For Immediate Release

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A.C.O.A. CONDEMNS U.S. MOVES TO BREAK SOUTH AFRICAN ARMS EMBARGO AND POSSIBLE AMERICAN AID TO PORTUGUESE DAM PROJECT IN MOZAMBIQUE

Evidence is mounting that the United States is stepping up its aid to the racist and colonial powers of southern Africa. Last September, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, David Newsom, stated that the U.S. "would consider licenses for limited numbers of small unarmed executive civilian type aircraft" to South Africa. The words "unarmed" and "civilian" were backed up by a statement of continued U.S. support for the arms embargo called for by the Security Council of the U.N. in 1963. Now the report comes from Johannesburg that the U.S. Government has sanctioned the sale of light American aircraft to South Africa for reconnaissance and training purposes. Mrs. Olive Beech, head of American Beechcraft Corporation, revealed this on her arrival in Johannesburg on April 13 to arrange the sale. Mrs. Beech said that the U.S. used the aircraft for military purposes such as training, reconnaissance and ambulance work. Aerial reconnaissance is, of course, a key tactic in anti-guerrilla warfare used to track freedom fighters. The U.S. also allows the sale of helicopters in South Africa.

A second recent development concerns U.S. support for the Portuguese war in Mozambique. General Electric Company has asked the Export-Import Bank, an autonomous U.S. government agency, to finance a $55 million transformer system G.E. would supply for the Cabora Bassa dam project in Mozambique. Because Portugal (and South Africa which is largely financing the scheme) will use the dam to block the progress of the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) by bringing in a million European settlers to colonize the land, international indignation has been aroused; Swedish and Italian support has been withdrawn from the consortium involved in construction.

The American Committee on Africa strongly condemns these moves by the U.S. to further aid militarism, colonialism and racism in southern Africa. (SEE ENCLOSURES)
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The Hon. William P. Rogers  
Secretary of State  
Washington, D.C. 20500  

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We understand that at the present time the Export-Import Bank is considering an application from the General Electric Company to provide $55 million for financing of a transformer system to be supplied to the Cabora Bassa dam project now being built by the Portuguese in their colony of Mozambique.

In matters of this sort which involve important decisions in foreign policy, we understand that the Eximbank does not act without careful clearance with the Department of State. Thus we address this letter to you to urge that the State Department use its influence to stop the Export-Import Bank from financing this project.

The principle reasons we would outline for urging this position are as follows:

1. The United States should not give assistance to Portugal in strengthening her colonial hold on Mozambique. The Portuguese have said that they hope to encourage a vast number of Portuguese settlers to move into the Tete region of Mozambique where the dam is being constructed. Certainly the prime motive in encouraging this influx of European settlers is to gain new strength in opposing the efforts of the Mozambique nationalists in their struggle for freedom. The official position the United States takes is that peoples everywhere have the right to self determination. It is quite clear that this right is not open to them in the Portuguese colonies. Therefore anything which strengthens Portuguese control should be opposed.

2. The construction of the dam will aid South Africa in her efforts to extend economic, political and ultimately military control over large areas of Southern Africa. The ZAMCO Consortium which is building the dam is headed by a major South African Company, Anglo-American, and the consortium is heavily backed by South African capital and initiative. South Africa will be the main recipient of power flowing from the Cabora Bassa scheme. The South African Electricity Supply Commission (ESCOM) will absorb about 50 per cent of the power produced by the dam. Yet this is only approximately 8 per cent of South Africa's own needs. South Africa looks upon this scheme not as a necessity for its own electrical power potential, but as a means of shoring up the Portuguese. A strong Mozambique in Portuguese hands will be a further buffer against the challenge to South Africa's power outside of her own borders. Should the U.S. lend itself to this plan?
3. The Cabora Bassa dam will be yet another way of undercutting internationally backed sanctions against the Ian Smith regime of Rhodesia. Rhodesia hopes eventually to use power from this dam. Further the scheme will transform the Zambesi River into a navigable waterway right up to the Rhodesian border. Rhodesia is already participating in the project through the supplying of material and equipment to those building the dam.

4. If the United States through the Eximbank and General Electric participates in the Cabora Bassa project, it will be doing so in the face of concerted African and international opposition. The opposition comes not only from the African nationalist forces in Mozambique, but also from the Organization of African Unity. The O.A.U. in its last summit conference felt so strongly about this issue that it sent a delegation to the countries which support Portugal through contributions towards the dam construction urging them not to participate. The Swedish member of the ZAMCO Consortium, ASEA, has already resigned from participation. An Italian firm is reportedly re-thinking its involvement, and the Italian Government has withdrawn export credits originally provided for the project.

The position which the State Department adopts may be critical in the decision of the Export-Import Bank. We urge you to oppose GE's request to the Bank vigorously, and hope to hear from you on this matter in the near future.

Sincerely yours,

George M. Houser
Executive Director