

TRANSAFRICA FORUM

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THE U.S. AND SOUTH AFRICA: THE NEW RIGHT CONNECTION

The election of Ronald Reagan must have done more to buoy the hopes of white South Africans than any event in the last twenty years. South Africa now feels that it has a "friend" in the White House. The bond cementing this relationship is the host of connections between South Africa, New Right activists, conservative think tanks, registered foreign agents, and the administration.

With the revelation of the Muldergate scandal in 1979, it became clear that the South African regime viewed the influencing of what Eschel Rhoodie described as U.S. "opinion formers and decision takers" as an important part of its struggle to remain in power. Rhoodie, mastermind of the major propaganda war begun in 1974, spearheaded the elaborate effort aimed at buying influence, supporting friends, and punishing enemies in the U.S.

One such "enemy" was Iowa Senator Dick Clark, Chairman of the Senate's Africa Subcommittee, outspoken critic of South Africa's apartheid policy, and supporter of economic sanctions against the country. Clark was narrowly defeated in 1978 in a close election which he had been expected to win. Rhoodie claimed credit for Clark's defeat—as well as John Tunney's defeat—later when the Muldergate scandal broke. Rhoodie admitted to funneling South African money into Robert Jepsen's successful electoral campaign against Clark—a clear violation of U.S. law. Senator Jepsen, however, has denied these allegations.

Since Reagan's electoral victory, South Africa's crimes at home have been explained away; and its crimes against the American democratic process have been ignored. Investigations into South African contributions to and interference in U.S. electoral campaigns appear to be going nowhere. The Justice Department probe into these allegations was conducted by Joel Lisker, who now serves as Staff Director of Senator Denton's avowedly right wing Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism. The U.S. Attorney investigating Senator Jepsen's campaign has been replaced. All of the numerous allegations made by Eschel Rhoodie, now quieted, have yet to result in action against South Africa or its agents. Instead, President Reagan has surrounded himself with foreign policymakers who are clearly friends of South Africa's white minority government. What this may mean, both here and in South Africa, is unclear. In the interview below, Randall Robinson, TransAfrica Forum's Executive Director, discusses the issues raised by this growing New Right-South Africa connection with former Senator Dick Clark. □

What role specifically did South Africa or South African funded groups play in your electoral defeat? Are there other examples of such involvement?

CLARK: Technically and legally, it's impossible to know. It is a violation of federal law for a foreign country to put money into a campaign. Therefore, the only way South Africa can put money into a campaign is to do it illegally. I cannot say that they gave money to any particular organization or that they gave money to my opponent because I don't have that kind of evidence.

The circumstantial evidence, however, is rather overwhelming. Eschel M. Rhoodie, the Secretary of Infor-

mation, the department that distributed funds in the United States and in other countries, has specifically said that they put money into the campaign and took credit for my defeat. I don't know that I'd give them that much credit. A South Africa newspaper editor, who has looked into the situation carefully, checked many of Rhoodie's confessions as to where he put money and when and has found all of them to be accurate. The long and the short of it is that South Africa

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undoubtedly did put money into the campaign. The question is where and how much?

The last poll that I had taken showed me running ahead 57 to 27 points four weeks before the election. There were other polls being taken that showed no slippage right until the end. The Right to Life Movement undoubtedly was the most significant factor in the turn around on the last Sunday. It's hard to know exactly



Staff Photo
Dick Clark, Former Chairman, Senate Africa Subcommittee

how much it accounted for. I lost the election by a little over one point, and Right to Life was more responsible than anything else. It's impossible to know whether South Africa put any money into that organization or not although I'm confident that they put a good deal of money into the campaign.

If South African money was put into the campaign, what are the implications for the American political process?

CLARK: It shouldn't be underestimated or overestimated. Obviously, you have a case of a foreign power becoming involved in making the determination for a local constituency or state in another country as to who is going to represent them. If that is successful, it means that people who take positions that are contrary to another government's position are subject to being defeated based on what position they take on a foreign power. This clearly is inappropriate and illegal.

On the other hand, one should not look at it as being all that unique. The U.S. does the same thing in a number of other countries: the CIA gets involved in foreign elections and puts money into campaigns. They take credit for having saved Western Europe after the war in this manner. It is dangerous, nonetheless, because a country can afford to put up a great deal of money. What's a million dollars if you can change an election or change an attitude? It's the cheapest and the best kind of investment for a country. Therefore, we need to guard against it very carefully.

