

CHAPTER 2

THE INSTITUTION OF A MANDATORY ARMS EMBARGO AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Jimmy Carter was elected president of the United States of America in 1976, in the midst of a period of much regional political turmoil in Southern Africa. The main reason for this turmoil was violent political upheavals against white colonial rule in Angola, Mozambique and Rhodesia. According to Schraeder, the turmoil enveloped South Africa itself on 16 June 1976, when the South African security forces fired upon 15,000 black school children taking part in a demonstration in Soweto. On that day two students were killed, but the incident resulted in the worst violent riots and strikes ever in all of the major South African urban areas. In the months that followed, any possible international perceptions of the stability of the South African political arena were shattered when the violence left at least 575 people dead and 2,389 wounded. Carter entered office in the shadow of this upheaval. He was hailed as a crusader for human rights. Consequently, there was much anticipation among the growing US anti-apartheid movement and the African countries that an end to US-South African cooperation was in sight. This anticipation was enhanced when Carter's voiced his regret that he had not done much to support the struggle for black civil rights in the U.S., and that, if elected president, he would do anything in his power to rectify it.¹ Thus, it is clear that the Carter Administration ushered in a new emphasis on human rights in the domestic as well as foreign policy of the US. The aim of this chapter is to scrutinize the early months of the Carter Administration, and the reasons why the US under that administration supported a mandatory United Nations arms embargo against South Africa.

1. P.J. Schraeder, *United States foreign policy toward Africa: Incrementalism, crisis and change*, p. 215; Study Commission on US Policy Toward Southern Africa, *South Africa: Time Running Out*, p. 356; P.J. Rich, US containment policy, South Africa and the apartheid dilemma, *Review of International Studies* 14, 1988, p. 186.

2.2 CARTER AND SOUTH AFRICA: US POLICY REVIEWED

2.2.1 THE CASE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The first indications of a change in US foreign policy surfaced when Carter announced in early 1977 that a commitment to human rights would be the cornerstone of his Administration's foreign policy.² In essence, it meant a reevaluation of the official US relations with other countries. He accordingly appointed strong proponents of racial equality in South Africa to positions of authority within the Department of State, namely the black human rights activist, Andrew Young, as US Ambassador to the United Nations; Cyrus Vance as Secretary of State; and Anthony Lake as Director for Policy Planning. According to Schraeder, these individuals were bound by a common desire to downplay the importance of the Cold War in their approach to understanding the conflicts of the African continent. They favored a more regionalist approach towards new relationships in which power was more diffuse, and which emphasized the internal economic, cultural, political and historical aspects of regional conflicts. But it would be Vance who would especially give form and substance to Carter's foreign policy. He was Undersecretary of Defense during the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations, and was therefore well informed about the situation in South Africa, especially as far as the institution and implementation of the 1963 arms embargo was concerned. He regarded the Kissinger approach as too narrowly rooted in terms of the Cold War geopolitical struggle. Instead, he was of the opinion that human rights abroad should be enforced through sanctions or the threat of sanctions, if necessary.³

Within a few weeks after inauguration, Carter established a Policy Review Committee under the chairmanship of the Department of State and directed them to undertake a review of US policy toward Rhodesia, South Africa and South West Africa (Namibia), to be finished by the end of January 1977. A number of tasks were assigned, of which the following had a direct relation to South Africa: A review of US policy toward South Africa, together with an analysis of options for future US posture toward that nation, in light of different possible US roles in the Rhodesian and South West Africa (Namibia)

2. R.K. Massie, *Loosing the bonds*, p. 407.

3. A.J. DeRoche, *Andrew Young: Human Rights Ambassador*, pp. 71, 74; R.K. Massie, *Loosing the bonds*, p. 407; P.J. Schraeder, *United States foreign policy toward Africa: Incrementalism, crisis and change*, p. 215; Study Commission on US Policy Toward Southern Africa, *South Africa: Time Running Out*, p. 356; L.E.S. de Villiers, *US sanctions against South Africa*, p. 118.

negotiations; and an examination of the likely reactions by the US Congress and the American public to various US policy options with regard to South Africa. In the end, the establishment of an independent Rhodesia would prove to be the primary African issue for the Carter Administration. It embarked on a major effort to resolve the conflict in the country, which indeed ultimately facilitated the transition to the new nation of Zimbabwe. This effort however limited how much the Carter Administration could work in South Africa.⁴

According to William Schaufele Jr., the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs⁵, the concern of the Carter Administration with Southern Africa differed in many respects from its interest in other parts of the world important to the US. Schaufele made it clear that the Carter Administration did not have a strategic interest in Southern Africa, as it did not wish to play a military role anywhere in Africa. (This signified a total new policy in this regard, when the CIA involvement in 1975 in Angola is taken into consideration). The Carter Administration also did not base the new policy on economic interests, although it hoped to retain access to the mineral wealth of Southern Africa. Instead, the Carter Administration's policies in Southern Africa were essentially founded on political interests, of which a concern for human rights and human dignity formed a significant ingredient. Thus, the general thrust of the policy review was to find ways of strengthening the commitment of the US to social justice and racial equality in Southern Africa, and of demonstrating that commitment in tangible and meaningful ways.⁶

The Carter Administration made it clear that the foreign policy review should be done with the focus on the broader context of the national interests of the US, which included a number of things: First, it had to be true to the ideals of the American nation, namely a commitment to human rights, to which Carter on many occasions stated his own personal commitment. Such a commitment required a firm and clear opposition to racial and social injustice wherever it existed. Therefore, if the US wanted to remain

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4. Carter Presidential Library and Archives (Atlanta), Presidential Review Memorandums, 1977 - 1981, PD 5, Southern Africa: *Memorandum*: Z. Brzezinski to Vice President and Secretaries of State and Defense, 21 January 1977; A.J. DeRoche, *Andrew Young: Human Rights Ambassador*, p. 71; A.J. DeRoche, Standing firm for Principles: Jimmy Carter and Zimbabwe, *Diplomatic History* 23(4), Fall 1999, p. 657.
 5. In 1978, Schaufele was replaced with Richard Moose, Jr. as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs.
 6. W.E. Schaufele, Jr., United States relations in Southern Africa, *Department of State Bulletin*, 9 May 1977, p. 464; P.C. Habib, Southern Africa in the Global Context, *Department of State Bulletin*, 4 April 1977, p. 318; L.E.S. de Villiers, *US sanctions against South Africa*, p. 118.

true to its own convictions and not cast doubt on its commitment to social justice, it had to be engaged in Southern Africa. Secondly, the Carter Administration believed that the people of Africa held the key to the solution of African problems. The US therefore had to fully refrain from imposing its own ideas and solutions on Southern Africa, although it should use its political and economic influence and diplomatic offices to support racial and social progress. Thirdly, another reason for the Carter Administration's preference of African solutions to African problems was to avoid situations that would make Africa an arena for great-power rivalry, which happened in Angola. Racial discrimination and social and political injustice could breed prolonged violence, opening the door for foreign intervention and confrontation. The Carter Administration believed that its best defense against such possibilities was to support policies that would limit potential conflict. Finally, the Carter Administration believed that the US had a stake in Southern Africa because of a firm belief that political harmony must be achieved in diverse societies like the US, and that ethnic, racial and religious differences do not constitute a cause for discrimination and violence.⁷

Carter and Vance spent their first two months in office seeking a way to balance their foreign policy between the tacit US-South African cooperation of the past and an outright break with South Africa. Their first move was proposing that the members of the United Nations Security Council approve a Declaration of Principles opposing racism in Southern Africa. This was followed by a secret list drawn up by the Department of State in February 1977 in which steps that the US Government could take against South Africa, were outlined, e.g. withdrawing US military attachés in South Africa, ending the exchange of intelligence information, reducing Export-Import Bank loan guarantees, refusing visas to South Africans, etc. However, the policy at this stage did not include punitive actions designed to pressurize the South African Government. The State Department's Africa Bureau did favor a decrease in military cooperation to underscore the removal of South Africa from the list of countries with which the US had "normal" relations, but others were opposed to any form of disengagement. The Department of Defense for example argued that further restrictions on military cooperation would have severe repercussions on intelligence collection activities. They were supported in this view by the CIA, who in turn questioned the wisdom of

7. P.C. Habib, Southern Africa in the Global Context, *Department of State Bulletin*, 4 April 1977, pp. 318-319; W.E. Schaufele, Jr., United States relations in Southern Africa, *Department of State Bulletin*, 9 May 1977, p. 464.

pressurizing a valued regional power like South Africa at the same time that the communist pressures in Southern Africa required access to South Africa's vast intelligence network. For the first few months of the Carter Administration, the influence of the opponents of disengagement proved to be the stronger view, which could be seen clearly in a Presidential Directive issued in March 1977. In this directive, Carter rejected immediate punitive measures against South Africa, and instead stated that practical steps at downgrading relations between the US and South Africa were only to be enacted in the case of South Africa failing to make significant progress towards power sharing with the black majority.⁸

2.2.2 THE ROLE OF ANDREW YOUNG

While Carter and Vance worked on a new foreign policy towards South Africa, Andrew Young prepared himself for assuming the presidency of the Security Council for a month, where he would face a new demand for a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa. This demand was agreed upon by the African countries, which declared that the way the US would vote on the issue would be regarded as a test of the sincerity of the Carter Administration. The embargo resolution would be one of four that had been drafted for submission to the Security Council by the African nations. The African nations hoped to elicit the support of Young, who was a human rights activist with explicit links to the American civil rights movement, and who had stated during the first month of the Carter Administration that it was likely that the Administration would energetically pursue a very aggressive policy towards majority rule in all of the Southern African countries. Young also stated his support of a possible arms embargo against South Africa, but he did not think that economic sanctions would form part of the Carter Administration's policy towards South Africa, as it seldom had the desired results.⁹

Young's appointment in the Carter Administration was received with uneasiness on the South African side. The South African Government became even more uneasy when it

8. R.K. Massie, *Loosing the bonds*, pp. 407-408; P.J. Schraeder, *United States foreign policy toward Africa: Incrementalism, crisis and change*, pp. 216-217; Carter Presidential Library and Archives (Atlanta), Presidential Directives, 1977 - 1981, PD 5, Southern Africa: *Directive*, J. Carter to Vice President and Secretaries of State and Defense, 9 March 1977.

9. Anonymous, Young expects new Administration to 'be aggressive' in advancing majority rule in Southern Africa, *The New York Times*, 3 January 1977, p. 7; Anonymous, Embargo of South Africa to be pressed in U.N., *The New York Times*, 19 March 1977.

was announced that he would assume the presidency of the Security Council for a month in March 1977. But Young even antagonized the African nations somewhat, despite the hope placed in him by them, because of the way in which he expressed his views on South Africa. These views were often contradictory. Initially, in meetings with representatives from the African nations at the United Nations, he raised their expectations by proclaiming that a binding arms embargo against South Africa was an irreversible policy pursued by the Carter Administration. However, when he was called upon to fulfill these expectations in late February 1977, he suddenly took on a cautious note, asking if it was wise at that stage to support a mandatory arms embargo, and if it was the sort of prelude that would encourage an acceptable solution in South West Africa (Namibia). This change of tack makes one wonder whether Young had suddenly realized the considerable political and legal consequences that the institution of a mandatory arms embargo held. One effect was that the embargo would have to be enforced under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, which would in turn give substance to the claims of the African nations that South Africa was a threat to international peace and security. That, in turn, would support the frequent Third World demand for international action against South Africa by way of a "Unite for Peace" resolution in the General Assembly, where the US had no power of veto as it had in the Security Council. The South African Government however did not trust Young's change of tack one bit. They regarded it as Young playing all his cards in an effort to find his feet in the United Nations, with whose dealings he was, as yet, unfamiliar. He was also still unfamiliar with diplomacy, according to the South African delegation to the United Nations.¹⁰

Despite the contradictory statements, Young remained very outspoken against apartheid. Yet, in a press interview before assuming the Security Council presidency, that he had a great deal of sympathy for the white minority Governments in Southern Africa. Instead, the US had to use its tremendous influence to find ways of obtaining majority rule in Southern Africa.¹¹ In April 1977, he contradicted this stance as well as his initial opposition against sanctions when he told a British television team that

10. South Africa: The making of United States policy, 1962 - 1989, microfiche collection: National Security Files, fiche 00735: **Telegram**: United States Embassy, Pretoria to Secretary of State, 23 February 1977; Anonymous, Weapon, Time, Place – All wrong (Editorial), **Los Angeles Times**, 3 March 1977, Part II, p. 4.

