APARTHEID: A THREAT TO PEACE*

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During the early 1960's, when the rest of the African continent was engaged in a rapid process of decolonisation, the response of the Pretoria regime to growing demands for freedom from the African, Indian and Coloured people was to intensify its repressive apartheid system. Following the Sharpeville massacres of March 1960, the African National Congress and the Pan-Africanist Congress were outlawed. The system of white domination, relying on a massive police state apparatus, had to move a stage further by militarising the entire white population and preparing it for war against the black people. The defence budget was increased, the police and military forces reorganised for coordinated action, and the white population trained to counteract internal armed resistance. By 1962, the Pretoria regime set the country on the path of a major violent confrontation in the future.

South Africa is undoubtedly the dominant economic, political and military power in the Southern African region. With sophisticated modern equipment and expensive training, it has built up a considerable striking capability in order to preserve the apartheid system and intimidate independent African States in the region. Its defence strategy is primarily aimed at preserving internal security. Until recently, it was fortunate in having around it a series of buffer territories which were allied to the Pretoria regime and thus hostile to the liberation struggle. This added to its sense of security. However, even at that time, faced with a growing number of independent African States further north, committed to support her struggle against colonialism and racism, a major aspect of its defence policy was to intimidate those countries so that they would not support the liberation movements nor consider any kind of military intervention against South Africa.

As the Pretoria regime expanded its military power, it began to develop ambitions of becoming a major regional power in Africa. It considered that the problem of maintaining white domination within

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its border could not be separated from political developments in neighbouring territories; hence a defence strategy, initially aimed at preserving internal security, developed into one concerned with maintaining stability in the Southern African region as a whole. It is this preoccupation which led South Africa to intervene with armed units to defend the illegal Smith regime in 1967 and subsequently to fight in the war against the MPLA in Angola from September 1975.

DEFENCE BUDGET

Year by year the South African defence budget has increased. From R44m during 1960-61, it shot up to over R72m during 1961-62. Today its defence budget has reached the all-time high figure of R948m.[1] The rise in defence expenditure dramatically reflects the rapid militarisation of white South Africa during the past fifteen years.

ARMED FORCES

Recognising that the Portuguese were suffering severe setbacks in Mozambique and their other colonies; that the Smith regime was faced with a serious challenge to its power by the growing armed struggle in Zimbabwe; and the new mood of militancy among its own African population, demonstrated by the militant strike action of workers, the Pretoria regime decided during the early 1970's to increase the size of its armed forces. They doubled between 1971/72 and 1972/73 from around 48,000 to over 110,000. The figure for 1974/75 was a total of 119,450 with an additional 75,000 Commandos organised and trained as a Home Guard. The 1975/6 figure is virtually double that and stands at a total of 201,900 personnel with the Commandos remaining at the same strength of 75,000.[2]

It is important to note that the defence force has traditionally been all white and the expansion of manpower to its present high level has had the effect of withdrawing economically productive whites from their role in the economy. Consequently, there has been an increasing emphasis placed on recruiting white women for the defence forces. But the growing economic loss, taken together with the increased number of white casualties suffered in the defence effort in Rhodesia and Namibia, led to the South African authorities during 1973 to train special groups of African, Indian and Coloured

contingents for 'border duties'. As the cost of militarisation begins to increase for the white society, it is inevitable that they have to rely increasingly on drawing the black population into the defence forces. This development represents a significant break with tradition because they have always placed major importance on maintaining an all-white military force. There is undoubtedly an inherent danger in the practice of training sections of the oppressed population for the defence of the oppressor group. It is interesting, too, that an embryonic army was being trained for the Transkei in preparation for its 'independence' in October 1976. The Eastern Province Herald of 14 April 1975 reported that 'the basis of training for the new army will be counter-insurgency, and it will have its weapons and equipment supplied by the South African defence force'. The South African authorities clearly anticipate using an increasing number of black personnel for its defence forces in preparation for the growing confrontation with the African liberation struggle.

In 1967, when South Africa despatched armed units into Rhodesia to help defend the Smith regime, they described it as a 'police operation'. The Police force has a para-military wing, so the distinction is not very meaningful. In any case, South African military personnel only need to change uniforms in order to operate as so-called para-military policemen since their training and equipment are similar. In that experience, the South Africans suffered several serious losses, and African 'policemen' were often placed in the frontline and were usually among the first to die. Present developments with regard to recruiting blacks for the military are based partly on that experience.

THE ARMS EMBARGO

The growing reliance by South Africa on military force in order to preserve its system of white domination, led to various moves at the United Nations during 1963-64 to institute an international arms embargo against the Pretoria regime. At that time the Security Council adopted major resolutions calling for an international arms embargo and these were supported by Britain, the United States and other western powers. France has since refused to apply the embargo and over the years has replaced Britain as South Africa's major supplier of weapons. Italy also violates the embargo and supplies aircraft and other military equipment. Other western powers, such as Britain and the USA, claim to implement the UN embargo but in fact sell a wide range of equipment to the South African armed forces, largely as a result of the way in which

they interpret and implement that embargo. These and other western countries supply finance capital for developing South Africa's domestic weapons industry, which is also provided with military patents from abroad. There is also an exchange of military personnel for training and other purposes, as well as the provi sion of special assistance to South African technicians connected with its weapons industry. In addition, there is also growing evidence of secret supplies of military equipment and know-how re aching South Africa from certain western countries whose governments have known about and often sanctioned such tra nsactions.[3]

South Africa today makes a wide range of arms and ammunition, and assembles and makes tanks and aircraft under licence granted by various western countries. In addition to importing weapons from abroad, it is becoming a weapons exporter. Whilst the arms embargo has been a serious handicap to the Pretoria regime, it has been able to overcome some of the major difficulties as a result of enthusiastic collaboration by certain western countries.

South Africa has highly sophisticated military equipment, including modern fighters, missiles and rockets. It has developed various nerve gases and a whole range of ammunition. It is constantly in search of the most modern equipment, which is also highly expensive. As the feeling of insecurity increases, it responds by purchasing more and better weapons, hoping that this will be adequate to intimidate and deter Africans internally, as well as neighbouring African States which may consider supporting the liberation struggle.