Can you describe the funneling of money from South Africa to American right wing organizations?

CLARK: I really can't. It's very unfortunate that Eschel Rhoodie was not asked to go into that when he made the revelations in France. It's not hard to do because a lot of the right wing organizations are very friendly with South Africa. There's a working relationship between them.

It's never hard to move money in politics. It's harder today than it was before we had the Federal Elections Commission (FEC). Before we had these laws you could move money in and out of politics without having to record it. In the last several years so many of these right wing organizations have started; and unless they are directly working for the defeat or success of a candidate, they can take money without anybody ever re-

cording it. If an organization publishes a voting record, for example, it doesn't have to be recorded as a contribution to a candidate or against a candidate. Obviously, they do it very secretly because it would hurt them publicly if people knew that South Africa was contributing to the organization.

What connection do these groups have with the Reagan administration?

CLARK: The South Africans are quite right in looking at the Reagan administration as a great benefit to them. Almost anybody on the far right that you talk to is sympathetic to South Africa. I don't know why the two go together necessarily. I debate William Rusher, the publisher of the *NATIONAL REVIEW*, frequently; and the South African propaganda always comes out.

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It's amazing. Why the far right identifies with South Africa I don't know. I suppose it's the anti-communism element because they talk about Argentina and other such countries in a favorable light as well.

Did the South African government take any direct action against you?

CLARK: Early in the campaign, someone on the South African embassy staff campaigned against me. He went around to groups and gave speeches. However, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance heard about it and told the South Africans that the man had to be recalled to South Africa. He was declared *persona non grata* and was sent home. That was the end of any direct attempt against me.

What other kinds of experiences with South Africa did you have while you were in the Senate?

CLARK: The first time I went to South Africa in 1976, I met with Prime Minister John Vorster. It was the most difficult meeting I ever went to in my life. For an hour he quoted to me things I had said or done. I remember on one occasion he said, "Tell me about this meeting in Lesotho that you're co-chairman of." He would quote to me things that I had said at some small college out in Nebraska. They had apparently covered every speech I ever did anywhere.

It's eerie to think that this kind of government has that kind of access. It shows you can buy a lot with money. They've obviously got this country well covered in terms of what's happening where and who is doing what and why. I don't want to sound too conspiratorial, but their information sources are very good. They're putting a lot of money into this country. They buy information to keep informed. They have a kind of paranoia anyway. There never was anything I did or said about which they didn't know. The Prime Minister obviously had more information and knew more about what I had said than I remembered. □

THE MULDERGATE SCANDAL

In February 1974 South African Prime Minister John Vorster met with Gen. Hendrik van den Burgh, head of the Bureau of State Security (BOSS); Information Minister Dr. Cornelius Mulder (hence "Muldergate"), the man thought to be Vorster's successor; and Secretary of Information Eschel Rhoodie. What they gathered to discuss, according to Rhoodie, was ". . . a propaganda war in which no rules or regulations would count."

The strategy for this \$70 million war was developed by Rhoodie; the battlefields were to be the major cities of the world—Washington, London, New York, Paris. For Rhoodie the aim was to "sell South Africa" by any means necessary. His projects in the U.S. were designed to buy friends in high places and to enhance South Africa's influence. By Rhoodie's own admission, in so doing he violated both American and South African law.

The most well-known of Rhoodie's projects involved the targeting of two liberal Senators for electoral defeat. Rhoodie alleges that the Department of Information contributed about \$150,000 to the 1976 campaign to unseat Senator John Tunney of California. In 1978 well over \$250,000 was contributed to Robert Jepsen's successful campaign against Senator Dick Clark. Despite the clear violation of U.S. law, both the Justice Department and the Ethics Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives have dropped their investigations of these allegations.

In 1977 the Department of Information paid about \$110,000 to several American trade unions to prevent their support of a blockade against South African shipping organized by the International Federation of Free Trade Unions.