11. A.J. DeRoche, **Andrew Young: Human Rights Ambassador**, p. 71; Anonymous, Embargo of South Africa to be pressed in U.N., **The New York Times**, 19 March 1977, p. 4; K. Teltsch, Brother Young welcomed at U.N., **The New York Times**, 22 March 1977, p. 10; p. 4; R.K. Massie, **Loosing the bonds**, p. 410.

economic sanctions might be a legitimate nonviolent method to convince the South African Government to end apartheid. In his own words: *“At some point we’ve got to come to the conclusion that we’re no longer going to finance apartheid. When we come to that conclusion, its amazing how quickly the South Africans will come to their senses.”*¹²

Vance agreed with Young’s sentiments, declaring shortly after he was appointed that the Carter Administration was undertaking to stress by word and deed its opposition to the system of apartheid. However, as stated above, Vance and Carter were still trying to find a balance in their approach to South Africa. Young did not make it easier for them, though. He elicited quite a flurry of controversy around some remarks he made in the early months of his appointment, often forcing Vance to hastily issue retractions or corrections. For example, Young stated that South Africa could force Rhodesia to negotiate, on which Vance responded that it was not quite so simple. Also, Young described the Cubans in Angola as bringing a certain stability and order to the region, but Vance quickly corrected him by saying that any outside forces were not at all helpful in obtaining a peaceful solution. Another blunder by Young was an affirmative answer after being asked by a reporter if he considered the South African Government as being illegitimate. Although the answer was an honest reflection of Young’s own opinions, it was not the official position of the Carter Administration, who regarded the National Party as the legitimate ruler of South Africa. Accordingly, both the Carter Presidency and the Department of State issued a formal retraction of Young’s remark. Young did have a role to play, however, despite placing the rest of the Carter Administration in uncomfortable situations through his outspokenness. He was the first government official since Mennen (Soapy) Williams, President J.F. Kennedy’s Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, to link the civil rights movement with US policy toward South Africa. His appointment was therefore very significant in the sense that it helped to set course to the debate on US policy toward South Africa – something that previous US Administrations tried to avoid for various reasons.¹³

12. As quoted in R.K. Massie, *Loosing the bonds*, p. 410.

13. A.J. DeRoche, *Andrew Young: Human Rights Ambassador*, pp. 76-77, 82; R.K. Massie, *Loosing the bonds*, p. 410; South Africa: The making of United States policy, 1962 - 1989, microfiche collection: National Security Files, fiche 00727: *Telegram*: Secretary of State to United States Embassy, Dublin, 30 January 1977.

2.3 TIGHTENING THE SCREW ON VORSTER

In the midst of Carter, Vance and Young trying to formulate a South African policy, it is interesting to note the views of the US public on sanctions against South Africa. The US public in general seemed impressed by Carter's promise of a new policy towards South Africa during the run-up to the elections in 1976. However, a large proportion did not think that the situation in South Africa, repugnant as they thought it might have been, qualified for sanctions, which was clearly indicated in the United Nations Charter as being the ultimate weapon. According to a reader survey by the *Los Angeles Times* in the first quarter of 1977, the majority of the readers felt that such an extreme weapon would be unwise at that time in place, especially since an arms embargo was in place that refused South Africa arms that could be used in its repression of its black majority. They felt that although the deployment of South African troops in South West Africa (Namibia) was alarming, it still did not constitute such a threat to human rights as to justify sanctions, as more ominous international confrontations were visible in other parts of Africa. Instead, more meaningful action should be taken to advance change where change was needed, e.g. the Sullivan principles that were accepted early in March 1977 by several major US companies with extensive operations in South Africa. These principles had set forth new standards for employment practices, e.g. human equality through equal pay, non-discrimination in training for management positions, promotions of black people to senior positions, and equal treatment in working conditions, recreation and housing.¹⁴

Nonetheless, the initial rhetoric of the Carter Administration as described above promised a significant departure from the anti-apartheid policies of the previous US Administrations. The Carter Administration seemed to be profoundly against any racial discrimination and thus the apartheid policy of the South African Government. In early May 1977, the time to test this stance arrived when Secretary of State Vance announced that Vice-President Walter Mondale would be meeting with Vorster from 19-20 May 1977 in Vienna for "*a day and a half of very frank and candid discussions*"¹⁵ on the ending of apartheid. Mondale apparently intended to ask Vorster how South Africa planned to move away from apartheid and deal with its minority problems. Mondale

14. Editorial, *Weapon, Time, Place – All wrong*, *Los Angeles Times*, 3 March 1977, Part II, p. 4; R.K. Massie, *Loosing the bonds*, p. 408.

15. As quoted in Study Commission on U.S. Policy Toward Southern Africa, *South Africa: Time Running Out*, p. 357.

however did not expect that Vorster, being widely regarded as a blunt and experienced man, would merely absorb a lecture on the dangers of racism without vigorously defending his Government's justification for the system of apartheid. Even then, the Carter Administration felt that the talks would nonetheless be an opportunity to remind South Africa that US concern over the South African racial situation under a human rights conscious President like Carter went very deep, even to the point of reassessing US policy in an effort to ensure that changes actually occurred.¹⁶

Shortly after Vance's announcement, Young announced that he would attend a United Nations conference in Mozambique and on his way back pass through Johannesburg on invitation of Harry Oppenheimer, a white South African diamond magnate and critic of the Vorster Government. His announcement elicited strong reaction from the South African Government, who said that Young had not gone through official channels in arranging his visit. Eventually, they reluctantly agreed to the visit, although on a number of conditions, of which one was that the visit be unofficial. One can reasonably ask why the South African Government was so reluctant to allow Young to visit South Africa. Except for the reason that he did not go through official channels, other possible reasons included: he was not invited by the South African Government; he did not request meetings with South African Government officials, but with a critic of that Government; and he visited South Africa on his own initiative, not on the initiatives of the South African Government. Furthermore, Young had by this time already held intensive talks with the African block in the United Nations, who had requested that the Security Council seek measures to end the apartheid policy of the South African Government, seemingly through declaring the latter a threat to peace under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. Indeed, the representatives of the African block actually said privately that they were seeking to test the Carter Administration on its new policy towards South Africa. Young also held discussions with US diplomats accredited to African countries, which centered on possible changes to the Carter Administration's policy toward South Africa. This included the withholding of the US veto in the Security

16. P.J. Schraeder, *United States foreign policy toward Africa, Incrementalism, crisis and change*, p. 216; G. Godsell, Mondale, Young test new policy in S. Africa, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 16 May 1977, pp. 1, 11; B. Gwertzman, Vance reports no arms progress as two sides prepare for Geneva, *The New York Times*, 5 May 1977, p. A1; Anonymous, A toughening on South Africa, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 16 May 1977, p. 6.

Council, which would have amounted to the withdrawal of the protection that South Africa had for long enjoyed in the face of tough resolutions.¹⁷

On 4 May 1977, Vance held a news conference in which he touched very briefly on the Carter Administration's definition of human rights and the new US policy toward South Africa. Vance explained that the Carter Administration was trying to explain the concept of human rights by expanding it in terms of the various subcomponents included in the concept, as well as setting out the considerations that would have to be taken into account when deciding how to proceed in given human rights cases on a country-by-country basis. He also stressed the importance of using international and regional forums to have discussions on these cases. In the light of this, Vance was asked how rapidly he thought there should be moves toward majority government including all people in South Africa. His answer was that the Carter Administration's policy with respect to South Africa was and would remain an inalterable opposition to apartheid. However, the Carter Administration felt that the upcoming meeting between Mondale and Vorster would be constructive. The meeting would center on the questions of Rhodesia, South West Africa (Namibia) and South Africa, and how the South African Government planned to make progress in the ending of apartheid and in dealing with the problems of minorities.¹⁸

On 15 May 1977, just before the meeting between Mondale and Vorster, a report on four days of meetings in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, attended by several US State Department officials, appeared in *The New York Times*. At the meeting, it was said that the US was reviewing a series of possible strategies, some symbolic and some punitive, that would signal to the South African Government just how strongly the Carter Administration was committed to bringing about change in the South African racial policies. These measures basically included those on a secret list drawn up by the State Department early into the Carter Administration, as mentioned under Section 2.2.1¹⁹. They were contingency

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17. Anonymous, South African visit by Young remains a matter of doubt, *The New York Times*, 15 May 1977, p. 3; G. Godsell, Mondale, Young test new policy in S. Africa, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 16 May 1977, p. 1; K. Teltsch, 'Brother' Young welcomed at U.N., *The New York Times*, 22 March 1977, p. 10; C.L. Sulzberger, Borderline peace, *The New York Times*, 6 April 1977, p. 25; Study Commission on U.S. Policy Toward Southern Africa, *South Africa: Time Running Out*, p. 357; R.E. Bissell, *South Africa and the United States: The erosion of an influence relationship*, p.32; R.K. Massie, *Loosing the bonds*, pp. 409-410; G. Godsell, Carter faces credibility test on Africa, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 23 May 1977, p. 1.
 18. Department of State, Secretary Vance's News Conference of May 4, *Department of State Bulletin*, 23 May 1977, pp. 516-517.
 19. See p. 42.

plans, and it was unconceivable that they would be discussed in the meeting between Mondale and Vorster. The report went on to say that the upcoming meeting would be the clearest signal to date of the importance that the Carter Administration attached to the possible resolution of the Rhodesian and South West Africa (Namibia) questions as well as the need for serious change in South Africa. Several of the 35 US ambassadors who attended the meetings underscored that the Carter Administration had moved beyond the mere condemnation of apartheid to the formulation of an active policy. In other words, unlike Kissinger, the Carter Administration was no longer willing to hold back on South Africa in the hope of obtaining action on majority rule in Rhodesia and a new status for South West Africa (Namibia). However, the change in policy did not yet mean that the US would launch a barrage of punitive sanctions against South Africa.²⁰

On 19 May 1977, Mondale and Vorster met in Vienna. From the outset, Mondale did his best to make it clear that the official US attitude toward South Africa had changed. He emphasized that the new policy would no longer only focus broadly on Southern African problems as was the case with Kissinger, but also directly on South Africa. In other words, the time for anti-apartheid rhetoric had passed, and the US would now back up its words with actions. Mondale strongly registered total disagreement with Vorster's contention that separate development was not discriminatory. He stated that unless South Africa was willing to commit to full and equal participation of all its citizens in political affairs, the Carter Administration would have no choice than to exert diplomatic steps. Concerning the independence of South West Africa (Namibia), Mondale firmly rejected any solution based on ethnic representation, according to Vorster's Turnhalle initiative that emerged from a conference of South West Africa (Namibia) internal factions. He also made it clear that the Carter Administration, unlike the Ford Administration, would not trade progress in South West Africa (Namibia) and Rhodesia for inaction on apartheid. Vorster, as expected, was unbending to what he regarded as US interference in South Africa's internal affairs. He bluntly resisted the suggestion that South Africa should soften its apartheid policy, saying it was not a multiracial country, but a multinational one. Therefore, the apartheid design would guarantee the maintenance of the various distinctive forms of culture in the country. On the other