When one examines South Africa's internal power structure and the size and scope of the military in relation to the need to exercise control over the entire country, it is not difficult to see that the regime's forces can easily be overstretched by a major confrontation. This is why its sen ior military officers keep pointing to the fact that South Africa has a very low 'security ceiling'. Faced with this serious internal security problem, it becomes vitally necessary to ensure that the neighbouring territories will not support the African liberation struggle and that international pressure against South Africa is eased. In this respect, a major consideration for South Africa is to secure firm outside allies on whom the Pretoria regime can rely for support, both during peace time and at a time of crisis. The white regime has always considered itself to be the protector of western interests in Africa and has tried to secure increased western military support on the basis of its fanatic anti-communism and the so-called threat to the Cape sea-route from Soviet naval forces. Certain politicians in the west have echoed South Africa's policies and in recent years

there has been growing support in western military circles for the view that South Africa is vitally important to western defence and security interests. This attempt to build up a firm alliance between Pretoria and the principal western powers has had considerable political success in recent years and particularly in the United States in view of its new interest in the security of the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

COLLAPSE OF PORTUGUESE COLONIALISM

With the collapse of Portuguese colonialism, the strategic situation in Southern Africa changed dramatically: South Africa has been deprived of an important ally and become directly vulnerable to the growing African resistance in Rhodesia, Namibia and South Africa itself. With the independence of Mozambique, a buffer territory has been transformed overnight into an independent African State, firmly committed to the eradication of colonialism and racism. South Africa has had to face its first real independent border which has been heavily patrolled by its armed forces ever since the FRELIMO takeover of power.

The situation with regard to Zimbabwe became even more serious -- the Pretoria regime was quick to realise that it could not get involved in an open-ended war in Rhodesia with any prospect of winning. To continue to back the illegal Smith regime could not only turn Rhodesia into South Africa's Vietnam, but it could also make the Pretoria regime more vulnerable to international economic and other sanctions, and to serious internal resistance.

SWAPO was making considerable headway and international pressure over Namibia was also building up - it would be difficult for South Africa to rely too heavily on the western powers for support; they would find it increasingly difficult to defend and protect South Africa from international political pressures unless South Africa gave the impression of making some 'concessions'.

When the issue of South Africa's expulsion from the UN was raised in 1974, the three western Permanent Members in the Security Council -- Britain, France and the USA -- used the triple veto for the first time to block the move. Premier Vorster immediately responded by thanking the western powers for their action in defence of South Africa and promised substantial changes in South African foreign policy within the next six months to a year.[4]

Pretoria then set about taking a series of initiatives with regard to Rhodesia which it described as being part of a wider policy of detente with Africa. It was prepared to help bring about a

legal settlement in Rhodesia in such a way as not to threaten the future security of South Africa. Over Namibia it was less earnest and merely wished to give the impression of being open to negotiation whilst in fact consolidating its hold over the international territory, by expanding its military bases and implementing the Bantustan policy.

The 1974/75 initiative to bring about a settlement in Rhodesia has failed and it is clear the power will not be transferred by negotiation alone and will need to be seized by the African people through national mobilisation and armed struggle. In Namibia, SWAPO has scored major military successes against the enemy, resulting in heavy South African military commitment to that region and the prospect of a major armed confrontation.

ANGOLA

Faced with the impending declaration of independence by Angola on 11 November 1975, the South Africans despatched armed units into that territory as early as June 1975.[5] By October it admitted to it. The initial reason given was that they were there to protect the Cunene Dam project and associated installations. Subsequently, on 14 October, the Defence Department in Pretoria made a statement to the effect that seven Ovambos had been killed in weekend raids from across the Angola border.[6] South African defence officials then began to suggest that they were following a 'hot pursuit' policy which meant that their forces would not be constrained by borders in pursuing guerrillas.[7] Since then, eye-witnesses and other reports have confirmed that South African armed forces in large numbers are not only operating within Angola but are directly engaged in the war against the MPLA.[8] Clearly South Africa is determined to ensure that Angola does not have an administration which will be hostile to its system of white domination and provide support to the African liberation struggle. It also wishes and thus strengthen its illegal occupation of Namibia.

South Africa's initial intervention in Angola needed a further decision after Portugal's withdrawal on 11 November 1975 as to how deeply Pretoria wished to be involved in Angola, since it could not risk leaving its area under-defended. The Vorster regime despatched more troops to Angola and expanded its military bases in Namibia in preparation for a large scale war. It tried to secure increased support from Washington, but the Senate vote against additional US involvement in Angola made it difficult for the Ford Administration to respond positively. One of the most

alarming factors in the Angolan conflict is the nature and extent of advance US and South African preparation to help destroy the influence and authority of the MPLA.

It is remarkable that South Africa's blatant aggression against Angola from the international territory of Namibia, which it occupies illegally, has not so far been considered by the United Nations Security Council. In June 1975, the three western Permanent Members of the Security Council vetoed a resolution calling for a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa on the grounds that Pretoria's illegal occupation did not constitute a threat to peace. Now, South Africa is using the international territory as a base from which to launch its aggressive operations against Angola. There is a clear case for United Nations action to ensure that South Africa's aggression in Angola is brought to an end.

SOUTHERN OCEANS

Whilst it is true to say that the major concentration of South Africa's military effort has been in counter-insurgency training and the provision of sophisticated equipment for the army and the air force, a substantial amount of money has recently been allocated to naval and maritime installations. Most of it has been devoted to expanding and improving the Simonstown naval base and other ports and the provision of sophisticated naval communication and surveillance systems.

South Africa has deliberately played on the apparent Soviet naval threat in the Southern Oceans in order to enlist the support of the principal NATO powers so that they may increase their military dependence on South Africa and set about establishing a formal defence alliance with it. South Africa's strategy in this respect received ready support from senior Conservative politicians in Britain, who pressed strongly throughout the middle and late 1960s for closer western defence collaboration with the Pretoria regime.

