

TRANSFRICA

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The Black American Lobby for Africa and The Caribbean

WAR IN WESTERN SAHARA

Pressed to the wall in her military struggle against POLISARIO guerillas in Western Sahara, the conservative government of Morocco is petitioning the Carter Administration to lift restrictions on military sales.

Sandwiched from the north and south by Morocco and Mauritania along the northwest coastal corner of Africa, the Western Sahara was annexed by the neighboring two states following colonial Spain's departure from the 154,400 square miles of desert territory in 1975. Since annexation, the POLISARIO Front, representing the 80,000 inhabitants of Western Sahara, has waged with increasing success a war for self-determination against the invading forces.

Now with conservative support in Congress,

King Hassan II of Morocco is mounting a last ditch campaign for increased U.S. military support to sustain his failing army. Despite existing restrictions, in February of this year the State Department quietly approved the sale of a half dozen Chinook CH-47 helicopters to Morocco. This brought Morocco purchases of American arms over the last four years to almost half a billion dollars.

Recalling in a letter last November to President Carter a 1960 agreement with Morocco which limits the use of American weapons to the defense of the Kingdom of Morocco itself not including the Western Sahara, Cardiss Collins, Chairperson of the Congressional Black Caucus, said that the President should withhold arms

and encourage King Hassan to negotiate an end to the war "through the exercise of genuine self-determination on the part of the Sharaoui people."

Mrs. Collins' view enjoys support from all interested parties save Morocco. The United Nations has resolved that the Saharan people have a right to self-determination. Spain has endorsed the U.N. resolutions. So now does vacating Mauritania. In July, the Organization of African Unity passed a resolution supporting a self-determination referendum for the former Spanish colony. Spain walked out of the OAU meeting in protest. In defiance of Africa and the world, King Hassan II has turned in the last resort to the U.S.



POLASARIO Army in the Western Sahara.

Message to the President on the Resignation of Ambassador Andrew Young and on United States Relations with the Middle East and Africa.

Dear Mr. President:

TransAfrica Inc. reflects the widespread attitudes of its general membership throughout the Afro-American community in expressing its anger and dismay at the actions of your Administration and of Israeli spokesmen and supporters that have led to the resignation of Ambassador Andrew Young. Black Americans and Jewish Americans are peoples whose history have made them ready champions of the oppressed; all the more reason for us to resent and deplore the insensitivity of those who pressed for his dismissal. They were apparently unmindful of not only the harm they might do to black Americans, or to the progress of the socially conscious and beneficial cooperation that has existed between our two communities, but also to the prospects for a general, peaceful resolution of conflict in the Middle East, to progress toward peace and racial justice throughout southern Africa, and to improved relationships between the United States and the excolonized nations of the world.

We can only hope that those supporters of Israel who mounted such effective, if misguided, pressure, and those in the government who gave in to it, did so blind to these consequences. We hope, as well, that this Administration will not compound the error and the injury it has committed, by allowing Ambassador Young's departure to lessen our country's push to achieve respect for human rights in the Middle East or in Africa, that it will not slacken the pace of our efforts to put an end to minority rule and racial privilege in Rhodesia, Namibia and South Africa.

We also hope that the country will now seize upon this first opportunity we have had in our national discourse openly and fully to consider on their own merits the issues of the rights of the Palestinian people, and the role of whatever organizational or individual spokesmen they may freely choose to put forward to represent their interests. We believe that in the past we have not been able to have such a discourse because, for whatever reason, Israel and its most ardent supporters have been able virtually to dictate the terms of reference of such a debate, and have allowed Israel unilaterally to compound its political and territorial ambitions with its legitimate security needs, and to define the issues to suit themselves. It will no longer do to call the PLO "terrorists" or define the Palestinian issue as one of refugees. Every sovereign state, has a right to define its own policies, but that does not mean that Americans have to follow them slavishly, still less to finance their implementation.

