supervision after April 1.

According to SWAPO, on April 1, 1989, combatants in Angola were confined to base 100 miles north of the Namibian border as per the Tri-Partite Agreement. However, according to SWAPO, on or near that same date, either several SWAPO members entered Namibia to join with combatants already inside who intended to surrender to the UN, or combatants inside Namibia who were following the "Agreement" attached to Resolution 435 requiring "confinement to base," emerged from the bush in search of UNTAG. In either event, South African forces attacked and slaughtered at least 200 SWAPO combatants, who assumed a "ceasefire" was in effect. SWAPO has clearly stated that the Tripartite Accord, which it did not sign, does not usurp Resolution 435.

Reports from the Lutheran Church state that in one incident, several SWAPO combatants were waiting in broad daylight in the middle of a town for the UN to come so they (the SWAPO combatants) could surrender. While waiting for the UN at what they obviously assumed was an assembly point, the South African forces came into the area and killed about 33 of them, as well as wounding several civilians. According to other reports, some SWAPO combatants drew arrows in the ground pointing to their location and saying "SWAPO" so that UN aircraft would be able to locate them. South African aircraft saw the obvious ground markers, located the combatants and killed all of them. Clearly, the initial reports in the major U.S. media which repeated Pretoria's claim that SWAPO was "attacking the South African police" or SWAPO was attempting to "seize territory in Namibia" were unfounded. No one "attacking" stands in broad daylight waiting for the UN or places markers in the ground to let anyone know their location.

The key point of this dispute lies in unclear stipulations about SWAPO forces within two documents: UN Resolution 435 and the Tri-Partite Peace Accord.

South Africa and the U.S. are continuing to maintain that SWAPO guerrillas had been infiltrating into Namibia after the April 1 deadline and have violated the Tri-Partite Peace Accord. Therefore, the resulting South African mobilization of their military forces is justified. Members of the Frontline States, anxious that the peace plan for Angola not fail, have supported SWAPO's history of activities inside Namibia and criticized UN ineptness. Nevertheless, the Frontline States have also counseled SWAPO to agree to return to Angola to re-start the independence process (continued on page 4)
UN Ineptness and South African Brutality
Mark Beginning of Resolution 435
(continued from page 3)

for Namibia. SWAPO, while insisting that combatants who were inside Namibia have the right to be in their own country, has agreed to call back its combatants.

It can be argued that South Africa never intended to have “free and fair” elections in Namibia which SWAPO is assured of winning. Their tactics include incorporating Koevoet into the regular Namibian “police,” and registering UNITA members as Namibians. The pro-South African party in Namibia, Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), gets major financing from South African interests, while SWAPO’s marches and political rallies are banned or broken up.

Even the US media are finally reporting the increase of threats, intimidation, random beatings of SWAPO supporters, the destruction of private property and unexplained murders of civilians by the South African forces. South African military and paramilitary forces, which the UN released to operate freely, are compiling a track record of brutality in Northern Namibia. South Africa Now! and other media have produced evidence that South Africa murdered SWAPO combatants who surrendered or were found wounded.

Where are the peace keeping troops while all of this is occurring? During the time of the initial conflicts (April 1–7), there were barely 1,000 of the 4,650 UNTAG troops in Namibia. Only 120 were even in the North. The OAU and other world voices are severely criticizing the UN for not having its troops in place prior to the April 1 starting date for Resolution 435. The Council of Churches in Namibia has reported that even after conflicts in which dozens of SWAPO members were killed, UN forces never arrived to even survey the battle areas or interview the witnesses.

Most UNTAG forces including Martti Ahtisaari, stay primarily in Windhoek, rather than getting out to the Namibian bush where South Africa’s human rights abuses are taking place.

By the end of April, South Africa had in effect suspended the implementation of Resolution 435. They are also refusing to restrict their forces to base, even though SWAPO, in a major concession, has ordered its Angola-based combatants to return. But, the issue of SWAPO combatants already inside, Namibia prior to April 1 remains a sticking point.

Pretoria is claiming that over “1,600” SWAPO combatants crossed the border. A “compromise” of mid-April which set assembly points for SWAPO inside Namibia where they would turn themselves over to the UN quickly fell apart. The UN again blundered. They set up their “assembly points” on sites of South African military bases. In addition, the South African army maintained a strong, armed military presence at each site and retained the right to “interrogate” any SWAPO combatant that surrendered. Hardly any SWAPO forces appeared. Instead SWAPO forces are returning to Angola independent of the UN. The apartheid forces concede that over 400 SWAPO combatants returned to Angola, but Pretoria still claims that several hundred SWAPO combatants are still inside Namibia.