The South African Defence White paper published on 23 April 1969 stated: 'The considerable harbour and repair facilities at Simonstown and elsewhere in our country, as well as the modern communication and control facilities, all provided at great expense, are indispensable to Allied naval forces in the Southern Atlantic and Indian Ocean areas'. The Defence Paper provided for the construction of a world-wide communication network near Westlake to enable South Africa's maritime command to keep in touch at any time with any ship or aircraft operating between South America and Australia. The White Paper also placed considerable importance on building a new tidal basin and submarine base at Simonstown.

Britain and South Africa have a long history of joint military collaboration. It is significant that since the late sixties, every set of naval exercises between the Royal Navy and the South African fleet --under the Simonstown Agreement -- have been bigger than the preceding ones. Both Labour and Conservative Governments increased British military collaboration with South Africa in this field.

Within days of the Labour Government being returned to power in October 1974, the biggest ever naval exercise between the two navies took place and provoked a major political controversy in Britain. As a result of these pressures (and perhaps in anticipation of using the British veto jointly with France and the USA in the Security Council some days later), the British Foreign Secretary said on 25 October 1974 that if the Simonstown Agreement was only of 'marginal' military importance, and caused Britain 'political embarrassment' then perhaps it ought to be terminated. As expected, the Agreement was officially terminated on 16 June 1975. However, as Parliament was informed in November 1974, it does not mean that British naval ships will stop calling at South African ports.

Also during November 1974, South Africa announced that it was embarking on an extension of the Simonstown base which will treble its capacity so that the harbour will then be able to hold between 40 and 50 ships. The cost of the extension was estimated at about £10m. The London Times reported: 'The decision to go ahead with the plan has been taken in the belief that whatever the outcome of the British Government's review of the Simonstown Agreement, the base will still play an important role in the defence of the Cape sea-route.'[9]

It is highly unlikely that the South African regime will embark on expenditure amounting to millions of pounds if it is not assured that the major western powers will in fact utilise those naval facilities. South Africa's navy is by no means large enough to use the expanded facilities by itself.

US INVOLVEMENT

France has increased its defence interest in the Indian and South Atlantic Ocean area, and in February 1975 four of its warships called at South African ports.[10] But the most serious developments have been in relation to the USA.

With Britain's steady withdrawal from an 'East of Suez' defence role Washington has expressed its concern about the 'vaccum' in the Indian Ocean area and has negotiated for an expansion of its base facilities on the British-owned Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia. There is also growing evidence of high level defence cooperation between the United States and South Africa.

In October 1974, a distinguished American journalist, Tad Szulc, wrote in Esquire magazine about a secret White House document, a National Security Council Decision Memorandum (NISDOM), which set out several policy options for the USA with regard to Southern Africa. Policy option 2, known as 'Tar Baby', was adopted by Kissinger and Nixon in 1970 to signal a policy of a 'tilt' in favour of South Africa, Rhodesia and the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique. This document, in his view, 'provides the rationale for the defence of Southern Africa'. Szulc was referring to an earlier admission by NATO, during May 1974, to the effect that its Supreme Allied Command, Atlantic (SACLANT), based in Virginia, had prepared contingency plans for military operations around Southern Africa.

During 1974, several South African leaders visited Washington to discuss Indian Ocean security. In January, the Minister of Interior and Information, Dr. C. Mulder, visited Washington and held talks with Vice-President Ford as well as Vice-Admiral Ray Peet, a leading planner in the Pentagon. In May, Admiral Biermann, head of the South African Defence Forces, went to Washington on an apparently private visit which involved a meeting with J.W. Middendorf, the Acting Secretary for the Navy. In November, the London Times reported that the South African Defence Minister 'confirmed that the Vice-Admiral James Johnson, head of South Africa's Navy, had been invited to the United States for private discussion'.[11]

In January 1975, six Republican Congressmen spent a fortnight in South Africa and visited the Simonstown naval base, the Silvermine communications headquarters, and the Atlas Aircraft Corporation. The group was led by Robert Wilson, a member of the House Armed Services Committee, who was reported to have made statements in favour of a US presence in Simonstown and relaxing the arms embargo. Upon its return, the delegation met William Middendorf, now Secretary of the US Navy, who apparently emphasised the strong need to secure Simonstown as a port of US warships.[12]

In April 1975, a similar visit by three Democratic Congressmen took place with their itinerary also arranged by the South African regime. Two of them, John Dent and Richard Ichord, were also members of the House Armed Services Committee, and upon their return they undertook to work to improve relations between the USA and South Africa.[13]

Also during April 1975, Melvyn Laird, former US Secretary of Defence, visited South Africa and stated that the USA could review its arms embargo against South Africa.[14]

US interest in developing a closer working alliance with South Africa is directed not only at preserving the status quo in South Africa but also to establish a greater presence in the Indian Ocean area so that it may be close to the Arab oil producing region. The so-called oil crisis has already led to grave warnings by the USA of possible direct intervention to take over the oil wells in the event on another oil boycott by the Arab countries which might result in the strangulation' of western economies. These preoccupations, together with the alleged Societ naval threat in the Indian Ocean area, form the basis of a growing de facto alliance between the major NATO powers and South Africa.

THE ADVOKAAT SYSTEM

A major aspect of this developing western alliance with South Africa is the construction of the Advokaat military communications system by South Africa in cooperation with several western companies at a cost of over R15m. The installation became operational in March 1973 and is claimed to be the most modern system of its kind with the ability to maintain surveillance from South Africa's coastline across the South Atlantic to South America and across the Indian Ocean to Australia and New Zealand. The headquarters of this system is at Silvermine, Westlake, which is near Cape Town and not far from the Simonstown naval base.[15] It has several sub-stations, including one in Walvis Bay in Namibia, and, reportedly, it is directly linked by permanent channels 'with the Royal Navy in Whitehall' and 'with the US Navy base at San Juan in Puerto Rico'.[16]

In June 1975, documents published by the British Anti-Apartheid Movement and submitted to the United Nations revealed that the Advokaat system was initiated via firms in Germany which cooperated with the West Germany Defence Ministry in helping to construct that system. In addition, the documents also provided evidence of firms in Britain, the USA, France, Denmark and the Netherlands being involved in supplying equipment and spares for the system. Although the firms cannot be identified from the NATO forms, because the reference to them is shielded by the use of code numbers, it is clear that firms from the above mentioned countries are involved. Most striking of all is the fact that the NATO system of codifying equipment and spares has been made available to South Africa.