20. M.T. Kaufman, U.S. considering new strategies in its policies toward South Africa, *The New York Times*, 15 May 1977, p. 3.

hand, he accepted regional involvement by the US with the aim of hastening solutions in Rhodesia and South West Africa (Namibia), and promised South African cooperation.²¹

Meanwhile, Young was attending the Special United Nations Conference on Southern Africa in Maputo, Mozambique, where he denounced colonialism and minority rule and explained that the aim of his visit to Africa was to start implementing a new US approach to Southern Africa and to demonstrate his own commitment to human rights. He advocated that all parties fighting minority rule in Southern Africa should work together, whether they were guerillas or 'nonviolent nuns'. During the Conference, general agreement was reached on a series of embargoes against South Africa, including a supplementary Program of Action for the Liberation of Rhodesia and South West Africa (Namibia). The Program would include proposals for a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa. However, Young told reporters that the US would for the time being not join a consensus on the action plan, as it would hamper efforts to bring about a peaceful transition to black rule in Rhodesia and South West Africa (Namibia). He nonetheless added that Carter had openly warned the South African Government of the possibility of economic sanctions if it continued to defy United Nations resolutions concerning the independence of South West Africa (Namibia).²²

Against the above backdrop, Young arrived in Johannesburg on 21 May 1977. As his visit had already elicited strong controversy among white South Africans a few weeks before, the local press was not allowed to greet him and the security around him was tight. The majority of black South Africans he encountered nevertheless warmly welcomed him. Shortly after his arrival, he addressed a group of two hundred business leaders. In his address, possibly to avoid any further controversy, he avoided any suggestions that black South Africans should organize economic boycotts, and touched only briefly on his frequently expressed moral and humanitarian distaste for the South Africa's Government's policy of apartheid. Instead, he strongly endorsed the concept of free enterprise, saying that black South Africans had to become full participants of the economy, gaining the changes they seek through the marketplace. This he linked with

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21. G. Godsell, Carter faces credibility test on Africa, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 23 May 1977, p. 1; R.K. Massie, *Loosing the bonds*, p. 412; Study Commission on US Policy Toward Southern Africa, *South Africa: Time Running Out*, pp. 357-358; L.E.S. de Villiers, *US sanctions against South Africa*, p. 119.
 22. A.J. DeRoche, *Andrew Young: Human Rights Ambassador*, p. 81; J. Foisie, U.N. parley agrees on tough embargoes in Southern Africa, *Los Angeles Times*, 21 May 1977, p. 11; M.T. Kaufman, Young sees a tactic in Rhodesian foray, *The New York Times*, 19 May 1977, p. 5.

what he called an impressive military system of the South African Government, saying that the latter was defending itself against the wrong threat, as the problems that South Africa faced was not military, but economic, i.e. shrinking markets, shrinking investments, etcetera, as a result of apartheid.²³ In his own words: *"You cannot fight points in the money market and there is no army within 2,000 miles to challenge South Africa militarily, so what is the value of an atomic bomb when there is no one to drop it on?"*²⁴

Young drew a direct comparison between apartheid and the segregation experience that American blacks had to endure not so many years before. He suggested that those in South Africa who sought an end to apartheid should find a way to make the Government attentive, using as example the two things that the American civil rights movement believed were the only things the ruling conglomerate would listen to: votes and money. As the American blacks did not have votes, they used money. He then quickly added that he did not try to advocate a boycott, as doing so would mean that he meddled in the internal affairs of South Africa. However, the next day he indeed brought up the role of boycotts when he met with several black delegations and student groups. He told them without hesitation that they should use economic boycotts against apartheid. He furthermore touched on what can be viewed as an approval of violence when he said that it would be hypocritical for the US to condemn violence by black people seeking freedom when the US itself fought a revolutionary war of independence.²⁵

Young's turn-about from being wary of antagonizing the South African Government when he arrived to his recommendations the very next day that economic boycotts against the South African Government should be used, infuriated the latter and many of its supporters. As one middle-aged Afrikaner women commented when watching Young enter the Carlton hotel in Johannesburg: *"Who does he think he is, coming here and telling us how to run our country? He may know something of racial questions in*

23. A.J. DeRoche, *Andrew Young: Human Rights Ambassador*, p. 82; G. Godsell, Mondale, Young test new policy in S. Africa, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 16 May 1977, pp. 1, 11; J.C. Randal, Share power, Young urges S. Africans, *The Washington Post*, 22 May 1977, p. A14.

24. As quoted in J.C. Randal, Share power, Young urges S. Africans, *The Washington Post*, 22 May 1977, p. A14.

25. A.J. DeRoche, *Andrew Young: Human Rights Ambassador*, pp. 82-83; J.C. Randal, Share power, Young urges S. Africans, *The Washington Post*, 22 May 1977, p. A14; R.K. Massie, *Loosing the bonds*, p. 413.

America, but he doesn't know anything about us."²⁶ Young was also showered on his way to enter the hotel by typewritten slips thrown from high-rise buildings surrounding the hotel. Hard-line whites supportive of the South African Government presumably threw the slips. They were also distributed in the lobby of the Carlton hotel by a young white man, who was subsequently detained for a short while. The slips read: "*Young insults us. Kick him out*" and "*Hated Young is our enemy*".²⁷ As for Prime Minister Vorster, no immediate comment was forthcoming. He was still in Vienna after his meeting with Mondale.²⁸

By the end of May 1977, it was clear to all observers that the Carter Administration was indeed tightening the screw on the South African Government. Indeed, developments in the next months underlined this fact. In June 1977, Carter outlined some aspects of his new foreign policy in an interview with members of the Magazine Publishers Association. He started by saying that in foreign affairs, his Administration had been quite aggressive so far, especially in trying to wrestle with the basic questions of Southern Africa in a deeply involved fashion. He also felt that his Administration had been very successful in arousing the consciousness of the world about basic human rights and human freedoms. In Southern Africa specifically, they faced three basic, interrelated problems simultaneously: independence for Rhodesia, independence for South West Africa (Namibia), and the future attitudes of South Africa, who was also deeply involved in the first two questions. Concerning South Africa, Carter said that his Administration did not feel an inclination to intrude in that country's internal policies, although the US as a nation was committed to having equal treatment of citizens. Furthermore, although South Africa had a very bad reputation in many regions of the world, the Carter Administration was not trying to overthrow the South African Government. It did however feel that there ought to be some equality of pay for the same kind of work, promotion opportunities for black citizens, and an end to the discriminatory pass system. In its dealings with South Africa, the Carter Administration was trying to let the South African Government know that it was not abusive. Instead, they recognized the South African Government's value as a stabilizing influence in

26. As quoted in R.K. Massie, *Loosing the bonds*, p. 413.

27. As quoted in G. Godsell, Carter faces credibility test on Africa, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 23 May 1977, p. 11.

28. G. Godsell, Carter faces credibility test on Africa, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 23 May 1977, p. 11; J.C. Randal, Share power, Young urges S. Africans, *The Washington Post*, 22 May 1977, p. A14.

Southern Africa to the extent that they worked with the US to resolve the questions in the region.²⁹

In early July 1977, Vance made the most comprehensive statement yet on US policy toward South Africa, in a speech before the annual meeting of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). In the statement, Vance warned the South African Government that its relations with the US would surely deteriorate if it failed to make rapid progress to end apartheid and bring about the full political participation of all South African citizens. Vance urged the South African Government to begin discussions with the black majority immediately, concerning ways to bring about the progressive transformation of the South African society. On the communist threat in the region, Vance said that he had heard many suggestions that the US ought to support the white minority governments in Southern Africa, since they were anti-communist. However, the Carter Administration was of the opinion that the continued denial of racial justice in the region encouraged the possibilities for outside intervention. Concerning the form of Government that a transformed South Africa should have, Vance said that it was a decision for the people of South Africa to make, as there were many ways in which the individual rights of all citizens could be protected. He was of the opinion that the key to the future was that South Africans of all races began a dialogue on how to achieve a better future. He specifically rejected the South African policy of separate homelands for black people, which he asserted had been devised without concern for the wishes of these black people. The US had not recognized the autonomy of Transkei, called the first independent black homeland by the South African Government, nor would it recognize a second homeland, Bophuthatswana, whose independence was scheduled for December 1977. Lastly, Vance said that the Carter Administration had decided to actively pursue solutions to all three Southern African problems, as they were intertwined. To ignore the apartheid system in South Africa while concentrating on achieving progress in Rhodesia and South West Africa (Namibia) would be wrong and would not work, according to Vance. He thereby again rejected Kissinger's policy of ignoring apartheid for the sake of Rhodesia and South West Africa

29. Anonymous, Magazine Publishers Association interviews President Carter, *Department of State Bulletin*, 11 July 1977, pp. 46-48.

(Namibia). Vance felt that it would be blind to the reality that the beginning of progress must be made soon in South Africa, if a peaceful solution was sought.³⁰

Interestingly, neither Carter nor Vance publicly mentioned that they were expecting a vote on sanctions against South Africa in the United Nations Security Council. Behind the scenes however, they were most concerned about that possibility, which had indeed been indicated by the African states already in March 1977. In a memorandum to the Department of State, the National Security Council (NSC) requested a short planning memorandum on sanctions affecting South Africa likely to be voted on by the Security Council. The NSC asked for a memorandum that would present a step-by-step scenario of sanctions possibilities, starting with an amendment of existing Rhodesian sanctions to cover arms imports from South Africa, up to the most severe economic sanctions that could be voted against South Africa. The NSC stated that it was most concerned with having an array of possibilities in this regard.³¹ The reasons for their concern were not mentioned.

It should be noted at this stage that although Vance's statement of July 1977 was a forceful restatement of concerns expressed by Mondale to Vorster in their meeting in Vienna in May 1977, the increasingly vocal anti-apartheid movement in the US felt it clearly indicated an unwillingness to move beyond rhetoric to active action. Accordingly, they decided to exert more pressure for more progressive policies toward Africa. One of the new mouthpieces calling for comprehensive sanctions against South Africa as well as support for the armed struggle against the white minority governments in Southern Africa was TransAfrica, a foreign policy lobby officially incorporated in July 1977. TransAfrica was to organize and mobilize the African-American electorate in support of more progressive policies toward Africa. In addition, a Task Force on Africa was created by the NAACP, which called for the adoption of comprehensive economic sanctions against South Africa, including a mandatory arms embargo, and the complete withdrawal of investments from South Africa.³² Both organizations were fully supported by the Congressional Black Caucus under the leadership of Charles Diggs.

30. Anonymous, U.S. urges rapid S. Africa Reform, *Los Angeles Times*, 2 July 1977, pp. 1, 19; R.K. Massie, *Loosing the bonds*, p. 413.

31. Carter Presidential Library and Archives (Atlanta), White House Central File, Subject File, CO 141, Box CO-53, 20 January 1977 - 31 May 1977: *Memorandum*, National Security Council to Department of State, 23 June 1977.

