Constructive Engagement and the Arms Embargo

Statement before the Special Committee Against Apartheid of the United Nations General Assembly

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Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the American Committee on Africa, I want to thank the Special Committee Against Apartheid for the opportunity to appear today. These hearings come at a critical time in southern Africa. South Africa has established a policy of destabilizing the Front Line States which has wreaked havoc in the region. South African military forces still occupy parts of southern Angola, and Pretoria's troops regularly stage bloody raids on neighboring countries.

Recent press reports have suggested that the signing of the security pact between Mozambique and South Africa will bring peace to the region. But peace will not come to southern Africa until Namibia is independent and South Africa is free. As long as apartheid exists in South Africa, Pretoria will need weapons to maintain its power. This point was graphically illustrated last week when the South African Minister of Finance Owen Horwood announced that defense expenditure will rise by 21.4 percent in the coming year to $2.4 billion [R3.004 billion].

South Africa is now spending billions of dollars maintaining its power, including the purchase and production of armaments. The participation of Armscor in an armaments show in Chile this February is perhaps the most dramatic recent demonstration of the development of South Africa's military armaments manufacture capacity and Pretoria's ability to flout the international arms embargo. Not only is South Africa able to produce a variety of weapons for its own use, but South Africa is aiming at an export market in weapons of up to $121.2 million [R150 million] per year. Armscor even boasts that its weapons are battle tested. As one recent advertisement put it, "Born of necessity. Tested under fire."
The South African government seeks to give the impression that the apartheid regime is now self-sufficient in weapons. It even claims the United Nations arms embargo has helped South Africa develop its arms industry by forcing self-sufficiency.

The claim for South African's self-sufficiency in arms production does not hold up under scrutiny. The South African military, despite its much trumpeted weapons development program, remains dependent on foreign sources for advanced technology, oil and even trucks and aircraft. An estimated sixty percent by value of all automobiles are imported. The South African weekly Financial Mail recently noted, "SA's arms procurement problems are not solely a matter of money. Despite Armscor's achievements, there is a limit to what can be produced locally."

The reality is that the arms embargo has some significant leaks. These flow from two major weaknesses. The first is the refusal of Western countries including the U.S. to interpret and implement the arms embargo established under Resolution 418/77 in a forceful and effective manner. Thus in the U.S. so-called grey area items are consistently allowed to go to South Africa although their sales to Eastern Bloc countries are restricted. The second weakness is the exclusion from the embargo as established of far too many elements which have clear and direct military application, the most obvious being oil and nuclear technology.

The Reagan administration's policy of constructive engagement has already led to a significant relaxation of the arms embargo. Stressing the goal of regional stability the American government has now adopted a policy which they see as an "even handed" approach to all countries in the region. Thus the Reagan administration seeks to blame all sides equally for the violence in the region, ignoring the fact that the violence stems from apartheid. In reality there is no even handedness in the U.S.'s engagement in southern Africa; policy in the last three years has resulted in an increased South African ability to harass and dominate regionally.

The effect of the easing of the arms embargo, both in terms of the actual regulations and in terms of interpretation, has been documented in Military Exports to South Africa: A Research Report on the Arms Embargo by NARMIC. The study reveals that more than $28.3 million worth of military equipment was authorized for sale to South Africa for fiscal years 1981-1984, as compared to $25,000 for 1979.

Additional research needs to be done. One of the reports indicating a serious breach of the arms embargo that we at the American Committee on Africa have sought to investigate involves computers and missiles. The Washington Post in July 1981 reported that "an air-to-air missile similar to the U.S. Sidewinder that the South Africans are developing is guided by a U.S. made computer." At the time we wrote to then Secretary of State Alexander Haig asking about the report. The State Department
replied, "Few details were provided in the story which makes an investigation of the case quite difficult." There has been no prosecution in this case nor more public information.

According to the authoritative manual, *Janes Weapon Systems*, 1983-84, South Africa is now producing and exporting the Kukri air-to-air missile which conforms to the Sidewinder Aero 3B. It was the Kukri air-to-air missile that formed the centerpiece of the South African display in Chile.

Even more disturbing is the report in the 1983-84 *Military Balance*, issued by the International Institute for Strategic Studies, that the South African Airforce possesses Sidewinders. This is the first time Sidewinders have appeared in the *Military Balance* for South Africa.

Obviously much of what happens in regards to the arms embargo and technology transfer never becomes public. But I would like to mention just a few cases.

The Council for Scientific & Industrial Research is a South African governmental body that conducts a wide range of research in such areas as ordinance development, guided missiles, specialty metals, nuclear research and many other military areas. It has a close relationship with Armscor. The Council has obtained several U.S. computers. The Council also has been increasing its activities abroad, opening a second office in the U.S. in 1980, and it has offices in the Federal Republic of Germany, England and France. Dr. Edward Teller, the U.S. physicist known as "the father of the atom bomb," visited South Africa in 1982 as a guest of CSIR. He was but one of many scientists from many countries to do so.