According to South African press reports, Argentina, Australia and New Zealand were initially directly connected with the Advokaat communication system. With the advent of a Labour

Government, Australia appears to have refused to use the existing link between Silvermine and the Australian Navy's headquarters in Canberra. The Johannesburg Sunday Times reported in October 1973: 'Australia wants no help from South Africa in the vital defence task of watching what the Russian ships are doing in the Indian Ocean. A former sister in the Commonwealth and a World War II ally, Australia is now making no use of our sophisticated naval intelligence service'.[17] Presumably it is because of this development that South African Ministers no longer speak of the Advokaat system extending to Australia and New Zealand. For example, when the Information Minister, Dr. C. Mulder, visited France during April 1975, he said: 'And not far from Simonstown, we have built a sophisticated multi-million franc maritime communications headquarters that provides up-to-the minute information on all maritime traffic from the Cape to North Africa, South America, the South Pole region, and India'.[18] Links with Argentina presumably remain. The Change of government in both Australia and New Zealand at the end of 1975 may, of course, mean that these defence links will be re-established.

NATO

In the past, when members of NATO as well as its Secretary General have been asked about reports of NATO links with South Africa, they have flatly denied all links, maintaining that they have no military relationship with the Pretoria regime and in any case South Africa is far outside the NATO Treaty area. When NATO officials were confronted with information about the operational planning of SACLANT for the Cape route, they responded by stating that there were no plans to cooperate with South Africa. When the British Foreign Secretary was questioned in the House of Commons on 6 November 1974 by a Labour Member of Parliament, whether the NATO study indicated possible NATO defence involvement with South Africa, Mr. Callaghan said: 'Studies have been made, but there is no commitment to the part of NATO members to engage collectively or individually in activities outside the NATO area'.[19]

It so happens that the Advokaat system becomes operational at the northern point of the South Atlantic where the NATO area ends -- at the Tropic of Cancer. Moreover, it is not limited to the Atlantic area and covers the South Pole area as well as the Indian Ocean. For the purposes of military surveillance and communications in the Southern Oceans, South Africa claims to have become virtually the nerve centre for western defence.

The Pretoria regime has its reasons for making exaggerated claims, but it is worth considering that if South Africa is providing such modern facilities to the West at considerable financial cost, what does it receive in return? It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the evolving alliance relationship with NATO members involves a firm western commitment to help preserve the stability of the Pretoria regime and afford its international political support. In this context, it does not become absurd for the principal western powers to use the triple veto to prevent South Africa's expulsion from the United Nations, as they did in 1974. More recently, in June 1975, during the Security Council debate on Namibia, they once again used their troika veto to block a resolution which called for a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa. Both the USA and Britain claim to implement the UN embargo on arms sales to South Africa, yet they resort to veto, with France, in order to prevent the embargo becoming mandatory. At first sight this may appear difficult meaningful in the context of the growing military dependence that the major western powers are placing on preserving South Africa's stability and security in the Southern hemisphere.

The African States, the liberation movements and various anti-apartheid organisations have in the past drawn attention to statements emanating from several organisations linked with NATO, as well as from official NATO organs, indicating a strong desire to rely on South Africa as a military ally. These protests have produced fervent denials of any intention to collaborate militarily with South Africa. It is useful, therefore, to note some of the more recent statements. The Council of the Atlantic Treaty Association, at its Spring Meeting and Seminar held at SACLANT Headquarters in Norfolk, Virginia, adopted a Resolution on 26 May 1973, part of which stated:

> 'The extraordinary expansion of Soviet sea power in recent years has transformed the security problems of the Alliance, as defined by the North Atlantic Treaty. The Council of the Atlantic Treaty Association registers its concern at this development, and its continued conviction... that naval cooperation among the Allies is required <u>outside</u> the geographical boundaries of the Treaty area. The adjustment of Allied sea power to the Soviet expansion on the seas is necessary to maintain deterrence against both nuclear and non-nuclear attack, and <u>equally against maritime routes critical to the</u>

Allies in peace or in war -- the sea lanes for petroleum or other vital supplies, for example'. (Author's emphasis)

This Resolution was published in the official NATO Review, No. 4 of 1973, issued by the NATO Information Service in Brussels. Despite the guarded language in the Resolution and the absence of any direct reference to South Africa, no observer can fail to conclude that it refers to the security of the so-called Cape route which is now considered to cover the area from the South Atlantic around to the Indian Ocean rather than merely the region along South Africa's coastline.

The documents presented to the UN in June 1975 provide authentic evidence about the involvement of various NATO members in the Advokaat system and the provision of the NATO code for its equipment. It is difficult to believe that, for example, the code was provided without proper authorisation by the relevant NATO authorities or any of its members. Yet even the publication of official NATO forms with codes for equipment connected with the Advokaat system in June 1975 has brought forth further denials from Brussels that NATO is involved with South Africa. Indeed, it is now claimed in Brussels that the codification system is an 'open system' and available to various 'neutral states'.

Public protests in several NATO countries have elicited the further information that at present about a dozen non-NATO members utilise the NATO codification system for spares and equipment -- but nothing is said as to why South Africa and its Advokaat partners were the first non-NATO countries to be provided with the codification system. On what grounds was South Africa granted the codification system? Who authorised it? Why was this information kept secret? These and other questions remain unanswered.

NATO TREATY

The NATO Treaty stipulates that an attack on any member constitutes an attack against the Alliance as a whole. South Africa would welcome an arrangement which placed it in the same category so that it could feel secure in the knowledge that, should help be needed to maintain the apartheid system, assistance would be forthcoming from powerful western nations. There is a major problem in extending the NATO area beyond its present limit and an even more serious political problem for any western alliance formally to incorporate South Africa as a member.