TransAfrica Inc. is an organization with membership throughout the black community, from all walks of life—elected black officials, government servants, clergy, cultural figures, academics, leaders of labor, fraternal and sorority organizations, and the general citizenry. We seek American foreign relations that are more mutually beneficial to this country and to the substantial populations of African descent in the countries of Africa and the Caribbean. We are styled "the black lobby for Africa," and sometimes compared with "the Israeli lobby" by people who wonder if we can "do for Africa what the Jews have done for Israel." We do not seek to do what they have done. We do not seek to hold American policy or action to ransom in the interest of this or that policy or ambition of any foreign country. We can help lead our country to overcome past inequities and images, and help it to live in harmony and peace, and mutual respect, with the new nations and with those still struggling to be born. We work to have the United States have access to their needed resources and to their attractive markets, but more importantly, to be respected in this for fair dealing, and for the values, deeply rooted in our national ethic, that foster respect for the human dignity, fundamental freedoms, and a decent level of economic well-being for all peoples.

We have not always agreed with Ambassador Young and the Administration's policies in Africa; we do not share their faith that American businesses can play a sufficiently positive role in South Africa, for example. We do recognize, however, as seemingly a number of others do not, that no single person in government in recent years has had Andrew Young's understanding and effectiveness in improving the relations between the United States and the emergent and impoverished nations of the world. That is a national asset that should not have been taken lightly.

Our concerns stem not only from the events of the moment but also from a growing chain of abuses to our sense of fairness and of the practicalities of achieving progress in the Middle East and southern Africa. In that light we make the following assessments and observations:

I. The Circumstances of Ambassador Young's Resignation itself:

— As publicly reported, Ambassador Young's actions do not seem to constitute such a serious breach of publicly known policies and commitments as to warrant his removal. Clearly, his was not the first, and we hope it will not be the last, official American "contact" with a representative

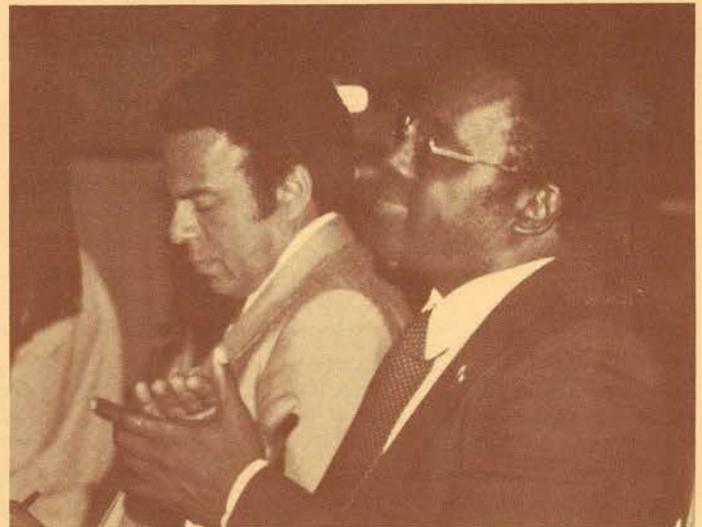
of the PLO. His conversation with and/or in the presence of Mr. Terzi of the PLO appear to fall far short of "negotiating" with that organization. If Young's actions were part of a pattern of official acts, there was no justification in personalizing the affair. If, on the other hand, his was a singular act, there was no reason, given its character, to attribute to it consequences grave enough to justify what has happened.

- We note that the Jewish community did not arouse a furor for the ouster of Ambassador Wolf, himself Jewish, who appears to have had discussions with PLO representatives that were even more substantive in nature than those Young was accused of conducting. Wolf's discussions are reported to have involved a discussion of PLO policy as part of a U.S. objective to move them to accept the existence of Israel and the provisions of U.N. resolutions, so that they could satisfy the conditions that the U.S. has promised Israel it would require be met before recognizing or negotiating with the PLO regarding a Middle Eastern settlement. It would appear that Israel and its supporters do not want to see the PLO satisfy these conditions.
- The blame for Young's removal must fall principally on you Mr. President, who had other options, for example: (a) to indicate that Ambassador Young had acted within the confines of Administration policy and procedure, or (b) to emphasize the reasonable interpretation of his actions as representing something other than a policy or trend of official recognition of or dealing with the PLO, or (c) to accept his act as a personal, perhaps unfortunate, one that was done in the belief that it was within policy and procedural requirements, and was very much in the interest of the United States (and of Israel, for that matter).
- We are particularly grieved by the reported efforts of "high Administration officials" to promote the idea that Ambassador Young had become "a political and diplomatic liability" or that he had lied, or had claimed to see a meeting report he had not seen, or was bound, due to his "freewheeling style" to transgress the confines of his job. The Administration itself will