South Africa is seeking to make itself the regional "computer power." In March of this year, the International Federation of Information Processing was scheduled to hold its annual meeting in Cape Town. I have yet to see any reports of the results of this conference. But press reports in advance noted that the topic to be discussed was computers and the third world. Representatives of several African countries were invited. The *Financial Mail* commented, "SA could become the focus of a sub-Saharan computer fraternity... And the fact that the UN maintains a high-tech embargo against SA makes the move all the more noteworthy." I hope the Committee will pursue this matter perhaps meeting with the Geneva based International Federation for Information Processing in order to urge it to expel its South African affiliate.

Computers are widely advertised in South Africa. It is literally impossible to maintain end user verification. And even the smallest computers can have important military uses. For example, personal computers were used by the U.S. military in both Lebanon and Grenada. Under the export regulations for South Africa, personal computers are "denied for military or police entities, except on a case-by-case basis." It would be
interesting to know what, if any, exceptions have been made, and how controls are exerted on items readily available in stores to businesses in South Africa.

One area that warrants increased study is in the nuclear field. In our opinion, it is clear that South Africa cannot be trusted to maintain military and civilian nuclear development in watertight compartments. Therefore any aid to nuclear development in South Africa has military implications. Since 1978 the U.S. has not supplied South Africa enriched uranium because of Pretoria's refusal to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty or accept full-scope safeguards. South Africa's nuclear power plant at Koeberg I began operation this month. Koeberg II is scheduled to be fueled in September and begin operation by the end of the year. The opening of the plant was delayed a year because of the extensive damage done by the African National Congress. The fuel for the Koeberg nuclear reactors was obtained with the help of two U.S. brokerage companies from French, Swiss and Belgian suppliers. The U.S. government has admitted that it knew in advance of this transaction and did nothing to stop it.

The Reagan administration sought closer nuclear collaboration with South Africa from the start. In May 1981, South African Secretary of Foreign Affairs Brand Fourie came to Washington and discussed nuclear cooperation with U.S. Assistant Secretary James Malone. In August 1981 a team of South African nuclear experts toured a U.S. uranium enrichment plant and in late October a team of top American nuclear experts toured South Africa's top secret uranium enrichment plant at Valindaba. By mid November reports leaked to the press that South Africa had obtained the enriched uranium needed to operate Koeberg.

I cannot go into all aspects of South Africa/U.S. nuclear collaboration. I would just like to mention two other disturbing developments regarding Koeberg. In December it was learned that a $4.04 million [R5 million] maintenance contract will be split between the South African subsidiary of the U.S. firm Fluor and the French company Framatone. In addition, the U.S. company Mobil Oil is the exclusive supplier of lubricants to the Koeberg generators and to other critical equipment.

South Africa has not been able to obtain all its needs legally and has resorted to smuggling. Since the Reagan administration came to power in January 1981, there has been an intensified U.S. effort to keep arms and technology with possible military uses from Eastern bloc countries. Under the program "Operation Exodus", over 765 shipments of weapons or high technology goods had been seized by the end of 1982. And although the program was not designed to target goods going to South Africa, ten of these shipments were destined for South Africa and Namibia. Since that time there have been other seizures, including six planes bound for Namibia that were seized in northeastern Pennsylvania last August. Although the planes were seized over six months ago, U.S. attorneys refused to comment on whether the case is still under investigation, or whether there
are any indictments. I would suggest that this committee might want to ask the U.S. government about this case. One must ask how many shipments are getting through undetected and how many of these would be stopped if the U.S. put the same emphasis on South Africa that it puts on other countries?

It is impossible for a non-governmental organization to undertake all the necessary research of arms embargo violations. What is amazing is the amount of material that our limited research does turn up. Most of what we learn comes from press reports and government documents. But even these sources give a glimpse of the size of the problem. For example:

*An advanced DEC computer was shipped to South Africa and later re-exported to Sweden, allegedly en route to the Soviet Union. How was an export license for South Africa granted for this computer considered militarily important. A second question is raised by this case, the relationship between U.S. and South African intelligence agencies. Press reports talk of a "combined U.S.-S.A. investigation."

*Dieter Gerhardt, former commander of South Africa's naval port of Simonstown and recently convicted of spying, was actually arrested in New York after being lured to the United States and interrogated by the CIA for 11 days, according to the Daily Telegraph. This is a curious case of cooperation between South Africa and the U.S. and again raises questions about how much the U.S. actually knows about illegal arms sales to South Africa.

*Private South African security firms use sophisticated U.S. equipment, and an inkless U.S. fingerprinting system is now available that "can be used for ID cards or by police on the scene of a crime."

The South African government continues to depend on foreign arms and technology. South Africa is reportedly looking for a new generation of fighter planes. Secrecy continues to be the order of the day.

The South African government's policy of destabilization of the Front Line States, continued illegal occupation of Namibia and repressive actions inside South Africa itself demonstrates that apartheid continues to be a threat to peace. The Reagan policy of constructive engagement has contributed to the arming of apartheid.