It is precisely for this reason that the British Foreign Secretary suggested that the Simonstown Agreement should be ended if it was a 'political embarrassment' for Britain. Thus it was terminated with unusual understanding being shown by the Pretoria regime. But as the British Government says, it will not result in any hindrance to British warships calling at Simonstown and other South African ports.[20] That Agreement has not been ended to liquidate all British military relations with South Africa: in fact, Britain's reliance on South Africa's defence role has increased as a result of British naval withdrawal from the Indian Ocean area.

NATO justifies its SACLANT study by claiming that the western alliance has to take account of the importance of its sea-route around the Cape which would need protection in times of 'crisis' or during a 'war'. The emphasis placed on possible NATO operations outside its Treaty area in 'time of crisis' is a recent development which is primarily aimed at placing a major strategic importance on South Africa's defence role in relation to the Cape sea-route.

In November 1975, the Chairman of the NATO Military Committee, Admiral Sir Peter Hill-Norton, suggested at a luncheon in London that three or four NATO members with 'blue-water' navies, including Britain, could combine in a group outside the alliance's framework to monitor what was going on in the Indian Ocean, where the Soviet naval presence represented a serious threat to the west's lines of communication. In this way, he suggested, a NATO 'area of interest' could be established in addition to Europe. Sir Peter said that the west's ability to defend itself was greatly weakened by the lines drawn on its maps, including one at the Tropic of Cancer. This novel approach to create a separate grouping which could presumably establish formal links with South Africa would in effect extend NATO's operations far beyond its Treaty area.[21]

Earlier, at the beginning of October 1975, Lt. General Gunher Rall, West German representative on NATO's Military Committee, was forced to resign by the Bonn Government when the African National Congress of South Africa revealed that he had travelled to South Africa the previous year under an assumed name and visited various atomic and military installations. This exposure caused considerable concern in some NATO capitals, but only a month later Sir Peter Hill-Norton felt it appropriate to call for an extension of NATO's interest to cover the Cape route. There has been no statement of disclaimer or

protest made by any NATO members since, and this reflects the strength of powerful new forces committed to increasing western military collaboration with South Africa.

NUCLEAR COLLABORATION

It has always been known that all the major western powers have collaborated closely with South Africa in developing its nuclear technology and plants. However, secret documents published by the African National Congress at the end of September 1975 revealed high level West German Involvement in building up the Pretoria regime's nuclear capability.[22] South Africa and Iran have since reached an agreement under which Pretoria will sell uranium oxide worth some £340 m to Iran in exchange for financial participation in its proposed uranium enrichment plant to be constructed with West German Assistance.[23] The enrichment plant is expected to be one of the biggest in the world and a feasibility study has been completed by STEAG of Essen.

South Africa has refused to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty and is now an incipient nuclear power; the grave danger which an apartheid nuclear bomb presents to Africa and the world is obvious.

THE WEST AND SOUTH AFRICA

The major western powers have substantial financial and economic interests in South Africa and rely heavily on its mineral resources. They are becoming increasingly committed to preserving the apartheid status quo. In the context of the growing military dependence placed upon South Africa by the western powers, it makes it inevitable that the major NATO powers will seek to preserve the overall stability and security of South Africa. Recent history bears dramatic testimony to the fact that once a region is designated as being of major strategic importance then external alliance powers cannot tolerate any prospect of political change in that region and become firmly committed to helping to preserve the status quo. South Africa knows this and has succeeded in drawing the major western powers into a close military alliance with the Pretoria regime. There are as yet no known formal military pacts but as the South African Defence Minister indicated in an interview about their military relationships with NATO, they are 'not official' but 'friendly'.[24]

The commitment of the western powers to the side of the status quo in South Africa makes the internal conflict in that country even sharper, and seriously impedes the liberation struggle. At the UN and elsewhere, the western powers have blocked every proposal for meaningful action under their general policy of not

wanting any confrontation with South Africa. This 'no confrontation with South Africa's policy has developed during the past decade into a firm 'anti-liberation policy'. When confronted with the fact that the white regime refuses to abandon white domination and race rule, the western powers reply by stating their strong commitment to 'peaceful change'. In effect, this policy means that the only change which they will support is that which the Pretoria regime decides to initiate and implement in order to consolidate the white power system. It is a foolproof policy of preventing all international action against South Africa, since the no confrontation policy excludes non-violent measures such as economic sanctions or mandatory arms embargo, and the peaceful change thesis involves only supporting that change which the Pretoria regime feels the need to make.

CONCLUSION

Neither Premier Vorster nor the western powers are unaware of the prospect of a major violent confrontation in South Africa. The Pretoria regime's detente policy, announced towards the end of 1974, was based on the need, as Vorster stated, to avoid a 'catastrophe' in Southern Africa.

Basically, as can be seen by South Africa's defence expenditure and the role of its armed forces, the Pretoria regime faces its greatest threat from the 20 million oppressed African, Indian and Coloured people within its boundaries. The heavy militarisation is an indication of the lack of security felt by the white regime and its readiness to resort to military power if the system of white domination is seriously challenged. It is aware, however, of the need to end international pressures against apartheid and, as an insurance system, to draw the western powers steadily into its internal conflict by developing close military relations with them. There is now alarming and growing evidence that the major western powers are fulfilling South Africa's need to maintain the apartheid system, despite their claim that they are only concerned with a potential Soviet naval threat in the Southern Oceans.

The extent to which South Africa succeeded in drawing in the US on its side in the battle against the MPLA in Angola reflects some of the dangers inherent in the growth of military collaboration and Pretoria. Despite official denials by NATO, there is increasing evidence of poweful elements within NATO determined to promote closer military ties with Pretoria by various direct and indirect means. South Africa now has the technology and capability to produce its own nuclear bomb, largely due to the ready assistance it has received from various NATO powers.

The dangers inherent in the rapid integration of South Africa in overall western defence planning and strategy are obvious. The western powers are rapidly becoming more and more deeply involved in the explosive racial conflict in South Africa on the side of the apartheid system, with all the disastrous consequences of that engagement for the future peace and security of the peoples of Africa and the world.