A day of the brutality of the defense forces increases, local support for SWAPO deepens. Many speculate that in a truly free and fair election, SWAPO would win the needed 2/3 majority to draft its own constitution, declare independence immediately and begin dealing with South African economic domination.

However, if South Africa is able to block SWAPO from attaining a 2/3 majority, then the struggles in the constituent assembly to build a coalition with the South African-backed party will begin. Until a constitution is drafted and approved, South Africa will continue to administer Namibia.

Legislative Update on UNTAG Funding

The assessed fee for the US portion of the cost of the UNTAG is $129 million. Within the FY 1989 budget, there is a supplemental (extra-budgetary) request for $150 million for the world-wide United Nations Peace Keeping Account. Of those funds, only approximately $101.5 million are specifically earmarked for UNTAG. $25 million of that total has been reprogrammed from the State Department budget and sent to the UN in April. The remaining $76.5 million will be tied up in congressional debate. An additional $39 million, which would cover the balance of the assessed US contribution to the UN for UNTAG, is included in the Administration’s FY 1990 budget request for the UN Peace Keeping Account.

While the $25 million from the State Department budget has been sent for UNTAG, the additional UNTAG money in the FY 1990 budget and the remaining $125 million of the 1989 supplemental have emerged as points for debate in the Congress.

On April 12, Representative Gerald Solomon (R-NY) attached an amendment to the 1990 State Department Authorization Bill which connects disbursement of UNTAG funds to the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. At present, the State Department Authorization which passed on the House floor mandates that no FY 1990 money can be disbursed for UNTAG until the President certifies that the signers of the peace accord are adhering to that treaty. In addition, the Solomon amendment requires a statement from the UN Secretary-General echoing the President’s certification.

The State Department Authorization has been approved by the House. While the Solomon amendment does not affect the $25 million that has already been sent or the $125 million, the political “die has been cast.” At a minimum, the Republicans in the Senate will support language similar to Mr. Solomon’s House-passed preconditions and attempt to attach such an amendment to the supplemental. The supplemental bill is expected to arrive in the Senate at the end of May.

Senate conservatives, led by Jesse Helms (R-NC) and Senator Dennis DeConcini (D-AZ), may try to link disbursement of those UNTAG funds to the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. In a recent WOA survey of Senate staff members of the Appropriations Committee, we found few that were agreeable to amendments that would cancel or delay the UNTAG funds. Nevertheless, strong opposition from the right wing may force an unfavorable compromise.

Presently, there is no exact timeline for passage of all UNTAG funds. Secretary of State James Baker and outgoing Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Chester Crocker have stated that the Administration’s support for the fund the UNTAG Peace Keeping Account funding. In spite of this, the Congressional approval for additional UNTAG funding will probably not be finalized until late June or July, 1989 at the earliest.
Tough New Sanctions Needed in 101st Congress to Help End Repression in Southern Africa

Why Sanctions?

Apartheid remains the law of the land inside South Africa. The white minority regime in Pretoria is still committed to maintaining economic and military domination in the region. Through direct military attacks, support for rebel terrorism and economic destabilization against black-ruled neighboring states, the apartheid regime continues to sponsor death and destruction throughout southern Africa.

At the same time, Pretoria has continued to detain activists without trial and to accuse church, trade union and anti-apartheid community leaders of subversion and treason. In February, 1988, 18 leading anti-apartheid organizations were banned outright. All non-violent resistance against apartheid has now been criminalized. At the Delmas trial last year, 11 anti-apartheid activists were convicted of treason and terrorism for working for a non-violent solution to end apartheid oppression. Recently the South African parliament has proposed legislation which may severely hinder foreign funding for anti-apartheid organizations inside South Africa such as the South African Council of Churches (SACC) which receives significant funding from international sources.

Meanwhile, thousands of Blacks—including scores of youth— languish in South Africa’s prisons, some detained without charges or trial for as long as three years. A recent hunger strike by hundreds of these detainees across the country who are demanding to be charged or released, is testimony to the thriving spirit of resistance by Blacks against apartheid.