32. P.J. Schraeder, *United States foreign policy toward Africa: Incrementalism, crisis and change*, p. 217.

2.4 THE CASE OF ARMS FOR SOUTH AFRICA

In mid-1977, another factor that would play a role in pressurizing the Carter Administration to active action against South Africa came to the fore in a Congressional Hearing on the US implementation of the 1963 arms embargo. As mentioned before, in October 1976 the US, Britain and France vetoed a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa, and in March 1977 efforts by the Security Council to strengthen the embargo proved abortive. The issue greatly concerned anti-apartheid lobbyists in the US Congress. Accordingly, in March 1977 the House of Representatives introduced a joint resolution calling for a comprehensive presidential review of US policy and practices with respect to the shipment of arms to South Africa. The resolution followed a two-month investigation by the Committee on International Relations that revealed that from 1975 through 1976, the US Government permitted the export of nearly \$500,000 of weapons like shotguns, rifles, teargas and other so-called nonmilitary weapons to South Africa.³³

What further caused renewed interest in the implementation of the arms embargo was the fact that from February to April 1977, several reports on the South African military build-up appeared in various different newspapers. In the *Los Angeles Times* of 6 February 1977, a reporter alleged that Israel was selling arms worth millions of dollars to South Africa. As the Israeli arms industry was created mainly with help from the US, there was rampant concern that US equipment and technological know-how ended up in South Africa through Israel. One example was the Kfir fighter plane that was being developed and manufactured in Israel and offered for sale to South Africa, among other countries. However, the Kfir had a US manufactured General Electric J079 engine. Thus, any sales of the aircraft ought to have been approved by the US. Israel apparently had no concern for this regulation, especially because it was also known as a pariah among the nations – just like South Africa, it was labeled as racist (ironic when one considers the reasons why Israel was originally founded) and subjected to almost as many condemning United Nations resolutions. Accordingly, it apparently had no regrets about dealing with South Africa as a wealthy nation willing to pay well for arms and technology. The issue of Israeli-South African ties was also reported on in the *Christian*

33. United States Congress, Subcommittee on Africa of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives. Hearing: *United States-South African relations: Arms embargo implementation*, 14 & 20 July, 1977, p. 53.

Science Monitor of 25 March 1977, which stated that Israel regularly denied reports of arms sales to South Africa, although it was widely believed that regular supplies of especially electronic equipment made its way from that country to South Africa.³⁴

On 31 March 1977, a report on South African increases in defense spending appeared in the *New York Times*. It was reported that the South African Government had, in reaction to growing pressures both domestically and abroad, announced a budget marked by sharp increases in outlays for defense and the police. Growing concern over the security of South Africa was reflected in a 21.3 percent increase in defense spending and a 15 percent increase in the outlays for the police. These increases brought the defense budget to 18 percent of the total budget. A few days later, on 4 April 1977, the *New York Times* again carried a report on the South African Government strengthening its defenses against the mounting threat to white supremacy. The report included a statement by Vorster that the position of whites in South Africa was not negotiable. Accordingly, he had commissioned the development of a 'total strategy' to stave off pressures for majority rule. This in effect meant that South Africa would be put on a war footing. The new strategy unfolded since the beginning of 1977, trimming civil liberties, strengthening the economy against the threat of embargoes, and expanding the already powerful armed forces. Furthermore, it was indicated that more far-reaching measures would also be pursued in order to maintain essential democratic principles. The strategy emerged from a policy review by Vorster in the wake of the widespread rioting in black communities in 1976, as discussed earlier in this chapter. The riots were the most serious internal challenge ever mounted against apartheid, and provoked an international outcry that added momentum to the campaign by Communist and third-world countries for concerted efforts to be taken against the South African Government. Most seriously for South Africa, it weakened the hand of the Western countries, which have long resisted calls in the United Nations for an arms and investment embargo against South Africa. On 5 April 1977, the *Christian Science*

34. United States Congress, Subcommittee on Africa of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives. Hearing: *United States-South African relations: Arms embargo implementation*, 14 & 20 July, 1977, p. 1; D. Torgerson, Israel selling millions in arms to South Africa, *Los Angeles Times*, 6 February 1977, p. 1; Anonymous, Israel-South Africa ties questioned, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 25 March 1977, p. 3.

Monitor carried an article on the defense budget and the 'total strategy', in a very similar vein to the two *New York Times* reports.³⁵

On 30 April 1977, *The New York Times* reported that South Africa had a secret nuclear plant that was suspected of working on a nuclear bomb. The report stated that if South Africa was developing nuclear weapons, it was almost certainly taking place inside a top-secret uranium enrichment plant at Pelindaba near Pretoria. The plant was the focus of attention among a growing number of political and military analysts who believed that the South African Government intended to build atomic bombs. They alleged that these bombs would be used to deter black-ruled states to the north of South Africa, who have vowed to use all means, including force, to overthrow the white South African Government. They were of the opinion that the uranium enrichment plant was being used to develop weapons-grade uranium, the basic material for nuclear explosives. What made South Africa's case worse was that it was one of the nations who had not yet signed the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty banning the spread of nuclear weapons.³⁶

The South African Government insisted that its nuclear program was for peaceful application only. Concerning the treaty, it said that the international inspections required when signing the treaty could compromise the secrecy of the South African enrichment process, which was unique and cheaper than systems elsewhere. A director of the South African Atomic Energy Board (AEB) responded hotly to the rumors, saying that they were absurd – the Pelindaba plant was NOT making nuclear weapons. He went on to ask what South Africa would do with a nuclear weapon, arguing that it would be of little use in controlling guerrilla warfare or urban unrest, the most likely strategies of black militants. But the statement by the AEB director was only half true. It was true that the Pelindaba³⁷ nuclear plant was not manufacturing nuclear weapons. Furthermore, the secret uranium plant was not situated at the Pelindaba site, but next to it at a site called Valindaba³⁸. However, despite continuous denials, South Africa indeed had a nuclear weapons program that produced six and a half nuclear bombs by 1989, as revealed by South African State President F.W. de Klerk in 1993. The manufacturing

35. Anonymous, South Africa increases outlays for defense, *The New York Times*, 31 March 1977, p. 7; J.F. Burns, Afrikaners dig in against threat to their rule, *The New York Times*, 4 April 1977, pp. 1, 8; J. Goodwin, S. Africa girds with arms, laws, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 5 April 1977, p. 4.

36. J.F. Burns, South Africa's secret atom plant suspected of working on a bomb, *The New York Times*, 30 April 1977, pp. 1, 6.

37. A Zulu word meaning "we don't talk about this anymore".

38. A Zulu word meaning "we don't talk about this at all".

was highly secret and was not done at the Pelindaba site.³⁹ Information on this never leaked, therefore the issue would, until the climax in 1993, continue to draw much attention and speculation. The US specifically would find itself in the crossfire in the years to come, because of the fact that 120 South Africans were sent for training at nuclear establishments in the West at the outset of the South African nuclear program. Many of these establishments were in the US.⁴⁰

The issue of a possible mandatory arms embargo against South Africa had, as previously discussed, again surfaced at the United Nations Conference in Maputo attended by Andrew Young in May 1977, and all indication was that it would be a principal topic during the annual session of the General Assembly scheduled to begin in September 1977. In the light of all the media coverage on the South African defense issues as well as the House Joint Resolution of March 1977, the Carter Administration suspected that it would face a renewed demand for a mandatory arms embargo. The State Department was therefore requested to compile a report on US practices with respect to the embargo, in order to ensure it was effective. In June 1977, the report was sent to the NSC, who suggested that the report should not say that the US was unable to account fully for certain figures of arms-related equipment finding its way to South Africa. Instead, it should explicitly state what was licensed for export to South Africa in 1975 and 1976, indicating that it was due to loopholes, and then detailing what the Carter Administration had done to close the loopholes. The NSC further stated that the US should indicate in the report that the NSC supported efforts to close the loopholes in the current US arms embargo policy to South Africa, and therefore had no objections to a study of this issue should it be requested by the United Nations.⁴¹

In mid-July 1977, a *SAPA/Reuters* news report asserted that the Carter Administration had presented a report on arms embargoes to the US Congress. The report allegedly indicated that although the Carter Administration had declared that it would act more severely on South Africa, in fact it still did not have a clear-cut action policy and was

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39. P. Liberman, The rise and fall of the South African bomb, *International Security* 26(2), Fall 2001, p. 56. A detailed discussion of South Africa's nuclear weapons program follows in Chapter 7.
 40. J.F. Burns, South Africa's secret atom plant suspected of working on a bomb, *The New York Times*, 30 April 1977, pp. 1, 6.
 41. United States Congress, Subcommittee on Africa of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives. Hearing: *United States-South African relations: Arms embargo implementation*, 14 & 20 July, 1977, p. 1; Carter Presidential Library and Archives (Atlanta), White House Central File, CO 141, Box CO-53, 20 January 1977 - 31 May 1977: *Memorandum*, National Security Council to Office of Management and Budget, 30 June 1977.

wondering if a mandatory arms embargo would be the right tool to use. Although South Africa was not explicitly mentioned in the report, it was clear that the report was directed against a proposed mandatory arms embargo. The Carter Administration warned Congress not to implement an arms embargo too strictly against countries that have ignored human rights according to US standards. According to the Carter Administration, an arms embargo could become a blunt tool if not used cautiously. In essence, it held the possibility that smaller countries could be offended – countries that were important to US security. An arms embargo also had the danger that countries under an embargo could turn to other countries for their military needs. This could destroy the US' influence on these countries to adhere to human rights. Instead, US arms should only be withheld from the most serious offenders of human rights, i.e. where there was no hope for improvement in applying human rights. In such cases, the US did not want to be associated to any degree with such countries. The report also briefly touched on the dangers involved in an arms embargo. The Carter Administration believed that numerous other countries would not follow its example of instituting an arms embargo, which in turn would only encourage the target of the embargo to buy its arms from other countries. Lastly, the possibility of control over arms sales rather than an embargo was mentioned.⁴²

The anti-apartheid movement did not agree with Carter's stance, and on 14 July 1977 launched into a hearing on the 1963 arms embargo implementation before the Subcommittee on Africa of the Committee on International Relations in the House of Representatives, chaired by Charles Diggs. The hearing was held as part of the anti-apartheid movement's continuing review of US-South African relations. Diggs was of the opinion that the timing of the hearing was fitting because of the rapidly evolving political situation in Southern Africa, and the role that arms and arms-related material played in retaining the South African apartheid Government in power. Diggs asserted that there were several loopholes in the implementation of the embargo: Firstly, there was no legal standard by which to judge the enforcement of the embargo; second, there was an exception that enabled South Africa to receive arms and equipment for its external defense; third, there was no clearly specified prohibition of items with dual civilian military use; and lastly, there was no uniform standard for controlling the resale of armaments by third parties. The aim of the hearing was to examine the extent to

42. Anonymous, America's dilemma with arms embargo, *Sapa/Reuters*, published in *Die Suidwester*, 13 July 1977, p. 4.

which the loopholes have permitted South Africa to continue to receive arms and military-related equipment from major powers like the US; the principal violators of the voluntary arms embargo and the nature of the arms trade with South Africa; South Africa's response to the embargo and its development of its own arms industry; and ways of strengthening the embargo.⁴³

The first person to testify at the Hearing was Sean Gervasi, a research associate at the New York State University. He charged that major Western countries, including the US, had helped South Africa stockpile a secret arsenal of sophisticated weapons in violation of the 1963 United Nations arms embargo. The objective of this embargo was to prevent South Africa from acquiring foreign weapons with which to build a modern military machine. The Security Council reasoned at the time that if South Africa were denied supplies of modern arms, it would find it difficult to resist the growing internal demands for the ending of apartheid. By 1977, it was widely believed that the arms embargo had been successful, with most arms-producing countries repeatedly stating that they did not allow the sale of arms or military equipment to South Africa. However, Gervasi said that new data obtained from industrial and governmental sources showed that the arms embargo was practically non-existent, and that there had been a thriving international trade in arms for South Africa for nearly a decade. In some cases, South Africa had been able to purchase arms quite openly, but a great deal had been obtained secretly or through certain loopholes in governmental policies. In any case, South Africa's arms stockpile was worth more than \$3 billion and far exceeded all previous estimates. A good proportion of this was re-conditioned but very serviceable equipment of US origin.⁴⁴

According to Gervasi, the US Congress faced two immediate problems. First, to find out why major US equipment, whether produced in the US or under license abroad, was able to reach South Africa. This immediately raised a variety of questions: Was it the policy of previous US administrations to allow the shipment of major arms systems to

43. United States Congress, Subcommittee on Africa of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives. Hearing: ***United States-South African relations: Arms embargo implementation***, 14 & 20 July, 1977, pp. 1-2.