It has therefore never been as important as it is now to increase international pressure against South Africa and to support the African liberation struggle if a major racial conflagration is to be averted. South Africa is today, in a very real sense, perhaps the greatest threat to international peace and security.

REFERENCES

1 Figures from The Military Balance, annual publication of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, London.

2 These figures for the total armed forces include the Active Reserve Force: See The Military Balance.

3 For example, West German nuclear collaboration and the supply of equipment for the Advokaat system by various NATO members referred to in text, pp.8-10.

4 The Guardian, London, 6 November 1974.

5 The Times, London, 22 January 1976.

6 The Times, London, 15 October 1975.

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APPENDIX I

SOUTH AFRICA

Population:	
African	17,740,000
Whites	4,160,000
Coloureds	2,300,000
Asians	700,000
T o t a l	24,900,000

The Military Balance, 1975-1976*

Military service: 12 months
Total armed forces: 50,500 (35,400 conscripts)
Defence expenditure 1975-76: R948.1m

ARMY: 38,000 (31,000 conscripts)
141 Centurion tanks, 20 Comet med tanks; 1,000 AML-245/90 Eland, 50 M-3 armoured cars and 80 Ferret scout cars; 250 Saracen, about 100 Commando APC; 25-pdr gun/how, 155mm how; 17 pdr, 90mm ATK guns; ENTAC ATGW; 204 GK 20mm, K-63 twin 35mm, L-70 40mm and 3.7-in. AA guns; 18 Cactus (Crotale), 54 Tigercat SAM.
Reserves: 13,800 Active Reserve (Citizen Force). Reservists serve 19 days per year for 5 years.
NAVY: 4,000 (1,400 conscripts)
3 Daphne-class submarines
2 destroyers with 2 Wasp ASW helicopters.
6 ASW frigates (3 with 1 Wasp ASW helicopter each).

*Published by the International Institute for Strategic Studies London.

1 escort minesweeper (training ship)
10 coastal minesweepers.
4 patrol craft (ex-British Ford-class).
(6 corvettes, with Exocet SSM, being built).

Reserves: 10,400 trained Citizen Force with 2 frigates and 7 minesweepers.

AIR FORCE: 8,500 (3,000 conscripts); 108 combat aircraft.

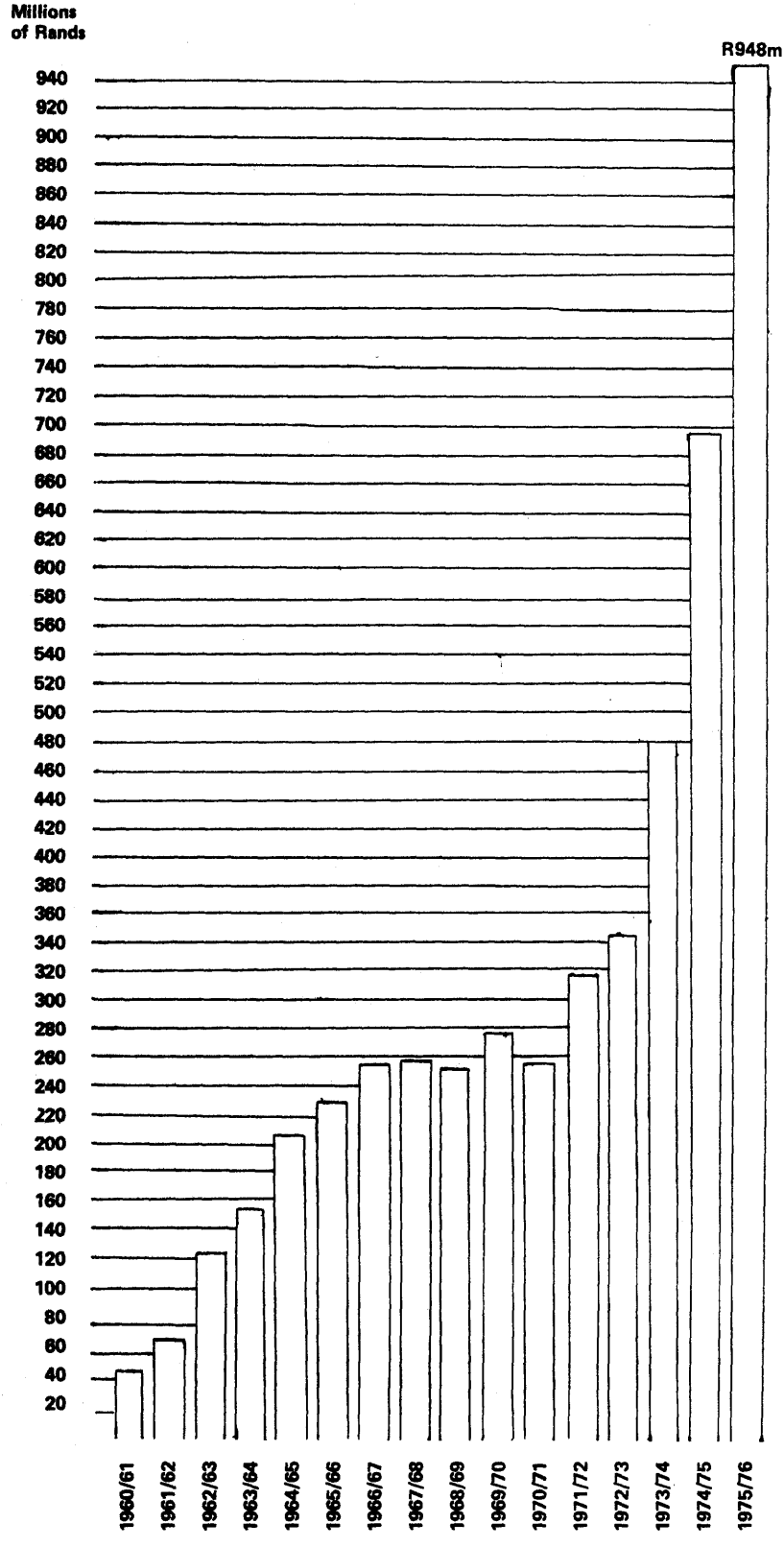
1 light bomber sqn with 6 Canberra B (1)-12, 3 T-4.
1 light bomber sqn with 10 Buccaneer S-50 with AS-30 ASM.
2 fighter sqns with 32 Mirage IIIEZ and 8 IIIDZ.
1 fighter/recce sqn with 16 Mirage IIICZ, 4 IIIBZ and 4 IIIRZ with AS-20 ASM, Matra R-530 AAM
2 MR sqns with 7 Shackleton MR3, 18 Piaggio P-166S Albatross (2 more P-166S on order).
4 tpt sqns with 7 C-130B, 9 Transall C-160Z, 23 C-47, 5 DC-4, 1 Viscount 781 and 7 HS-125.
4 hel sqns, 2 with 20 Alouette III each, 1 with 20 SA-330 Puma, 1 with 15 SA-321L Super Frelon.
1 flight of 7 Wasp (naval-assigned).
1 comms and liaison sqn (army-assigned) with 16 Cessna 185A/D/E (being replaced by AM-3C).