Because of Pretoria’s escalating attacks against the non-violent opposition, church and trade union leaders have stepped up their calls for tough new sanctions against South Africa by the international community. They argue strongly that comprehensive economic sanctions, applied globally, will have a significant impact on South Africa. Such measures will deny desperately needed technology, foreign exchange earnings, trade credits, and reinvestment of profits earned by U.S. corporations to the minority regime. This economic pressure can raise the costs of apartheid for whites and help force the government to negotiate an end to apartheid with the anti-apartheid leaders of South Africa. They argue further that the limited sanctions imposed by the U.S. and other Western countries to date have already had a limited but significant impact on Pretoria. Partial sanctions have helped further erode South Africa’s deteriorating economy and made more costly its war against Angola and continuing illegal occupation of Namibia. Moreover, they say that South Africa has worked hard to give the appearance of “reform” because of the current sanctions.

Under our current sanctions law, many goods and critically needed technology continue to flow to South Africa from the U.S. Total exports to South Africa from January to September, 1988 totalled more than $1.24 billion, including $97 million in aircraft and aircraft replacement parts, $64.4 million in office machines and equipment, $58.09 million in digital computer equipment, and $45.7 million in “mechanical shovels.”

Although the current sanctions law “bans” new investment in South Africa, it allows the reinvestment of profits by U.S. corporations presently operating there. The General Accounting Office (GAO) reported in September, 1988 that U.S. investment in South Africa since sanctions has actually increased by 4%.

Limited sanctions imposed by the U.S. and other Western countries to date have already had a limited but significant impact on Pretoria. Partial sanctions have helped further erode South Africa’s deteriorating economy.

Current Sanctions Legislation

H.R. 21/S. 507 mandates complete disinvestment and a near total trade ban against South Africa. Its chief sponsors are Congressman Ronald V. Dellums (D-CA) and Senator Paul Simon (D-IL).

The apartheid government has many apologists in Congress, particularly in the Senate. Winning Senate support for stronger sanctions will be difficult, but it is a task that must be tackled. A bi-partisan coalition in support of sanctions in the Senate and mobilizing grassroots pressure are crucial to obtaining passage of stronger measures against South Africa.

South Africa has been attempting to polish its international image through a media campaign which spotlights “positive” events such as the commutation of the death sentences of the Sharpeville Six, the movement of Nelson Mandela to a so-called (continued on page 6)
forces monitor and safeguard their freedom and fairness beyond the April 1, 1990 date set for "independence"? South Africa has announced that it will use a system of proportional representation. It used proportional representation to elect a puppet government in 1978. Proportional representation allot seats in accordance with the percentage of votes for each party. Minority parties usually get more representation in this way than under the winner-take-all constituency system used in this country.

Most observers feel that SWAPO would get more than two-thirds of the vote in any truly free and fair election. The fact that it could hold up trade through the port as a stick or dangle credits as a carrot. It could offer to incorporate Namibia into the customs union (SACU) which it runs for Swaziland, Botswana, and Lesotho and which it manipulates to extract concessions from them.

Will It Bring Peace?

Many fear that even if SWAPO wins by a decisive majority, South Africa could pursue a policy of destabilization by promoting a dissident force as it has done in Angola and Mozambique. Almost certainly, South Africa will use its economic leverage to compel recognition of its continuing domination. It will continue to hold onto Walvis Bay, which is Namibia's only major port. It could hold up trade through the port as a stick or dangle credits as a carrot. It could offer to incorporate Namibia into the customs union (SACU) which it runs for Swaziland, Botswana, and Lesotho and which it manipulates to extract concessions from them.

Why Did Such a Risky Set of Agreements Get Adopted?

For South Africa, the major reason was the increasing human and financial drain of its war in Namibia and Angola. It had lost air superiority in Angola, in part because of the UN arms embargo. It had failed to capture Cuito Cuanavale, a military defeat which forced it to rethink the wisdom of the war. It could foresee many more white lives being lost. With economy and political morale weakened by sanctions imposed by the United States and others, it was important to create an image of moderation and reform in order to defuse the demand for more sanctions and to regain credit-worthiness in international banking circles.

For Angola, agreement to the accords opened the possibility of U.S. diplomatic recognition and admission to the World Bank, IMF and other western sources of credits and development aid. Most important, it ended the sickening loss of young lives and its inability to control its territory or unify the people for economic development. Already, the Angolan government has welcomed back leaders of one rival party, FNLA, which fought against it in 1974-76 and given them government posts. It is by no means impossible that reconciliation with UNITA could take place if outside powers cease promoting Savimbi's forces although Jonas Savimbi himself is unacceptable. Luanda has offered amnesty to UNITA forces repeatedly but finds it difficult to consider negotiations with a Savimbi-led UNITA.

What Can We Do to Promote a Free and Independent Namibia?