Moreover, South Africa funded John P. McGoff's unsuccessful bid to purchase the *Washington Star* and his successful bid to purchase the *Sacramento Union*. Allegedly, gold bullion from Rhoodie's secret fund was smuggled out of South Africa and funneled to McGoff. It also has been reported that McGoff's firm, Global Communications, used South African funds to purchase a fifty percent share of United Press International Television News (UPITN). Although McGoff has denied these charges, he has publicly declared his support of the South African regime, promising to do anything in his power to bring that country closer to the U.S.

By January 1978, the South African press and public had been made aware of Rhoodie's "war." Rhoodie fled the country and made his now famous confession in France. Prime Minister Vorster and Cabinet Minister Mulder were forced to resign. Later, Rhoodie was extradited to South Africa, tried for fraud and theft of government funds, and sentenced to six years in jail.

Ostensibly, the revelation of the Muldergate scandal ended South Africa's illegal "war" for Americans' "hearts and minds." It must be noted, however, that South African officials did not disclose the details of all Rhoodie's projects, and a number of them were to be continued. □

THE DENTON HEARINGS

In March Senator Jeremiah Denton (R-Ala), a champion of "New Right" causes, held five days of hearings on what he titled, "The Role of the Soviet Union, Cuba, and East Germany in Fomenting Terrorism in Southern Africa." The hearings, conducted by the Senate Subcommittee of Security and Terrorism which Denton chairs, sought to establish as a matter of public record that the leading liberation movements in southern Africa—the ANC and SWAPO—were in fact terrorist groups controlled and directed by Moscow.

During the course of the hearings, it became apparent that the South African government—not Denton and his staff—was the primary force behind the Senate proceedings. South Africa provided the majority of the witnesses for the hearings—police informers and captured soldiers—as well as documents and photographs to be entered into the record and an arms display of Soviet-made weapons. In his opening remarks, Denton said that "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." Consequently, South Africa was provided an opportunity to present its familiar case that liberation struggles in southern Africa result not from racial repression and colonial occupation but from communist expansion in the region. The Denton hearings simply mark South Africa's latest successful attempt to use another American forum to legitimize their claims.

Some of the witnesses apparently had trouble reading their own statements despite denials that others had prepared their testimony. Witnesses from southern Africa included: three former ANC members turned police informers; one former ANC member who is the niece of Lennox Sebe, the president of the Ciskei bantustan; two SWAPO soldiers captured in Namibia; an official from the South African-backed DTA government in Namibia; a Mozambican pilot who had deserted to South Africa and has been cooperating with military intelligence there; and a former SWAPO leader who now heads the breakaway SWAPO-Democrats in Namibia.

Their testimony included descriptions of the structure of the ANC and SWAPO and of the type of aid these organizations receive from Eastern bloc countries. Denton argued that the testimony supported South Africa's claim that the Soviets had a "grand design" for all of southern Africa and that they control and direct the leadership of the ANC and SWAPO—both now terrorist surrogates for communist expansion.

Senator Denton had hoped to attract major media attention to the Soviet role in southern Africa as he defined it; only the South African press, however, turned out in large numbers. The American press understandably had grown a bit skeptical of these "Guerrilla of the Week" type proceedings after the infamous Nicaraguan star witness debacle. He was able, nonetheless, to give the South Africans another occasion to mislead the American public. □

SOUTH AFRICA'S HIRED GUNS: THE REGISTERED FOREIGN AGENTS

The apartheid government of South Africa has developed a network of highly paid lobbyists with solid connections to the New Right in an increasingly aggressive bid to influence U.S. domestic and foreign policies. The expressed policy of the Reagan administration to develop closer ties with South Africa and the appointment of South Africa sympathizers and ex-lobbyists to key government positions have acted as a spur to these activities.

Among the lobbyists engaged by South Africa in this new phase of its constant battle to improve its image in the U.S. is John P. Sears of the Washington law firm, Baskin and Sears. Mr. Sears, a former campaign director for President Reagan, and his firm received more than \$750,000 in 1981, "to lobby, represent, advise, and assist in the promotion of the political, economic, and cultural objectives of [South Africa]."

The agreement between the law firm and South Africa was reached in January of 1981 as the new Reagan administration was taking shape. A junior partner in the firm, Philip J. Hare, appears to be directly in charge of their efforts on behalf of South Africa. Mr. Hare, who became an American citizen in 1980, was born in Parys, South Africa.