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RECENT EVENTS

- On May 29, over 1,000 guests celebrated TransAfrica's first anniversary of full time operation at Washington's Shoreham Americana Hotel at \$60 a plate. The guest speaker was Ambassador Andrew Young. The benefit dinner, sponsored by over 100 prominent figures including 31 African and Caribbean ambassadors, raised \$30,000.
- On July 15, Mayor Tom Bradley and Councilman Robert Farrell sponsored a TransAfrica fundraising reception in Los Angeles for over 300 people. TransAfrica Vice Chairman, Harry Belafonte was the special guest and principal speaker.
- From July 16-20, Randall Robinson, Executive Director, attended the Organization of African Unity summit meeting in Monrovia, Liberia as the guest of the Liberian government. Other black Americans attending were D.C. Mayor Marion Barry, John Sengstacke, Reverend Wyatt T. Walker, and TransAfrica board member, Courtland Cox.
- On July 26, TransAfrica policy subcommittee chairman, Dr. Willard Johnson testified before the House InterAmerican Affairs subcommittee on U.S. policy in the Caribbean. (Dr. Johnson's testimony is available on request.)
- TransAfrica Forum, the tax exempt educational arm of TransAfrica has been granted by the Internal Revenue Service tax exempt status. The forum will sponsor a series of public seminars and provide informational materials on United States policy vis-a-vis Africa and the Caribbean.
- On August 21, Board Vice-Chairman Harry Belafonte and company performed a benefit concert at Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. before an audience of 3,300 people. Mr. Belafonte's superb three hour performance was met with a fifteen minute standing ovation. Receptions for Mr. Belafonte were hosted by Mayor Marion Barry and Ambassador Omer Salih Eissa of the Sudan.



Ambassador Andrew Young and Chairman Richard Hatcher at May 29 dinner.



ZANU President Robert Mugabe, center, and aide talking with Randall Robinson, right, at OAU summit meeting. [Photo, Wyatt T. Walker]

ACTION ALERTS

Write, call and arrange a meeting with your Congressman and Senator and tell them that:

The United States must continue to impose sanctions against Rhodesia because the goal of genuine majority rule has not been achieved.

The United States should not sell arms to Morocco.

NOTE: Please respond immediately. A vigorous response from Black America can and will mean the difference between victory and defeat. Let us know your representative's response so that we can follow up in Washington.

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have to take the weight of such accusations and for making Andrew Young the political fall guy.

II. U.S. Relations with the PLO

- We believe that Palestinians are a people who should enjoy the fundamental human rights that other people enjoy, including the right to self-determination in a state of their own.
- We are impressed with the fact that the PLO has won the recognition and support of the active defenders of Palestinian rights, of almost all other Arab states, of most of the African states, and most of the delegations to the United Nations. Unless and until the Palestinian people are given an opportunity freely to choose some alternative leadership, through elections or a plebiscite that is not managed by Israel or any other particular and culpable party, efforts should be made to have the PLO's views bear weight on peace making activities for the area. Otherwise, war and conflict will continue, not because a handful of people can always disrupt peaceful populations, but because a whole people, who have been displaced from their homeland will resist the continued denial of their rights.
- We believe that it is callous and hypocritical to claim that the Palestinians already have a state, because Jordan exists, or nineteen other states, because of the other Arab states, as if there are no states in the world, other than Israel of which Jews can feel fully a part.
- We deplore the fact that the PLO has engaged in acts of terrorism, but we do not believe that makes the organization and its membership inherently terroristic, anymore than the former acts of Israel's leader while in the Irgun, or the fact that the State of Israel has also resorted to terrorism in the name of state and national security makes the Israelis inherently a terroristic people.

