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FROM: CONGRESSMAN CHARLES C. DIGGS, JR.  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OPEN LETTER TO IBM CORPORATION RE: SOUTH AFRICA

APRIL 28, 1975, Washington, D.C. --

Congressman Charles C. Diggs, Jr. (D-Michigan), joined by 18 of his colleagues in the House of Representatives, sent the following open letter to IBM Corporation regarding a recent shareholders' resolution on IBM selling, leasing or servicing computers and computer parts to the South African Government.

Congressman Diggs was joined in this effort by the following Congresspersons: Yvonne B. Burke, Robert F. Drinan, Ralph H. Metcalfe, Charles B. Rangel, John Conyers, Jr., Donald M. Fraser, Walter E. Fauntroy, Harold E. Ford, Leo J. Ryan, Ronald V. Dellums, Stephen J. Solarz, Augustus F. Hawkins, Parren J. Mitchell, Michael Harrington, Cardiss Collins, Frederick W. Richmond, George E. Brown and Robert N.C. Nix.

The text of the letter follows:

April 25, 1975

Mr. Frank T. Cary  
Chairman, Board of Directors  
International Business Machines  
Old Orchard Road  
Armonk, New York

Dear Mr. Cary:

We, the undersigned Members of Congress, are deeply concerned about the role of International Business Machines (IBM) in helping to maintain and, indeed, perfect, South Africa's repressive system of apartheid. We are aware of the recent shareholders' resolution, co-filed by a number of church organizations holding over 54,000 shares of IBM stock, which requests that IBM cease selling, leasing or servicing computers and computer parts to the South African Government.

In recognition of the significance of computers (specifically IBM computers which represent nearly 50 percent of the South African computer market) to the South African regime, we would like to express our support for this resolution.

For the White minority South African regime, which represents less than 20 percent of the total population, to control the majority is not an easy task, but with the assistance of computers the apartheid system has been maintained and even expanded. Computers, and in particular IBM, place a concentrated source of knowledge, technology and control in the hands of the minority government.

The system of apartheid in South Africa violates the basic human rights of that country's 18 million Africans, 2 million Coloured, and approximately 1 million Asians who are under the rule of the four million Whites. Furthermore, the South African regime has continually ignored world protest against its racist policies. In a recent speech Prime Minister Vorster stated, "But in White South Africa it is the Whites who will rule and there will be no Black majority rule." Thus, there is no hope for voluntary or peaceful negotiations leading to an equitable sharing of political power under the present system. This imbalance of power in the hands of the South African Government is maintained through an elaborate system of control and exploitation which is invaluablely aided by the computer. Under this system the Whites have delegated 87 percent of the land to themselves and the remaining 13 percent is divided into bantustans or homelands to which the Blacks have been assigned. There is little employment opportunity in the homelands and

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Black males are forced to leave their families and seek employment in the White areas. Through the pass law system, the movements of non-Whites are monitored, and a system of surveillance and informers aids the police in enforcing the law. It is through the computer that the minority has been able to strengthen its military position, vis-a-vis the majority population, as well as neighboring independent African states.

With the growing pressure of independent Africa and especially with the coming independence of Mozambique and Angola, the South African regime has recently made a defense budget request which is up 36 percent over the fiscal year 1974-75 defense budget.

Although the current relaxed interpretation of the U.S. arms embargo against South Africa, pursuant to the Security Council resolution of August 1963, does not consider these computers within the embargo, the military significance of computers for enabling the minority police, defense or other governmental apparatus to maintain effective control over the majority, raises serious questions as to whether the export of computers to or for the use of the South African Government should be prohibited under the embargo.

Computers are being used by every department of the South African Government, but especially noteworthy is the presence of IBM computers in the Departments of Prisons, Justice, Interior, and the so-called Department of Bantu Administration and Development. IBM computers are also found in the Department of Defense, Atomic Energy Board, and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, aiding in the development of South Africa as a nuclear power.

The IBM shareholders' resolution is not only consistent with United States moral obligations, but it is in our best political and economic self-interest. In the Dar-Es-Salaam Declaration of April 12, the Organization of African Unity announced its unequivocal intention to work towards bringing an end to apartheid by actions including measures against companies operating in independent African States which also operate in South Africa. As concerned Members of Congress, we therefore associate ourselves with the IBM shareholders' resolution, which provides:

"RESOLVED, that Article Second of the Certificate of Incorporation of the Corporation shall be amended by adding the following new subparagraph at the end thereof:

Notwithstanding the foregoing, neither the Corporation nor any of its subsidiaries shall henceforth make or renew any contracts or agreements to sell, lease or service computers, computer parts or software to, or for the use of, the Government of the Republic of South Africa, or any of its agencies or instrumentalities."

Sincerely,

(signed)

CHARLES C. DIGGS, JR. et al