Baskin and Sears has lobbied intensively to weaken U.S. restrictions on trade with South Africa. They have aided the granting of export licenses to corporations doing business with South Africa and given advice on a possible "Investment Treaty" between the two countries. During the Senate hearings on "Terrorism in Southern Africa" conducted by Senator Jeremiah Denton(R-Ala) last March, the firm not only actively consulted with the counsel of the subcommittee, Joel Lisker, but it also assisted "in interviewing potential witnesses."

Another Washington law firm working for the South African regime is Smathers, Symington, and Herlong. It was retained by South Africa in early 1980 for an all-inclusive annual fee of \$300,000. The firm, however, is generously reimbursed for "expenses not within the scope of the contract." Smathers, Symington, and Herlong gives South Africa the services of the Former Senator George Smathers of Florida and the former Congressman James Symington of Missouri, both long-time democrats. Both men were closely associated with the Kennedy administration. A review of the firm's registration, filed pursuant to section two of the Foreign Agents Registration Act, shows extensive financial contributions of the firm and its senior members to politicians including: the Carter-Mondale Campaign and Senators Kennedy, Jackson, Byrd, Long, and Cannon.

Smathers and Symington worked for the defeat of bills limiting or prohibiting new U.S. investment in South Africa. They lobbied in favor of the American tour of the South African National Rugby team and opposed House Resolution 214 of September 1981, which condemned South Africa's invasion of Angola.

At the time of their appointment as South Africa's

legal advisors, much was made of the Smathers and Symington connection to the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. It was even suggested, according to the Rand Daily Mail of July 16, 1982, that their appointment marked "an official break with the Rhodie method of influencing U.S. opinion." However, the election of Ronald Reagan and the increased influence of the New Right activists encouraged South Africa to seek more conservative representation. In John Sears, South Africa has found a near perfect choice.

More aggressive than Baskin and Sears or Smathers and Symington in the promotion of South Africa's interests is the U.S.-South West Africa/Namibia Trade and Cultural Council. Its directors are Carl L. Shipley, Marion H. Smoak, and Thomas C. Henry of the Washington law firm of Shipley, Smoak, and Henry. This council is the registered agent for the South African created Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) government of Namibia.

With hundreds of thousands of dollars at its disposal, this lobby has developed a hit list of national legislators that it wants defeated this November. Prominent among them is Michigan Congressman Howard Wolpe, Chairman of the House Africa Subcommittee, in whose campaign they have promised to become "pretty heavily" involved. Shipley and Smoak have published several editorials in their *Namibia News Gazette* virulently critical of Congressman Wolpe. They have, in conjunction with other New Right activists, issued press releases attacking the Congressman.

The attacks on Wolpe have received the support of Michigan publisher, John P. McGoff, who has been under investigation by the Justice Department and the Securities and Exchange Commission. McGoff allegedly acted as an unregistered agent for South Africa and used South African funds in an unsuccessful attempt to purchase the *Washington Star* and a successful one to acquire the *Sacramento Union*.

The Shipley and Smoak lobby also has been engaged in a campaign of harassment against Gulf Oil Corporation and SWAPO representatives in the United States. A suit brought by the lobby against SWAPO in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia charges SWAPO with willfully violating the Foreign Agents Act. Among other things, the lobby is asking the court to enjoin SWAPO from representing itself in the U.S. The unprecedented suit is unlikely to go far. It is questionable whether the lobby has standing to sue in this case. The aim seems to be to distract SWAPO and its supporters more than anything else.

The available records show that South Africa's registered agents together spend millions of dollars promoting South Africa's interests in the U.S. What the records do not show is how unregistered agents, business interests, and right wing ideologues combine to expend millions more, illegally serving the aims of the racist minority government and subverting the American democratic process. □

REAGAN WATCH: AN ALLIANCE AMONG FRIENDS

"Can we abandon a country that has stood beside us in every war we ever fought? A country that strategically, is essential to the Free World in its production of minerals that we all must have?"

President Ronald Reagan
March 3, 1981

Since the disclosure of State Department documents in August 1981, the Reagan administration has been moving American policy toward South Africa closer and closer to "the side of the whites." Indeed, the Reagan administration considers South Africa a friend worthy of U.S. sympathy and support. The link between the Reagan administration and South Africa is the host of administration advisors, officials, and supporters who are openly sympathetic to and long associated with Pretoria.