Trainers incl Harvard; 160 MB-326M Impala (some armed in a COIN role); 30 Vampire FB Mk 6, Mk 9, T Mk 55; T-6; TF-86; C-47 and Alouette II/III. (32 Mirage F-1A2 and 16 F-1CZ and 15 MB-326K on order).

Reserves: 3,000 Citizen Force. 8 sqns with 20 Impala, 40 AM-3C Bosbok, 100 Harvard IIA, III, T-6G Texan; Cessna 185A/D, A-185E.

PARA-MILITARY FORCES: 75,000 Commandos - armed civilian military organised in infantry battalion-type units grouped in formations of 5 or more units with local industrial and rural protection duties. Members undergo 10 months' initial and periodic refresher training. There are 12 Air Commando squadrons with private aircraft.

SOUTH AFRICA'S MILITARY BUDGET ESTIMATES 1960–1976



South Africa's Military Build-up

South Africa is undoubtedly the dominant economic and military power in Southern Africa with aspirations to assert itself as the major regional power in the area. Its military build-up since the Sharpeville massacre in 1960 reflects its growing insecurity internally and its determination to intimidate and threaten the newly independent African states. By outlawing the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress in 1960 the white regime drove them underground and prepared to meet future internal resistance by even more repressive legislation and by militarising the entire white population.

Defence Budgets

In 1960-61 the defence budget amounted to R44m and shot up to R72m the following year. By 1973-4 the defence budget had risen to R480m and 1974-5 rose by more than R200m to reach almost R700m. Once again, in 1975-6 it rose to R948m, a rise of about R250m. The current estimate for 1976-7 is R1,300m.(U.S. $1 = R0.87) (1) In the period since 1973-4 to the present the defence budget has shot up year by year from R480m to the present figure of R1,300m: by all accounts one of the most phenomenal rises in defence expenditure. This reflects in a dramatic fashion the rapidly changing situation in Southern Africa' and the serious crisis faced by the Pretoria regime.

Manpower

In terms of manpower, the South African military has traditionally been all white but in 1973 it began to train special contingents of Africans, Indians and Coloureds for operations in the 'border' areas. There is also a special army for the Transkei. These developments came about as a result of the growing casualties suffered by the white forces and the difficulties experienced in recruiting an ever increasing number of young whites for the armed forces from the economy which needs them. However, despite these recent changes the armed forces are still vitually all white. In 1971-2 they stood at 48,000 and rose to over 110,000 the following year, 1972-3. By 1975-6 the figure vitually doubled to 201,900 personnel with an additional 75,000 commandos

*The author sent additional material to supplement the original article

organised and trained as a Home Guard. The present standing armed forces amount to 51,500 with 173,500 Reserves making a total of 245,000 personnel with an additional 90,000 Commandos.

Army, Airforce and Navy

The South African military forces are equipped with the most modern and sophisticated weapons available today. The army has modern tanks including British comets centurions; French Pauhard tanks and British armoured cars which are made under license in South Africa; as well as Ferret, the Crotale and Tigercat ground to air missiles.

The Air Force has British Canberra, Buccaneer planes and wasp helicopters; French Mirage III's as well as fighter and interceptor squadrons with the modern Mirage FI; French Alloutte, Puma and Super Frelon helicopters; Italian Piaggio, Aermacchi MB 326M and the new 326K as well as the Aeritalia AM 3C aircraft which are ideal for counter insurgency operations. They also have old US supplied Harvards and more recently supplied Cessna and Merlin planes transporters including Lockheed E-130's and Douglas C-54's. They also have the Franco German TRANSALL transporters. The South Africans have manufactured over 200 Aermacchi 326 M's internally known as the Impala I and are now making the 326K under the name of Impala II. They are also assembling French Mirages including the F.I.

The Navy has old frigates, minesweepers and destroyers supplied by Britain and more recent purchases of submarines from France as well as 3 new missile armed fast patrol boats from Israel. There are six coruettes on order equipped with the Israel Gabriel naval missiles.

UN Embargo

The United Nations arms embargo adopted by the Security Council in 1963 has not been effective in imposing a total ban on the supply of military equipment to South Africa. Britain, the USA and the Federal Republic of Germany claim to adhere to the arms embargo but in fast supply a wide range of electronic and other military equipment. France has in practice taken over Britain's role as South Africa's major arms supplier and continues to collaborate closely with the Pretoria regime. Italy claims to enforce the embargo strictly yet South Africa obtains Italian aircraft with ease and is even granted licences for their manufacture inside that country.

Israel is now promoting close military ties with South Africa and beginning to supply it with military weapons. Those weapons which are denied to South Africa by some of the Western powers are in fact made in that country under licences granted by certain western countries. South Africa has thus been able to develop an internal armaments industry with the assistance of multinationals which have enthusiastically established subsidiaries in that country and transferred capital, technology and skilled personnel there for that purpose.

The UN Security Council has been blocked twice, in June 1975 and October 1976, from imposing a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa by the use of the Triple Veto by the USA, France and Britain.