III. Israel's Actions in the Middle East

- Although the circumstances by which it came into being are unfortunate, we accept and support Israel's right to exist, on the same basis that we accept the Palestinian right of return and the restoration of the state promised in UN Resolutions 181 and 194.
- For more than a decade Israeli action has eroded the basis for our respect, and acceptance. We have shared the

concern of Arab and African peoples, along with many others, over its retention of occupied territory especially after 1967 and the annexation of Jerusalem. We share the dismay the Africans felt at the intransigence they found in Israel with regard to the return of these occupied territories, when the so-called African Committee of Four Wise Men met with such failure in their efforts at conciliation in 1971/72.

- We share what we think is a general American opposition to the continued official Israeli tolerance and sponsorship of settlements in the occupied territory of the West Bank. We are not impressed with the labels the Israeli government unilaterally chooses to put on this territory or the settlements. If we are to accept that God gave the land to the Jews, we must also accept that he gave it to the Arabs as well, because both are descendent peoples of Abraham.
- We oppose the use of American supplied or financed equipment for offensive purposes, which the recent raids into Lebanon appear to us to be. We resent the little concern that Israel has given to American public opinion on these matters, when we, and all the other American taxpayers, bear so much of the cost, not only in direct tax outlays, but also in needed social services and economic conditions that are foregone. We note also that U.S. economic assistance to all of Africa and Afro-Caribbean countries has amounted to only a fraction of the assistance that typically has been given to Israel over the years.

IV. Israel's Foreign Relations

- We have been all too alone in our protests of growing intimacy between Israel and the state of South Africa. Israel tends to counter such criticism by pointing out that her trade with South Africa is a very small portion of her total trade. What disturbs us is that so much of this trade and assistance has military implications, to wit:
 1. Israel agreed to refit South African armored vehicles, from Centurion tanks to Panhard armored cars, with its newly developed armorplating.
 2. Israel delivered to South Africa at least three Reshef class missile boats, and has promised at least three more, has delivered Gabriel sea-to-sea missiles for six South African built corvettes, and has supplied South Africa

with rifles, mortars, various types of electronic equipment, and licenses to make the Uzi submachine gun and the 65ft Dabur class patrol boat.

3. Israel helped to revamp the South African air force.

4. Israel was the pass-through area, if not the point of purchase by Rhodesia of eleven Bell helicopters that have been put to military use against the freedom fighters.

5. Israeli technicians helped to erect an electrified 'wall' and to lay a 'carpet' of electronic sensors along South Africa's borders so that it could more effectively counter penetration by freedom fighters.

V. American Orientations Toward Recent Events and Trends in Africa and the Middle East

- Africans have now come to share the opinion that so often has been advanced by Arab spokesmen, that Israel and South Africa represent examples of a similar phenomenon, "settler colonialism" or arrogant, aggressive racialism. Americans should have enough influence with Israel to change and negate the growing reality of this charge.
- We have been particularly distressed to see a number of prominent supporters of Israel jump into the Rhodesian situation by promoting the idea of visits to the U.S. by Ian Smith and his collaborators, and in sending an "observer team" to help legitimate a sham Rhodesian line-up that they were willing to call a free and fair election. We are curious that individuals and institutions that purport to promote freedom could accept constitutional arrangements that are as racially oriented and based as those in Rhodesia today. We hope this is not some prelude to efforts to legitimate some similar type of arrangement for the West Bank.

In all, the "Andy Young Affair" has been a sad one indeed. We wonder if anyone has gained from it. If there is to be anything positive that comes from this episode, it will be because the Afro-American and the Jewish communities, and all the others who may care a lot about the achievement of freedom and justice in Africa and the Middle East, to say nothing of the elimination of the very serious threats to world peace that exist there, move to deal with the basic issues we have mentioned above, and the country moves to open up the discussion and reassess our stance so as to make it possible to satisfy the legitimate rights of all the peoples of the area.