Reagan's advisors on foreign affairs have been described by the *Washington Post* as "almost a Who's Who of leading rightist theoreticians and activists." Core conservative think tanks such as the **American Enterprise Institute**, the **Center for Strategic and International Studies**, the **Hoover Institution**, the **Heritage Foundation**, and the **Committee for the Present Danger** serve as the breeding ground and cooling-off point for the New Right. All take a pro-South Africa line, and most have been pleased with Reagan's handling of the situation. They argue that although change will come to South Africa, it must come about led by whites through measures such as the Botha "reforms." Peter Duignan, a campaign advisor to Reagan, and Lewis Gann at the Hoover Institution wrote, for example, that U.S. policy should "promote trade, economic co-operation, and cultural exchanges . . ." with South Africa.

Among administration officials involved in foreign policymaking, relatively few identify with black aspirations in southern Africa. A number, however, clearly have been linked with South Africa's white minority regime in some way. Richard Allen, formerly National Security Advisor and currently with the Heritage Foundation, was a lobbyist on behalf of the white Portuguese colonies in Africa during 1972. Allen is quoted as saying that the U.S. should take the "politically courageous act" of publicly recognizing South Africa as an "ally." Thomas Moorer of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board has taken several trips to South Africa paid by the South African government. Richard Mellon Scaife, whose newspapers often run features favorable to the South African government, recently acquired the *Sacramento Union* from John P. McGoff. Scaife also reportedly paid for the travel expenses of Professor Peter Vanneman, who testified at Senator Denton's hearings on southern Africa. Vanneman traveled from South Africa where he was on sabbatical. Scaife, one of the largest individual contributors to the New Right, sits on the Board of Directors of the proposed U.S. propaganda station directed toward Cuba, Radio Marti. William Simon, Chair of the President's Advisory Committee on Productivity, also has made several trips to

South Africa paid for by the South African government. Marvin Leibman, now Director of Public Affairs for the National Endowment for the Humanities, launched the pro-South Africa American African Affairs Association (AAAA) in 1965. Early AAAA board members included William Rusher, publisher of the *National Review*, which regularly features articles sympathetic to South Africa. Jay Parker, a black conservative who now heads AAAA, purports to represent the Republic of Venda, a South Africa created—but internationally unrecognized—bantustan, for \$36,000 a year. AAAA was the publisher of the Duignan and Gann pamphlet quoted above. Joseph Churba, an analyst with the Department of Defense and former Regan campaign advisor, made widely publicized remarks in support of South Africa—later repudiated by Assistant Secretary of State Chester Crocker. Churba is quoted as saying that South Africa's strategic importance should be the "overwhelming factor" in relations between the U.S. and South Africa. Robert Cabelli, the recently hired special assistant to Chester Crocker, is a former employee of the South African mining firm, Goldfields. Cabelli has close relations with prominent South Africans such as the deputy director of the South African U.N. mission.



Donald deKieffer

Perhaps, the most highly placed link between the administration and South Africa is **Donald deKieffer**, General Counsel in the White House Special Trade Representative's Office. DeKieffer, a registered agent for South Africa until 1979, was hired by Eschel

Rhoodie in 1974 while he was with the firm, Collier, Shannon, Rill, and Edwards in New York. DeKieffer's services to South Africa included lavish entertaining averaging more than \$30,000 a year. In addition, deKieffer made personal political contributions to candidates sympathetic to his client's interests.

DeKieffer's appointment to the Trade Office parallels the loosening of restrictions on trade with South Africa. Despite the apparent conflict of interests, he admits to attending a meeting of high-ranking officials from the Commerce and State Departments during which South Africa related issues were discussed. Shortly after the Reagan administration's relaxation of restrictions on trade with South Africa was announced, deKieffer made a trip to the country to address American businessmen there and to meet with South African trade officials. DeKieffer has argued that he has been careful to "recuse" or to disqualify himself from any discussion with direct bearing on South Africa.

Clearly, the South Africa sympathizers now serving in or closely connected with the Reagan administration outnumber the black Americans who have influence with the same administration. The impact of this imbalance in influence will be devastating for twenty million black South Africans. □