1. Maintain pressure on the Congress to appropriate funds for UNTAG without pre-conditions.
2. Insist on wide access to Namibia and protection for international press and observers. Insist that they get visas for as long as needed to observe the elections. International observers must have access to all complaints of intimidation, interference and violations of human rights.
3. Send observers from your organization to Namibia to observe the election process.
4. Send material aid and money through the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the Lutheran World Federation and SWAPO to assist in the repatriation of refugees in Namibia.
5. Express your outrage at the recent behavior of the UN in implementing Resolution 435 to our government and the UN Secretary General. The UN should not unload its responsibilities on South Africa.
6. Organize local, regional and national meetings on Namibia to inform people about the importance of the Namibian independence process.

Sanctions Legislation, continued from page 5

prison "luxury house" and government "outrage" whenever "petty" apartheid laws are re-initiated by Conservative Party-controlled Town Councils. The apartheid government has been able to manipulate the media to over-report unfortunate events surrounding Winnie Mandela (see page 7). But the media, aware of government censorship, has stopped reporting on everyday tragedies of apartheid such as conditions in the bantustans. All of these factors have lent credence in the Congress to the false claim that South Africa is "reforming."

Background Review: Sanctions in the 100th Congress

After House passage of the Dellums sanctions bill (H.R. 1580) on August 11, 1988 by a vote of 244-132, a bill introduced by Senator Alan Cranston (D. CA) and passed the Foreign Relations Committee by a party-line vote of 10-9. This was the first time disinvestment legislation had ever passed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Because most Senators seemed undecided on the measure and because of his own opposition to sanctions, Majority Leader Senator Robert Byrd (D-WV), refused to schedule a vote.

Less than 40 Senators were actually committed to support the measure.

The sanctions strategy for the 101st Congress is, therefore, focused on winning strong support for the legislation in the Senate. While passage of H.R. 21 will not be easy, at least House support for the measure is stronger and more organized than in the Senate. Only seven other Senators have openly supported Senator Simon's bill at the end of April, while 125 House members had co-sponsored H.R. 21.

Senate Sanctions Survey

In our informal poll of Senate aides in February, only 24 Senators committed themselves to supporting the Simon/Dellums bill. Of those 24, Senators Johnston and Bentsen again stated their support of the bill only if the provision restricting U.S. oil companies that do business with South Africa from bidding on federal oil, coal and gas leases was stricken.

In conversations with other Senate offices, the disinvestment provision was the most often-stated reason for opposition to the measure. Twenty-three Senators, including hard-line opponents like Senator Helms (R-NC) and Thurmond (R-SC), and past supporters of lesser sanctions like Senators Lugar (R-IN) and Kassebaum (R-KS) are presently unmoved in their opposition to
the Africa Hotline for up-to-date information on sanctions legislation and other measures affecting southern Africa. The anti-apartheid action hotline provides a 3-minute, taped message, changed weekly, providing information and suggestions for action. On 24 hours a day, call (202) 546-0408.

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U.S. News Media Continues to Comply with Apartheid Censorship

Special to Washington Notes on Africa by Chris Root

The U.S. media gave seriously unbalanced coverage to two recent stories on South Africa—the Winnie Mandela crisis and the detainees' hunger strike. In mid-February, at the crucial moment for both stories, news of the downfall of one anti-apartheid leader largely overshadowed news of the hunger strike by at least 300 detained political activists. The New York Times and the Washington Post both gave well over three times more space to the Mandela story.

The information regarding the death of a black youth in Soweto connected to Mrs. Mandela’s bodyguards deserved some attention. The forceful public statement by the United Democratic Front and COSATU union leaders expressing outrage and remorse over any connection between Mrs. Mandela and the entire unfortunate situation, indicated the seriousness of this event. However, the way in which the U.S. media reported this story was manipulated by the apartheid regime of South Africa. For example, the government-run South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) gave foreign networks police film footage of the police raid on Winnie Mandela’s house. The apartheid government provided unusual access to reporters to cover the story. This unprecedented coverage of the untimely death of a black youth by both the apartheid government and the foreign media stands in stark contrast to the slight attention given to the more than 1,000 township residents who had been killed by the South African police and army this year, according to a recent University of Natal study.

The U.S. media virtually ignored reports—supported by the African National Congress (ANC), the anti-apartheid leaders inside the country, and Soweto civic organizations—that the United Mandela Football Club which was acting as bodyguards for Mrs. Mandela, had been infiltrated by the police. The media failed to report on the extensive consultation and agreement reached between internal and external anti-apartheid forces, that Mrs. Mandela should be allowed to rejoin the Movement if she submits herself to its structures and disciplines.