44. Anonymous, S. Africa secret arsenal violates UN treaty, ***The Christian Science Monitor***, 14 July 1977, p. 2; Anonymous, Stockpiling for S. Africa? ***The Christian Science Monitor***, 15 July 1977, p. 2; United States Congress, Subcommittee on Africa of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, Hearing: ***United States-South African relations: Arms embargo implementation***, 14 & 20 July, 1977, pp. 1-7; Anonymous, West reportedly helped S. Africa stockpile arms, ***Los Angeles Times***, 14 July 1977, p. 6.

South Africa, and if so, did they deliberately ignore the United Nations arms embargo? Or, if that was not the case, were regulations governing the arms trade so loosely drafted that it permitted sales to South Africa? If these regulations were adequate, were they then simply not enforced for a long period of time? Secondly, if arms sales to South Africa continued, they should be stopped immediately, as a matter of some urgency, as Africa was nearing a final confrontation over apartheid. In Gervasi's opinion, continued arms sales to South Africa at that time would be regarded worldwide as evidence of a commitment to support apartheid.⁴⁵

In the light of the above-mentioned questions, Gervasi proceeded to outline what he thought was the US' contribution to the breakdown of the embargo. The list of major items, which, according to him had reached South Africa either directly or indirectly from the US, included armored personnel carriers, armored cars, battle tanks, light tanks, self-propelled guns, Starfighter jets, counter-insurgency aircraft, Iroquois helicopters and Hercules C-130B transport aircraft. All of the alleged items were operational and in service of the South African regular and citizen forces, and deliveries continued even as he was speaking. However, US corporations did not sell directly to South Africa. South Africa obtained the equipment they needed through an indirect route. The preferred channel appeared to be licensed production, by which US corporations agreed to let a foreign manufacturer produce a US weapon under license. This foreign manufacturer then shipped the items in question to South Africa. Although the Office of Munitions Control in the Department of State should have controlled this traffic, they apparently did not control some foreign sales when production took place under a US license. For example, a US corporation, FMC, had licensed Oto Melara, a major Italian arms manufacturer, to produce a version of the M-113A1 armored personnel carrier, which was shipped to South Africa from Italy. Oto Melara also produced and refurbished the M-109 self-propelled gun under US license and then sold it to South Africa. Nonetheless, Gervasi did not believe that the Carter Administration was involved in the arms traffic, as the information that he had was mainly applicable to the previous US Administrations. In this regard, he felt that the shipment of such large quantities of arms to South Africa indicated some kind of military commitment in support of the South African apartheid Government in a very delicate stage of its

45. United States Congress, Subcommittee on Africa of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, Hearing: *United States-South African relations: Arms embargo implementation*, 14 & 20 July, 1977, pp. 7-8.

history.⁴⁶ Indeed, when observed closely, it was consistent with the reversal of policy by the previous two US Administrations of Nixon and Ford.

The second statement to be heard at the hearing was that of Lewis Gann, a Senior Fellow of the Hoover Institution at Stanford University in San Francisco. He had a totally different perspective from Gervasi's, disagreeing with the assessment of South Africa as a moral pariah. Gann could not understand why South Africa was made a moral outcast while the US had for many years been a major exporter of arms to countries like the Republic of Korea, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Ethiopia, Libya, Yugoslavia, Morocco, Zaire, Brazil, Chile, Haiti and many others whose commitment to human rights were just as or even more questionable than that of South Africa. The best policy would certainly have been not to sell arms to any of these countries, either. Moreover, the US, even though in the midst of the Cold War, exported sophisticated industrial goods and technical know-how to the Soviet Union, a country that unlike South Africa posed a mortal military threat to the US. Gann had many more positive things to say about South Africa when compared to the countries listed, e.g. that it was not a persecuting society - instead it attracted both white and black immigrants; that the development of South Africa was an extraordinary success story, making it the economic giant of the African continent; that although the injustices in the South African society were apparent to all, South African blacks have derived many real benefits from the progressive economic system, leading to a black middle class coming into being; that South Africa's military expenditure was not an insupportable burden – indeed, it accounted for only 4.9 percent of the GDP, much less than that of Nigeria, East Germany or the US. Lastly, Gann emphasized the strategic importance of the Cape sea route, which was in the modern day especially important for oil tankers that were too large to pass through the Suez Canal. South Africa would also prove to be of importance in the event of war, supplying an array of airfields, naval bases, supply depots and repair facilities for which there was no equivalent in the southern part of the Indian Ocean.⁴⁷

46. United States Congress, Subcommittee on Africa of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, Hearing: *United States-South African relations: Arms embargo implementation*, 14 & 20 July, 1977, p. 6; S. Gervasi, *The United States and the arms embargo against South Africa: Evidence, denial and refutation*, pp. 20-23.

47. United States Congress, Subcommittee on Africa of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, Hearing: *United States-South African relations: Arms embargo implementation*, 14 & 20 July, 1977, pp. 18-27; L.H. Gann, South Africa and the US arms embargo, *South Africa International* 8(3), January 1978, pp. 127-136.

Although Diggs politely thanked Gann for an interesting point of view, his testimony did not enjoy any further attention. On the contrary, Gervasi's statement enjoyed wide media coverage in US and South African newspapers alike. In one report, he was recorded as saying that he obtained his information from industry sources and South African military personnel and national servicemen employed in South West Africa (Namibia). He apparently alleged that in mid-1976, young servicemen in the defense force in South West Africa (Namibia) provided him with useful insight and information, because they were afraid that the situation there would get out of hand. He also claimed to having undertaken years of research on the violation of the arms embargo. Whatever his source of information, he elicited an almost immediate response from the Carter Administration. In an urgent telegram to the US Embassies in Pretoria, London, Paris, Rome and at the United Nations in New York, the State Department presented the pertinent portion of Gervasi's testimony for urgent review. The first reply to this request was from the US Embassy in Rome, which stated that it had no record, knowledge nor recollection of Italian arms sales or transfers to South Africa of any items resembling those listed by Gervasi. It went on to say that on the contrary, it considered that the Italian Government and all significant Italian arms manufacturers and exporters were fully aware of and, as far it was known, honored US strictures on arms transfers, including those to South Africa. The Embassy had nothing to indicate that Oto Melara and Agusta were not meticulous in seeking prior US assent for possible arms sales. Oto Melara itself also responded immediately with a comprehensive denial, saying that it had respected the limitations set by both the Italian and US Governments and had not sold nor shipped any M-113 and M-109 155mm SP guns to South Africa, directly or indirectly.⁴⁸

In the days after Gervasi's testimony, several newspapers carried denials by the Carter Administration that the US had helped South Africa to build up a secret stockpile of sophisticated weapons in defiance of the 1963 arms embargo. In a statement to the press, a State Department spokesman, Hodding Carter, described the allegations by Gervasi as false and tendentious. He said that no licenses had been issued for the sale of arms or equipment to South Africa, as well as no approvals for the transfer of US-

48. Anonymous, 'Arsenal man tells of sources, *The Star*, 15 July 1977, p. 3; South Africa: The making of United States policy, 1962 - 1989, microfiche collection: National Security Files, fiche 00760: **Telegram**: Department of State to American Embassies in Pretoria, London, Paris, Rome, New York, 15 July 1977; fiche 00761: **Telegram**: American Embassy, Rome to Department of State, 18 July 1977.

made equipment or arms from third party countries. The only equipment permitted since the embargo came into effect in 1963, were spare parts for C-130 aircraft previously purchased, and some items like sporting shotguns and small private aircraft for sales to civilians. Concerning transfers of US arms and equipment from third countries, Carter said that if it happened, it was without US knowledge and approval.⁴⁹

On the South African side, in what can perhaps be viewed as an effort to quench the storm that broke loose after Gervasi's testimony, the chairman of Armscor, Commandant Piet Marais, held an extensive interview with the *South African Financial Gazette*. Not a word was mentioned on Gervasi's allegations. Instead, Marais was asked how sufficient was Armscor in the light of the cost of armaments escalating at an alarming rate, and South Africa having to spend vast amounts of money trying to defend itself. According to Marais, Armscor existed only to render a service to the SADF, namely to procure and manufacture arms at the lowest possible cost. To make South Africa self-sufficient in arms, it utilized more than 1 200 sub-contractors and main contractors. However, only work that was not of great strategic importance, were given to private enterprises. Armscor did the more sensitive and difficult work itself. Concerning who was responsible for identifying South Africa's armament requirements, the SADF determined new types of weapons it required to defend South Africa. Through a joint committee, they stated their needs relative to the external threat, then Armscor stated its capabilities of meeting those needs within cost and time limits, then the SADF made calculations and took the decisions. The SADF had the total responsibility for defense, while Armscor's responsibility was the supply of armaments. It was self-sufficient in guns, ammunition, armored cars etc., but with regard to naval vessels and modern bomber aircraft, it would be impractical and uneconomic to manufacture it. These, Marais stated, could and would be met from foreign suppliers.⁵⁰ Through this statement, it can be reasonably asserted that Marais did not deny the fact that South Africa was indeed able to obtain the armaments it needed from foreign suppliers, in spite of the arms embargo.

49. Anonymous, V.S.A. ontken hulp aan SA oor wapenvoorraad, *Die Volksblad*, 15 July 1977, p. 2; Anonymous, No US arms for SA, *Evening Post*, 15 July 1977, p. 2; Anonymous, G'n wapens deur ons, sê VSA, *Beeld*, 16 July 1977, p. 4; Anonymous, Secret arms deal denied, *Daily Dispatch*, 16 July 1977, p. 1; Anonymous, US denies aiding SA arms build-up, *The Citizen*, 16 July 1977, p. 11.

50. L. Kok, Questions for Armscor, *South African Financial Gazette*, 15 July 1977, p. 8; Anonymous, SA wapens "goed", *SA Oorsig*, 22 July 1977, p. 7.