SA's Role

South Africa does not only utilise its military might in order to suppress the black people of that country and threaten the rest of Africa but also supports the illegal Rhodesian regime with military assistance and maintains its illegal occupation of Namibia with increasing militarisation of the international territory.

The collapse of Portuguese colonialism in Africa in 1974 and the final victory of the long struggle of the people of Mozambique and Angola culminating in the assertion of their national independence and the defeat of South African forces in Angola has created a new strategic situation for the Pretoria regime as the effective de facto power in Rhodesia and Namibia where the liberation forces are making substantial headway. The regime is faced by a new crisis made all the more critical by the growing resistance in South Africa. The post Soweto developments taken together with the new offensive launched by liberation forces in the neighbouring territories under colonial occupation presents an unprecedented crisis not only for the Pretoria regime but also for the western powers. The Kissinger initiatives throughout 1976 have been motivated by the need to help preserve and stabilise Southern Africa against the Revolution in Namibia and Rhodesia which attempts to sweep away the apartheid system. Washington's need to control change in Southern Africa and give major priority to developments in that region presents very serious dangers for the future peace and security of that region as well as the continent of Africa.

Western Policy

But the western powers do not only seem to be preoccupied with maintaining the apartheid status quo. They are supporting

South Africa's wishes to become major regional power in the area with virtually unlimited hemispheric ambitions. There is much being written and said about South Africa's strategic importance to the West. The obvious interests of the Western powers derives from its considerable economic stake in the apartheid system and the need to benefit further from perpetuating and intensifying the exploitation of the African people and the resources of their countries.

However, to integrate South Africa even further into overall Western defence it is argued that Britain's withdrawal from its East of Suez role has created a serious vacuum in the Indian Ocean; that the growing Soviet naval fleet presents a serious potential threat in the Indian Ocean, that the Cape sea route, which constitutes the life line of Western Europe needs to be protected - that for all these and other reasons the Western powers should rely on South Africa's defence capacities in order to protect western interests in that region.

Rear Admiral Cunter Poser, retired, chief of intelligence on NATO's International Military Staff in Brussels recently wrote about SA: "As a western minded country it offers a key strategic position for the preservation of some western interests and the consolidation of sea power. Equally important are her resources... urgently needed in European countries which are under increasing pressure by demands of the volatile Third World".

South Africa's attempts to draw the major western powers even more closer in military collaboration takes many forms. It is spending vast sums on improving naval and maritime facilities and communications in order to make it an attractive ally of the principal western powers. The Simonstown naval base is being expanded as are several coastal parts and airports. In 1973 the Advokaat Communications system was made operational. It was built with the active participation of several Western German firms and its components came from various NATO members. The Anti Apartheid Movement disclosed in June 1975 that the Advokaat system was constructed with the use of NATO codification system for spares and equipment. Documentary evidence published at that time showed that South Africa had been provided with this NATO codification system.

These and other developments show the growing tendency to rely increasingly on South Africa's defence role in the Southern Oceans and to integrate it even further into overall western defence. Thus the growing crisis faced by the apartheid regime is also considered to constitute a crisis for the major western

powers. The public declarations of these powers expressing their firm commitment to peaceful change in Southern Africa is in effect an anti-liberation movement posture. As the liberation struggle intensifies and the conflict becomes sharper the major western powers are likely to become increasingly committed to maintain and preserve the status quo in South Africa. But we are already in a critical phase where various attempts will be increased to undermine and weaken the national liberation movements in Southern Africa.

S.A.'s Aggression

Despite its defeat in Angola the Pretoria regime remains determined to expand its security role in Africa. Its three ambitions are revealed by the official declaration of the official Pretoria regime that its armed forces may operate anywhere "South of the Equator". The recent attacks by Rhodesian forces against Mozambique and the absence of firm international action to stop such aggression points to the dangers for the future. In July 1976 the Security Council heard from the Zambian government of repeated attacks against Zambia by South African armed forces. South Africa was charged with no less than 14 acts of aggression this year alone including the attack on Sialola on 11 July 1976 when some 24 people were killed. In many other incidents since the beginning of this year Zambia has lost lives in landmines planted by the racists. Our people have been maimed and livestock and thousands of Kwacha worth of property have been destroyed. The South African Air Force has violated Zambia's airspace on numerous occasions".

Threat to Peace

Despite South Africa's growing threat to the peace and security of Africa and the world the western permanent members of the Security Council utilise their vetoes to prevent the situation to be determined as constituting "a threat to the peace" under chapter VII of the UN charter. One wonders what else South Africa has to do before it constitutes a threat to the world peace. It has indulged in a massive military build-up and adopts an increasingly aggressive posture towards independent Africa; it has invaded Angola and commits repeated acts of aggression against neighbouring African states such as Zambia; it provides military assistance including equipment of all types to the

Rhodesian rebel regime; it sabotages international economic sanctions against Rhodesia even though they are mandatory under the U.N. Charter (since UDI was considered a threat to peace by Britain); it refuses to withdraw its illegal occupation of Namibia and has instead established military bases in the international territory; it refuses to abandon the policies of apartheid and continues its brutal repression of the black people of South Africa.

Despite all these grounds the major western powers refuse to consider South Africa as threatening world peace. Instead some of the allies of the Pretoria regime have now embarked on assisting the Vorster regime to develop its own ambitious nuclear programme - and there is every likelihood that there will soon be an apartheid atomic bomb if it has not been developed already.

The apartheid regime has never been a greater threat to world peace. No African state can enjoy peace and security as long as the apartheid system survives in South Africa. It therefore becomes doubly important for all peace loving peoples of the world to support the anti-apartheid campaigns against collaboration with South Africa and win the widest possible support for the liberation struggle of the people of South Africa.

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1. For a graphical record of military budget estimates 1960-76 see Apartheid A Threat to Peace, by Abdul S. Minty, Anti Apartheid Movement, London 1976 p. 14.
2. These figures include Reserves.
3. Figures from the military Balance, annual publication of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, London.
4. Article in the current issue of South Africa International, quarterly publication of the South Africa Foundation.
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