By contrast, U.S. media reporting on the hunger strike—the largest prison protest in South African history—has been wholly inadequate. Three weeks after the strike began, there was a brief burst of stories when religious leaders and lawyers extracted a promise from Minister of Law and Order Adriaan Vilok to release a “substantial number” of the more than 800 detainees held under the 1,000-day old State of Emergency. The media then gave the impression that the hunger strike had ended.

In fact, the original hunger strikers only suspended their fast to await the government’s action. Meanwhile, other detainees joined the fast, which eventually included nearly one-third of the country’s political detainees. After the meeting with Vilok, only 202 detainees had been released, according to the Human Rights Commission. Furthermore, the government imposed severe restrictions on most of those it released, including sending some to areas far from their homes. In addition, other activists were newly detained, leading the Southern Africa Catholic Bishop’s Conference to conclude that new detainees “seemingly take the place of those who have been released.”

This unbalanced press coverage by the U.S. media is a stark example of a major complaint lodged by the anti-apartheid movement since the beginning of South Africa’s latest State-of-Emergency press restrictions. The U.S. media has largely made the decision to comply with apartheid censorship out of a claimed fear of being expelled from the country. In Afghanistan, in the midst of raging battles, major U.S. network cameramen with nightscopes and other sophisticated equipment filmed the images of conflict. When the government of Nicaragua closed opposition newspapers and restricted journalists, the daily outcry in the U.S. media was strong and consistent. Stories from Cuba, Iran, Libya, the Occupied Territories of the Middle East and other world hotspots all have substantial film footage and print media coverage. Yet, somehow in the case of South Africa and Namibia, the mighty U.S. media claims that it is paralyzed. The major networks and reporters followed the apartheid government’s orchestrated coverage of the Mandela situation with rarely a hint that the blanket of apartheid censorship was selectively lifted in this case. Little mention was made of the thousands of deaths and beatings of black youths in the townships and bantustans of South Africa at the hands of the apartheid regime.

Anti-apartheid activists across the U.S. must hold our local and national media accountable for this gap in coverage. We must demand complete stories, challenge one-sided editorials and author other op-eds that give full details of the suffering of apartheid. As the story of the hunger strike begins to fade away from press coverage and the U.S. media accepts censorship of coverage inside South Africa and Namibia, concerned news consumers must demand responsible coverage of apartheid.
Dear Friends of the Washington Office on Africa:

This is the day on which Damu Smith takes his leave of the office. He has resigned as director and will soon move to St. Louis where he can be close to his mother, who has been seriously ill. He promises that he will remain active in the anti-apartheid movement and will continue to support the work of WOA. We are sad to see him leave the Washington scene but we know he will be back soon and we can count on him to carry on the struggle.

Damu has been an inspirational and charismatic leader. Holding fast to principle, he has strengthened the anti-apartheid movement with his talent for warmth and vigorous commitment to the struggle for freedom and justice in Southern Africa. Under his direction, WOA has taken off into new and uncharted paths to reach new people and revitalize old interests and commitments. Under his guidance, WOA has become known as an activist base for the cause of Namibian independence. Damu has consistently led the fight for comprehensive mandatory sanctions against South Africa. We are grateful to him for his tireless service and dedication to the cause of liberation in southern Africa.

Unfortunately, during these years of growth, WOA's financial base has not grown to match our needs. We have been going through a financial crisis for the last six months or so. We have had to reduce staff to three people. As Acting Director, my first priority is to see to it that we have the funds and the administrative capability that a new director will need.

How can you help? Please write a check now to demonstrate your appreciation for Damu's work and for the work of the office. This newsletter is a venture in faith. We hope that the $2,000 it costs will come back to us doubled, tripled or quadrupled. Can we count on you? Please fill out the blank at the bottom of this page and send it to us today. Without your help, we will have to cut back even more. And that means that you will not get the service you need and deserve to have.

Sincerely yours,

Ted Lockwood
Acting Director

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YES, I want to help the Washington Office on Africa. Here is my gift to strengthen its work and help it to grow. Thank you, Damu. A luta continua!

I enclose:

□ $500 □ $250 □ $100 □ $50 □ $25 □ $35

Donations to the Washington Office on Africa Educational Fund (WOAEF) are tax deductible. The Washington Office on Africa (WOA) is a non-partisan political organization, but gifts are not deductible.

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Produced by: Ted Lockwood, Damu Smith, Jacki Wilson Asheeke, Chris Root, and Eva Bolden.