On 20 July 1977, the hearing on the arms embargo implementation continued. This time it was the Carter Administration's turn to present its statement. The task fell upon the shoulders of Stanley J. Marcus, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Domestic Commerce, Department of Commerce, and William H. Lewis, Director of the Office of Inter-African Affairs, Department of State. Marcus was requested by Diggs to address four issues, namely the implementation of the US Export Administration Act; the monitoring and implementation of embargoes; factors considered in the determination of strategic materials and who made these determinations; and the Department of Commerce's oversight responsibilities for foreign subsidiaries and branches.⁵¹

Concerning the implementation of the Export Administration Act, Marcus explained that it was the basic statutory authority for control over US exports, for three purposes: national security, US foreign policy, and to protect the economy against shortages and inflationary price increases. Restrictions on exports to South Africa rested on the foreign policy authority of the Act. In conformity with the United Nations Security Council resolution of 1963, the US embargoed shipments of arms, munitions, military equipment and material for their manufacture and maintenance to South Africa. Items that were strictly military in nature, particularly items on the munitions list, were controlled by the Department of State. Items that could not be exported without a valid license, as well as items with multiple uses such as civil aircraft, computers, radar and communications equipment, all of which could be used by the South African military forces for military purposes or by the internal security forces for crime control, were placed on the commodity control list and were denied for export to these forces. However, items that did not have any direct and clear application to combat or internal security operations, were generally licensed for sale either to military or civilian buyers in South Africa. Items that were predominantly used by military forces but did not have a clear and direct application to combat or internal operations were generally licensed for civilian use but could also be licensed to military buyers. At the time of the hearing, this policy was under review. Items with a clear and direct application to combat or internal security operations were not licensed to military or police buyers, but could be licensed for civilian use. Under these guidelines, the US had rejected applications for aircraft suitable for troop transport, but limited numbers of unarmed civilian executive type aircraft had

51. United States Congress, Subcommittee on Africa of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, Hearing: *United States-South African relations: Arms embargo implementation*, 14 & 20 July, 1977, pp. 44-45.

been approved for sale to the South African defense forces. However, very few items had in fact been licensed under this category, namely seven executive aircraft and computers for materials inventory were licensed to the military, and a small computer for toxicological laboratory work was licensed to the police.⁵²

Marcus emphasized that all license applications were given an intensive review to ensure that it would not be used by the South Africa military or security forces in a manner that was inconsistent with the arms embargo. When any doubt existed about the end use of the item, or the end user, the help of the US Embassy was elicited to conduct on-the-spot inquiries into the likely use. All sales to the South African military or internal security forces were also carefully reviewed in consultation with the Department of State and in certain cases with the Department of Defense. The same procedures applied to the export of US parts, components, materials or other commodities to be used abroad to manufacture or produce a foreign-made product. For example, the use of US components in the production of aircraft manufactured in third countries and intended for sale to South Africa was subject to the same kind of controls as described. Compliance with the policy was monitored and enforced through a devoted staff who examined shipments and shipping documents and worked with US Customs to ensure that items requiring a license did in fact have a proper license to be exported, before it left the US. On-site checks were also done in cooperation with the US Embassy in South Africa.⁵³

In addressing Diggs' third request, Marcus said that guidelines on the determination of strategic materials was first promulgated in 1964, amended in 1968, updated in 1970, and were, as he was giving evidence, again under some review. Pursuant to these guidelines, items on the Export Control List were continuously reviewed to determine whether it should be on the list, and, if so, if there was sufficient certainty that it would not be diverted to or used in an impermissible manner by the South African military or internal security forces. In this regard, new initiatives on the South African situation, coupled with congressional concern, had led the Department of Commerce to review and strengthen certain aspects of the embargo program. For example, a small value

52. United States Congress, Subcommittee on Africa of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, Hearing: *United States-South African relations: Arms embargo implementation*, 14 & 20 July, 1977, pp. 45-46.

53. United States Congress, Subcommittee on Africa of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, Hearing: *United States-South African relations: Arms embargo implementation*, 14 & 20 July, 1977, p. 46.

exemption that existed for shotguns, shells and parts was eliminated. Furthermore, new regulations were instituted to require validated export licenses for foreign shipments to South Africa and South West Africa (Namibia) that came through the US. And just the day before the hearing, new regulations were announced which significantly increased the level of control over equipment which could be used in crime control and detection, like psychological stress analysis equipment, nonmilitary gas masks, bulletproof vests, helmets and shields, photographic equipment especially designed for crime control and detection, document authentication equipment, and various other grey area items including Boeing 747 aircraft that could be used for troop transport, and shotguns.⁵⁴

Marcus' testimony was followed by that of William Lewis. His testimony was basically a confirmation of everything that Marcus had said, while he also emphasized that the allegations by Gervasi the previous week were utterly false. He said that all checks by the Department of State had failed to bring to light transfers of US equipment through third parties to South Africa. In addition to outlining the controls in place as demonstration of what he called the falsity of Gervasi's facts, he used the assertion made by Gervasi that a Portuguese firm, Bravia, had produced V-150 personnel carriers for sale to South Africa under license from Cadillac Gage of Detroit. The facts, according to Lewis, were that two former employees of Cadillac Gage stole technical data from the firm and conveyed it to Bravia. When the US Government discovered this, the two were prosecuted for illegally transferring the technology and were accordingly convicted and sentenced. As for the ultimate disposition of any personnel carriers manufactured in Portugal without a US license, the US Government was unable to obtain any confirmation of sales to South Africa. Also, the US did not authorize the export of any parts or components to Bravia.⁵⁵

Lewis further commented briefly on how the arms embargo policy fit into the Carter Administration's policy toward South Africa. It served two purposes. First, the Carter Administration believed it was essential to deny the sale to South Africa of any item

54. United States Congress, Subcommittee on Africa of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, Hearing: *United States-South African relations: Arms embargo implementation*, 14 & 20 July, 1977, p. 47.

55. W.H. Lewis, US arms embargo against South Africa, *Department of State Bulletin*, 5 September 1977, pp. 320 – 322; Anonymous, Secret arms deal with SA denied, *The Argus*, 21 July 1977, p. 15; S. Gervasi, *The United States and the arms embargo against South Africa: Evidence, denial and refutation*, pp. 25-27; United States Congress, Subcommittee on Africa of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, Hearing: *United States-South African relations: Arms embargo implementation*, 14 & 20 July, 1977, pp. 50-52.

that could be used to enhance or maintain the South African Government's military capabilities, or, in the case of the police, in the enforcement of apartheid. Second, the Carter Administration wanted to avoid the possibility that any of its policies could be interpreted wrongly as indicating US acquiescence in the South African racial policies. This had been embodied in the comprehensive review of the US' policy toward South Africa during the first few months of 1977. The Carter Administration now was studying particular aspects of US relations with South Africa. Close attention was particularly being paid to the importance of maintaining an arms embargo policy that was consistent with the Carter Administration's overall approach to South Africa. In this context, an in-depth look was being taken into the question of grey-area sales. Even if an item had no clear and direct application to combat or internal security operations, the sale of such items could strengthen the enforcement of apartheid. However, to devise guidelines on this issue was a difficult matter, and therefore some requests were to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.⁵⁶

The testimonies by Marcus and Lewis elicited a flurry of newspaper reports in South Africa. The headlines screamed that the US had moved to tighten the arms embargo, and that Carter Administration officials had made it clear that it was part of the program to force political change in South Africa. These officials had also apparently said that they wholeheartedly supported the sentiments of Diggs, when he emphasized the necessity for finding ways to strengthen the arms embargo. The reports further stated that Marcus had said that whenever the Department of Commerce could identify additional areas to strengthen the embargo, the changes would be initiated promptly. The new controls outlined by Marcus were listed, as well as the fact that the US had launched a major investigation to determine whether heavy military equipment of US origin had reached South Africa through loopholes in the arms embargo measures, as alleged by Gervasi. Lastly, the reports stated that it was understood that the South

56. W.H. Lewis, US arms embargo against South Africa, *Department of State Bulletin*, 5 September 1977, p. 322; S. Gervasi, *The United States and the arms embargo against South Africa: Evidence, denial and refutation*, pp. 27-28; Subcommittee on Africa of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, Hearing: *United States-South African relations: Arms embargo implementation*, 14 & 20 July, 1977, pp. 52-53.

African Government would protest against the move, as it would have a direct effect on the export of riot-control equipment to South Africa.⁵⁷

From the discussion above, one can conclude that the Carter Administration had indeed moved to strengthen the arms embargo. In early August 1977, France followed suit by extending its arms embargo against South Africa to all types of equipment. The South African Government reacted immediately, though in a very nonchalant way, through the Minister of Defense, P.W. Botha. He reiterated that South Africa would endeavor to manufacture all the arms it could not obtain elsewhere, but nonetheless added quickly that he thought that the arms embargo was a dream that could never be fully realized. In his own words: “*As long as we have the money, there will always be suppliers*”.⁵⁸ He however emphasized that South Africa never disclosed where it obtained its weapons or which countries it supplied. In another speech a few days later, he admitted that South Africa’s expenditure on arms had increased 15-fold during the previous ten years as a result of a major growth in the indigenous armaments industry necessitated by the arms embargo. The result was that by 1977, the local manufacture of ammunition, weapons, aircraft, electronic optics and pyrotechnics had progressed so far that South Africa was starting to consider the export of armaments to what he called “responsible powers”. And in what can be viewed as a defiant comment against the new US and France regulations, he said that once South Africa had acquired licenses for manufacture, no matter in what way, the initiative lay with South Africa to put them to practice or not.⁵⁹

From August 1977, relations between South Africa and the US deteriorated rapidly. On 6 August, the Soviet Union informed the US and subsequently also the other powers in the Security Council, that it had spotted installations for detonating a nuclear device in

57. Anonymous, US moves to tighten clamps on South African arms, *The Star*, 21 July 1977, p. 3; Anonymous, Boeings on new list of arms curbs, *The Argus*, 21 July 1977, p. 1; Anonymous, US will tighten SA arms embargo, *The World*, 21 July 1977, p. 1; Anonymous, Amerika omseil nie wapenverbod, *Die Volksblad*, 21 July 1977, p. 13; Anonymous, US tightens up police equipment exports to SA, *The Citizen*, 22 July 1977, p. 15; Anonymous, VSA verskerp wapenverbod teen SA, *Oggendblad*, 22 July 1977, p. 3.

58. As quoted in Anonymous, SA will make all arms – Minister, *Eastern Province Herald*, 10 August 1977, p. 1.

59. Anonymous, SA will make all arms – Minister, *Eastern Province Herald*, 10 August 1977, p. 1; Anonymous, Arms spending jumps 15-fold, *Pretoria News*, 18 August 1977, p. 8; Anonymous, Botha on arms policy, *Evening Post*, 18 August 1977, p. 7; Anonymous, Botha scorns weapon deal ban, *The Natal Mercury*, 18 August 1977, p. 13; Anonymous, Botha warns of need for discipline, *The Argus*, 18 August 1977, p. 17; Anonymous, S.A. kan wapens al uitvoer, sê P.W. Botha, *Die Volksblad*, 9 August 1977, p. 3; H. Hoffeldt, SA nie verleë oor Weste, *Beeld*, 18 August 1977, p. 1; Anonymous, Wapens: S.A. besluit self, sê Botha, *Die Burger*, 18 August 1977, p. 1.

the Kalahari Desert, South Africa. In a subsequent special statement, the Soviet Union alleged that South Africa was on the verge of manufacturing a nuclear bomb, and called for urgent international efforts to block such a development. The US immediately reacted by redirecting its own satellite cameras to the site, which verified the Soviet information. A strong joint warning not to proceed was issued to South Africa, but was met with a series of categorical denials that any explosion was contemplated, along with a public display of indignation about the way the US was treating South Africa. Vorster accused the US of backing a concerted international pressure campaign against South Africa, which could only result in chaos and anarchy in Southern Africa. He then vigorously reminded the US that South Africa did not intend to bow the knee to American pressure for changes in South Africa. Rather, Carter's pressure on the Southern African white minority governments was a way of repaying black voters in the US who have supported Carter in his election victory in November 1976. He also emphasized that while US interest in Southern Africa was welcome, the South African Government would not tolerate the right that the US had described itself to prescribe what should be done in the region.⁶⁰

Interestingly, Vorster only denied that South Africa was contemplating a nuclear explosion. He did not categorically deny that South Africa was building installations that could be used to test-explode a nuclear device. Therefore, US suspicions about the intended use of the installations in the Kalahari Desert remained until 1993, when South African State President F.W. de Klerk admitted that South Africa had sunk 200 meter deep by one meter wide shafts in the Kalahari Desert for underground nuclear testing, but had stopped the project after protests from the US and Soviet Union. De Klerk however emphasized that the actual detonation of a nuclear device was never intended.⁶¹

What is interesting to note, is that the Kalahari test-site incident happened almost on the eve of a meeting in London between the US, British and South African foreign ministers to discuss efforts to move both Rhodesia and South West Africa (Namibia) to internationally recognized independence. As the Soviet Union played a major role in

60. Study Commission on US Policy Toward Southern Africa, *South Africa: Time Running Out*, p. 358; Anonymous, Moscow says A-bomb near in South Africa, *The New York Times*, 7 August 1977, p. 13; R.K. Massie, *Loosing the bonds*, p. 414; Anonymous, South Africa lashes out at U.S., *The Christian Science Monitor*, 8 August 1977, p. 2; Anonymous, Candid talk on Southern Africa (Editorial), *The Christian Science Monitor*, 8 August 1977, p. 6.

