

U.S. and South Africa

Committee on Foreign Affairs
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The October 30 U.S. veto of the Security Council resolution to expel South Africa from the United Nations and subsequent U.S. action opposing the successful effort to bar that country from participation in the General Assembly are but two in a series of concrete examples of the U.S. failure to reflect in its policy towards South Africa the inevitability of majority rule there.

Following the April 25, 1974 coup in Portugal, progress towards the liberation of southern Africa has accelerated with Guinea-Bissau's independence finally recognized by Portugal on September 10, Mozambique's expected independence on June 25, 1975 and, although some obstacles remain, Angola's likely independence within the next two years. Pressures have mounted on the Rhodesian regime so that the question now is not if, but when, Zimbabwe will become an independent, majority-ruled country. Bordered by an independent Angola, the prospects for majority rule and independence in Namibia can only increase. In South Africa itself, there is continued resistance to the totalitarian regime and its increasingly oppressive apartheid apparatus.

South Africa now faces stepped-up internal and external pressures for liberation. A most recent example is the series of arrests, detentions and police raids following the scheduled September 25 pro-Frelimo rally, in Durban. At this rally, black leaders in South Africa and Frelimo representatives were to have voiced their support for the liberation of neighboring Mozambique. However, the crowd which gathered, despite the official ban on the meeting, found itself attacked by dogs and police. These actions against the leaders and supporters of South Africa's black consciousness movement are simply the latest in a series of confrontations over the past few years.

However, there is as yet, no evidence of a positive re-thinking and revision of U.S. policy towards southern Africa, in the direction of substantive U.S. support for freedom and majority rule. Quite the contrary, U.S. support for the minority regimes of southern Africa, particularly South Africa, has continued and, in fact, significantly increased.

A few ^{more} examples ~~of current U.S. policy~~ are illustrative.

We have seen, especially since January of this year, a continuing spate of "unofficial" visits to the United States by high-level defense and government officials from South Africa. In January, Dr. Cornelius Mulder, the South African Minister for Information, met with Vice Admiral Ray Peet, Director, Defense Security Assistance Agency of the Department of Defense, which has responsibility for foreign military sales and military assistance. In May, Admiral Hugo Bierman, Chief of South Africa's Defense

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Forces, on another "unofficial" visit, met with the Acting Under Secretary of the Navy J. William Middendorf II and with Admiral Thomas Moorer, then Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. A visit by Admiral James Johnson, Chief of the South African Navy, had also been planned for late November, but was later cancelled. Dr. Piet Koornhof, the South African Minister of Mines, who, in this capacity, is knowledgeable about South Africa's uranium enrichment method (which South Africa reportedly wants to exchange, along with its coal gasification process, for "freer" trade with the U.S.) is "passing through" this country on his way to and, perhaps from, Central America in early December. These stepped-up military contacts with South Africa are utterly inconsistent with the U.S. policy of maintaining an arms embargo against South Africa.

However, there has been a considerable loosening of the arms embargo policy established during the 1960's, so that sales of light civilian aircraft and equipment are now allowed to the South African military . ~~and to civilian users who are likely to be connected to the military, especially during any emergency.~~ Just this fall, the Commerce Department licensed six L-100's (the "civilian" version of the C-130) for sale to South African Airways, a "civilian" agency wholly-owned by the South African government. It is vital that any further attempts to weaken the embargo policy by limiting it solely to equipment designed for South Africa's internal use against apartheid be vigorously opposed.

Furthermore, regarding the NATO Military Committee's reported decision to begin negotiations with South Africa for the use of Simonstown as a NATO base, there have been disturbing reports that the United States defense establishment has strongly supported this decision.

In view of this increased U.S. support for South Africa, the role of America's constituency for Africa in continuing to inform the executive of its views regarding U.S. policy towards South Africa becomes even more crucial. The recent focus in the American press on a so-called U.S. tilt towards South Africa, all elements of which have been previously revealed in extensive hearings before the House Subcommittee on Africa, should not distract us from careful attention to those contingencies now being considered by the U.S. government, as well as to the shape of future U.S. policy towards South Africa.