61. D. Albright, South Africa comes clean, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 49(4), May 1993, pp. 3-6.

aiding the guerilla resistance movements in these areas in an effort to gain a foothold in Southern Africa, one cannot help to wonder whether the report on the presumed nuclear installation in the Kalahari Desert wasn't done on purpose to shoulder South Africa out of the negotiations. Whether this was the case or not, the fact is that South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha was not received too warmly at the talks in London. Indeed, he commented afterwards that the more South Africa did to help achieve acceptable settlements in Rhodesia and South West Africa (Namibia), the more the Western governments attacked South Africa. Therefore, South Africa had a growing conviction that accepting US and British demands for change in South Africa could lead to the latter's destruction.⁶²

In the meantime, the US expressed grave concern over allegations that South Africa was manufacturing a nuclear bomb. A decision by South Africa to make nuclear weapons could deliver a serious blow to Carter's campaign against nuclear non-proliferation. In the light of this concern, the Department of State asked South Africa for assurances on three points: first, that South Africa did not have or intend to develop nuclear explosives for any purpose, peaceful or otherwise; second, that the Kalahari facility was not a testing facility for nuclear explosives; and third, that no nuclear explosive testing of any kind would take place in South Africa. The enquiry was accompanied by a warning that any nuclear tests by South Africa would have serious implications. On 21 August 1977, South Africa reacted to the enquiry through Foreign Minister Pik Botha, saying that the allegation was totally and wholly unfounded and untrue. Botha added that the South African Government was actually getting used to such false allegations, as it had been alleged for years already that South Africa was designing and developing terrible weapons from deadly poisonous gas to nuclear weapons. A few days later, Carter announced a commitment from South Africa that it would not undertake nuclear tests at that stage or in future. Nonetheless, he cautioned that the US would continue to watch the Kalahari site closely. In addition, he promised that the US would make a fresh effort to try and convince South Africa to sign the

62. G. Godsell, S. African chess: The toughest moves, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 10 August 1977, p. 1; Anonymous, U.S.-British push vexes South Africa, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 16 August 1977, p. 9.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and to submit all its nuclear power installations to full international safeguards and inspection.⁶³

Looking closely at the outcry that followed the Soviet report, it seems that it was not so much because of the physical explosion of a nuclear bomb by South Africa as the fact that it might have caused a political explosion. As Andrew Young already said during his visit to South Africa in May 1977, it would have done no good to drop a bomb in Soweto, a black suburb of Johannesburg where unrest had continued for more than a year. Rather, it would probably have damaged negotiations on the independence of Rhodesia and South West Africa (Namibia), turning the spotlight away from them to South Africa. Furthermore, it could have sped up a trade and mandatory arms embargo against South Africa. Of course, the fallout from such an explosion would also have affected countless whites, too. On the other hand, exploding a nuclear bomb could have reiterated South Africa's new policy of 'total strategy', as noted earlier in this chapter, acting as a vigorous display of toughness when challenged.⁶⁴

By 27 August 1977, the theory of South Africa exploding a nuclear bomb as part of a political ploy was enhanced when US intelligence analysts stated that they doubted seriously whether South Africa ever intended to physically explode such a bomb. Despite hard photographic evidence from US spy satellites that an underground test site was being prepared in the Kalahari Desert, analysts suddenly started to believe that South Africa manipulated the whole episode for its own political benefit by giving US government officials the impression that a test was imminent. Some even suspected that the site was a mock test facility built to trigger publicity that would indirectly label South Africa as being a potential nuclear power.⁶⁵ Whatever the case, one tends to think that this sudden change in US theory is indicative of hurt pride, because of the fact that the US, with all its sophisticated spy satellites, did not even notice the site until after being directed to it by the Soviet Union.

63. Department of State, US, South Africa exchanges on nuclear matters, *Department of State Bulletin*, 5 December 1977, pp. 797-798; Anonymous, U.S. asks S. Africa about A-bomb test, *Los Angeles Times*, 21 August 1977, p. 10; Anonymous, Is Pretoria playing with a bomb? (Editorial), *Los Angeles Times*, 23 August 1977, p. 6; Anonymous, South Africa denies nuclear-test reports, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 22 August 1977, p. 2; R. Walker, We'll watch Kalahari 'A-site' says Carter, *The Natal Mercury*, 24 August 1977, p. 1.

64. J. Goodwin, South African atom bomb – a political explosion? *The Christian Science Monitor*, 24 August 1977, pp. 1, 22.

65. O. Johnson, A-test story seen as S. African ploy, *Los Angeles Times*, 27 August 1977, p. 6.

The South African Government again reacted defiantly, this time through Finance Minister Owen Horwood. He stressed that although South Africa stood by its assurances that it will not use its nuclear program for military purposes, it reserved the right to use its nuclear potential for other than peaceful purposes. In his own words: *"I think it is time we told Carter and a few other people that if we did at any time wish to do other things with our nuclear potential, we will jolly well do so according to our own decisions and our own judgment"*.⁶⁶ Nonetheless, Pik Botha, obviously being concerned that Horwood's statement could revive reports that South Africa was preparing to test a nuclear bomb, quickly followed up on his remarks, saying that the assurances given earlier that South Africa had no intentions of test-exploding a nuclear bomb still stood, and that it reflected firm government policy.⁶⁷

2.5 THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT'S DEFIANCE

From 22-26 August 1977, the United Nations sponsored a World Conference for Action Against Apartheid in Lagos, Nigeria, where a Declaration for Action Against Apartheid was made. Young attended the Conference and made a statement concerning South Africa that indicated that the US was still hesitant to take active steps against that country, despite its strong rhetoric and the events of the preceding weeks. Young asserted that the Vorster Government continually charged that the US was trying to pull the rug out from under white South Africa, and that the US policy was viewed as *"strangulation by finesse"*.⁶⁸ He made it clear that he could not agree with this condemnation; rather, the situation in South Africa should be analyzed rationally, all alternatives discussed and a serious attempt made in an effort to find realistic solutions. Although the US policy was rooted in a firm commitment to the progressive transformation of the South African society toward majority rule and an end to apartheid in as rapid and aggressive a manner as possible, it was inevitable that there would be differences on the tactics and methods of achieving these goals. He said that he did not believe in the method of violence, although he had never condemned any man's right to take up arms in pursuit of freedom. However, the armed struggle in Southern Africa was

66. As quoted in Anonymous, S. Africa official sounds defiant note on A-power, *Los Angeles Times*, 31 August 1977, p. 18.

67. Anonymous, S. Africa official sound defiant note on A-power, *Los Angeles Times*, 31 August 1977, p. 18.

68. As quoted in A. Young, Developments concerning apartheid, *Department of State Bulletin*, 3 October 1977, p. 446.

too often advocated most vigorously by people thousands of miles away from the actual struggle. Their only contribution to the struggle was bitterness and frustration.⁶⁹

In early September 1977, South Africa once again made headlines all over the world with the death of Steve Biko, a Black Consciousness leader, in police custody. Biko was a former medical student who was actively involved in self-help programs in black communities. In 1973 already, he was banned and restricted to King William's Town. Afterwards, he was arrested and released several times as a result of his promotion of Black Consciousness. The South African Government was of the opinion that Black Consciousness would eventually lead to the mobilization of black opinion against the white establishment, i.e. racial confrontation. Biko was furthermore often outspoken against US involvement in South Africa, believing that it had steadily increased and that the Carter Administration should take a harder line against South Africa. His final arrest was on 18 August 1977 near Grahamstown, far outside the limits of his banning restriction to King William's Town. He was kept in isolation until 6 September 1977, when he was taken to an interrogation room where he was confronted with pamphlets obtained from informants. According to his interrogators, he gave an unsatisfactory response, thereby eliciting a storm of physical and mental abuse that left him unconscious. He had suffered injury to the brain, but was refused proper medical attention for several days. Finally, he was transported to a police hospital outside Pretoria, more than a thousand kilometers north of Port Elizabeth where he was held in custody. The doctor who examined him on his arrival in Pretoria was given no information about his prior history, and proceeded to only give him a shot of vitamins. Biko died a few hours later on 12 September 1977.⁷⁰

A terse announcement of Biko's death was made the following day, leading to a wave of reports in English South African newspapers and international wire services. However, the South African state-controlled radio and television stations did not even mention Biko's death. At first, the Minister of Police, Jimmy Kruger, gave the cause of death as a hunger strike. But within a few days, an avalanche of questions and criticisms led to a retraction of the first explanation. Now, the official statement was that Biko had not died because of a hunger strike, but simply after one. Biko was also

69. A. Young, Developments concerning apartheid, *Department of State Bulletin*, 3 October 1977, pp. 446-447; A.J. DeRoche, *Andrew Young: Human Rights Ambassador*, p. 88.

70. R.K. Massie, *Loosing the bonds*, pp. 414-423.

accused of plotting and advocating violence. When questioned on Biko's death at the Transvaal Congress of the Nationalist Party, Kruger said that it left him cold. This statement caused the South African Government immeasurable damage, according to Foreign Minister Pik Botha. It alienated friends, because they saw a hardened point of view that was probably a trademark of Afrikaners and made them suspicious of further relations. Botha predicted that Carter would support a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa as a result of Biko's death.⁷¹

The initial explanation of Biko's death also did not go down well with a large proportion of the South African society. In the days and weeks after his death, the South African Government was confronted by an upsurge of black student demonstrators and protests, supported by white liberal factions. On 17 September 1977, Vorster made his first public comment about Biko's death in an exclusive press interview. He said that although it was very unfortunate and that an inquest would be opened, he wished to note that Biko's role as Black Nationalist leader had been exaggerated. Indeed, Vorster did not even think that one out of a hundred knew who Biko was before he died.⁷² In the light of the uproar that Biko's death caused, however, this remark can be viewed as very naïve. It is as if Vorster and his Government was simply blind to the truth, or maybe on the other hand they were simply being obstinate to the world resistance against their policy of apartheid. One also gets the impression that they seemed unaware of black attitudes, too.

Vorster used the interview to follow up on his thundered defiance against the United Nations at the National Party Convention in Johannesburg earlier that month. The United Nations was expected to impose sanctions on South Africa, and the renewed defiance could therefore be viewed as a political necessity considering the assurance by Vorster and some of his cabinet ministers in the preceding weeks that South Africa as a nation could stand alone. He forecasted some severe tests for South Africa, but nonetheless reiterated that the policy of apartheid was not discrimination but a sincere effort to provide black people living in South Africa with an opportunity to independently rule themselves in mini states within the South African borders. In this regard, he once again

71. R.K. Massie, *Loosing the bonds*, p. 423; J.E.H. Grobler, *Transcript of a telephonic interview with R.F. (Pik) Botha*, 11 February 1997.

72. R.K. Massie, *Loosing the bonds*, p. 423; S. Topping, Vorster warns U.S. against 'meddling', says he will resist sanctions, *The New York Times*, 17 September 1977, pp. 1, 5; Anonymous, Excerpts from interview with Prime Minister Vorster on South African policy, *The New York Times*, 17 September 1977, p. 4.

lashed out at the US, saying that relations between the US and South Africa was fast reaching the stage where the South African Government felt that the US wanted to prescribe to them how the country should be run internally. He admitted that only a fool would not listen to advice, but then said that outsiders could not be allowed to meddle in the internal affairs of another country. Therefore, the South African Government was definitely not going to allow anybody to tell them what to do and what not, especially not the US. Through this comment, Vorster specifically lashed out at Mondale, who remarked at his meeting with Vorster in May 1977 that he did not see any difference between the concepts of full participation and one-man, one-vote. He said that it was the same thing, i.e. every citizen should have the right to vote, and every vote should be equally weighed. The remark was taken by Vorster as confirmation that the US favored one-man, one-vote elections in South Africa, which would lead to black majority rule.⁷³

Turning to the other much-debated issue of the preceding months, namely South Africa's nuclear capabilities, Vorster was asked in the interview whether he would exclude the use of nuclear technology for military purposes if it came to the actual survival of South Africa as a result of pressure or attacks from Africa. Vorster answered that the use of nuclear technology for military purposes had never occurred to his Government, for the simple reason that South Africa was capable to deal with everything that comes out of Africa in the normal conventional way. South Africa manufactured all the armaments needed to defend itself, and only asked the West for armaments to defend the Cape sea route against Russian invasion. He then reiterated that he did not visualize a frontal attack from Africa to the north, but if they were "foolish enough" to do so, then South Africa would be able to deal with it effectively. Just a few weeks later, however, Vorster denied in a televised interview that he had given Carter a promise that South Africa would not develop nuclear weapons. On the contrary, he said, he merely repeated a statement that had been made often by his

73. J. Foisie, S. African leaders take a defiant stand against possible U.N. economic sanctions, *Los Angeles Times*, 18 September 1977, p. 5; S. Topping, Vorster warns U.S. against 'meddling', says he will resist sanctions, *The New York Times*, 17 September 1977, pp. 1, 5; Anonymous, Excerpts from interview with Prime Minister Vorster on South African policy, *The New York Times*, 17 September 1977, p. 4.

Government, namely that South Africa was only interested in peaceful development of nuclear facilities.⁷⁴

Several international sympathizers attended Biko's funeral, and a memorial meeting was held at the United Nations, where the Sierra Leone Foreign Minister, Abdullai Conteh, urged the international community to take collective action to bring an end to the carnage in South Africa, in the form of a mandatory arms embargo. His plea was echoed by David Sibeko, the Foreign Affairs spokesman of the PAC-in-exile, who asked the Security Council to impose economic sanctions and an arms embargo against South Africa. Sibeko quoted from a speech by Biko the previous year, in which he asked Carter to reverse the traditional policy whereby the US had always looked at South Africa as a partner in diplomatic initiatives in Africa. Several other appeals on the same note were also heard, and it started to look as if a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa was imminent. In fact, on 26 September 1977, a memorandum from David Aaron, the US President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs, was sent to Mondale and the Departments of State and Defense. In this memorandum, initial measures for force on South Africa, if necessary, were recommended. The measures, which were approved by Carter, were aimed at reaching a settlement in Rhodesia on acceptable terms, and included support for a mandatory United Nations embargo on arms sales to South Africa. In addition, it was stated that grey area sales of military related equipment would continue to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, but with some tightening as a signal to South Africa. The tightening pressures would be given special consideration in the South West Africa (Namibia) context, where the issue of South African military withdrawal could prove to be a major obstacle.⁷⁵

The South African Government had in September 1977 provided new ammunition to its foreign critics with the death of Biko. In October 1977 it provided even more such ammunition through what can be viewed as clumsy and naïve actions. Vorster felt that

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74. A.J. DeRoche, Standing firm for principles: Jimmy Carter and Zimbabwe, *Diplomatic History* 23(4), Fall 1999, pp. 657-685; S. Topping, Vorster warns U.S. against 'meddling', says he will resist sanctions, *The New York Times*, 17 September 1977, pp. 1, 5; Anonymous, Excerpts from interview with Prime Minister Vorster on South African policy, *The New York Times*, 17 September 1977, p. 4; Anonymous, Vorster denies A-weapons pledge, *The New York Times*, 24 October 1977, p. 2.
75. D. Shannon, Arms ban for S. Africa urged at U.N., *Los Angeles Times*, 24 September 1977, p. 2; Carter Presidential Library and Archives (Atlanta), Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection, 1972 - 1981, NLC-1132-C, PRC 41, 01/1977-01/1981, Box 24: *Memorandum*, David Aaron to The Vice President, Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense, 26 September 1977.

he might be able to turn the panicky mood that gripped South Africa to his advantage and proceeded to announce that parliamentary elections would be held in November 1977, a year earlier than the originally planned date. He wanted a strong mandate to deal for once and for all with outside intervention in South African affairs. To demonstrate his resolve to suppress dissent, he ordered a crackdown on dissident black leaders, newspapers and organizations, which was introduced on 19 October 1977. Two leading black newspapers, *The World* and the *Daily Dispatch*, as well as eighteen black and interracial organizations, including the South African Student Organization (SASO), the Black People's Convention, the Black Women's Federation and other organizations were banned. Fifty prominent individuals were arrested.⁷⁶

The bannings led to an immediate international outcry. The US Department of State issued a statement saying that the Carter Administration was deeply disturbed by the crackdown, which it viewed as designed to stifle the freedom of expression for black people in South Africa. Carter himself responded by calling back the US Ambassador to South Africa for consultation on what steps the US should take in response to the crackdown. This decision was given unusual publicity by the Carter Administration, presumably so that it could be regarded as a slap at the South African Government. Carter also called a policy review session with Mondale, Young, Vance, his national security advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, and representatives of the Treasury, Commerce and Defense Departments to discuss what concrete steps to take beyond the oral condemnation of South Africa. In the US Congress, white liberals and members of the Congressional Black Caucus, as well as the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, issued strong statements urging the Carter Administration to go beyond mere rhetoric and take specific actions like economic sanctions and other punitive measures. In the United Nations, the African nations began a renewed campaign to invoke tough punitive measures on South Africa, including an arms embargo and a ban on future investment or a curb on trade with South Africa. Andrew Young himself responded by

76. A.J. DeRoche, *Andrew Young: Human Rights Ambassador*, pp. 89-90; R.K. Massie, *Loosing the bonds*, pp. 424; B. Gwertzman, U.S. recalls envoy from South Africa for consultations, *The New York Times*, 22 October 1977, p. 1; Anonymous, The price of repression (Editorial), *Los Angeles Times*, 26 October 1977, p. 6.

saying that he favored some form of sanctions against South Africa, although he took care to say that he was expressing a personal view.⁷⁷

The American public and private organizations also reacted to the crackdown through numerous petitions and letters. The American Lutheran Church stated that the detentions and bannings were undeniable evidence of the oppression under which the nonwhites of South Africa lived. The World Methodist Council stated that its General Secretary had spent a week in South Africa and gained the distinct impression that the crackdown was aimed at persons who were doing nothing more than seeking the dignity and participation of all South Africans in the life of the country. The Church Divinity School of the Pacific send a mailgram to Vorster urging him to take back the order banning the Christian Institute in South Africa and to give back the basic rights of press and organization to black persons, noting that the restrictions on the freedom of the Gospel was frightening. The Polaroid Company noted a deep concern about the events in South Africa and said that it was dismayed to find that many of their friends and correspondents in South Africa had been placed under house arrest. It said that it was most anxious to know what policy the US Government would pursue regarding political and business relations between the US and South Africa. The Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy urged the Carter Administration to put an end to financing and investment in South Africa, as well as an end to all US nuclear trade and co-operation with South Africa. They also demanded support for a mandatory United Nations arms embargo. Lastly, the Tennessee Black Caucus presented a lengthy petition condemning the crackdown and requesting Carter to impose military, economic and political sanctions against South Africa.⁷⁸

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77. G. Hovey, U.S. considers steps against South Africa, *The New York Times*, 25 October 1977, p. 5; B. Gwertzman, U.S. recalls envoy from South Africa for consultations, *The New York Times*, 22 October 1977, p. 1; K. Teltsch, Young in favor of stiffer steps on South Africa, *The New York Times*, 25 October 1977, p. 1; C. Murphy, Young favors sanctions against South Africa, *The Washington Post*, 25 October 1977, p. A1; Anonymous, Young favors sanctions against S.A., 25 October 1977, p. 3; Anonymous, Young favors U.N. sanctions on South Africa, *Los Angeles Times*, 25 October 1977, p. 1; A.J. DeRoche, *Andrew Young: Human Rights Ambassador*, p. 90.
78. Carter Presidential Library and Archives (Atlanta), White House Central File, Subject File, CO 141, 1/20/1977-1/20/1981, Box CO-54: **Letter**, David W. Preus, President of the American Lutheran Church to President Carter, 31 October 1977; **Letter**, Frederick H. Borsch of The Church Divinity School of the Pacific to President Carter, 31 October 1977; **Letter**, Joe Hale, General Secretary of the World Methodist Council to President Carter, 31 October 1977; **Letter**, Peter Wensberg, Senior Vice President of the Polaroid Corporation to Vice President Walter Mondale, 28 October 1977; **Letter**, Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy to President Carter, 28 October 1977; White House Central File, Public Relations, Executive, PR 13-1/ST: **Letter**, C.B. Robinson, Chairman of the Tennessee Black Caucus to President Carter, 4 November 1977.

In conclusion, it can be asserted that at the end of October 1977, it was clear that the gulf between the US, i.e. both the US Government and the US people, on the one hand and the South African Government and its supporters on the other hand, was rapidly widening. The status quo that existed when Carter became US President nine months before, was no longer tenable.

2.6 THE INSTITUTION OF A MANDATORY ARMS EMBARGO AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA

The crackdown on internal opposition by the South African Government placed Carter in a position where he could no longer resist some form of action against that country, as it was widely regarded as a very drastic backward step on the advancement of human rights. If Carter did not do anything practical, his commitment to human rights would have been viewed as false by the American electorate who voted for him for just that reason, as well as by the world community who had been expecting a more hard-line policy toward South Africa from his Administration. Thus, on 25 October 1977, a new day dawned for US-South African relations. For the first time ever in the history of US-South African relations, an Administration of the US branded the South African racial policies a threat to international peace and security. On this day, officials of the Carter Administration announced that it had decided in principle to support a proposed move in the United Nations Security Council to impose a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa, possibly with an initial time limit of six months as an incentive to South Africa to stop the continuing crackdown on opposition movements.⁷⁹

In addition to the arms embargo, the Carter Administration also indicated that if satisfactory language for a resolution could be agreed upon with African states and other delegations, it would be inclined to support a Security Council warning of economic action against South Africa if the latter did not modify its policy of apartheid. But it was quickly added that the US gave no consideration at that stage for drastic economic sanctions against South Africa. The Carter Administration felt that to press for such drastic action would risk alienating conservative forces in the US Congress and

79. J.C. Harsh, Mr. Carter versus South Africa, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 27 October 1977, p. 23; O. Johnston, U.S. prepares South Africa sanctions plan, *Los Angeles Times*, 26 October 1977, pp. 1, 23; Anonymous, U.S. to support mandatory S. Africa arms embargo, *Chicago Tribune*, 26 October 1977, p. 2; Anonymous, Carter to back arms embargo on Republic, *The Cape Times*, 27 October 1977, p. 1.

among the public opinion, whose support was crucial for other foreign policy objectives. Thus, Carter left a door open for diplomacy. He still hoped that the South African Government would co-operate in bringing about a peaceful solution to the South West Africa (Namibia) question and the issue of apartheid.⁸⁰

But the US proposal still had to get past the African nations, who were reluctant to merely accept a mandatory arms embargo. Although they saw it as a positive step towards a shift in US policy towards South Africa, they did not think that it stretched far enough. Accordingly, four resolutions for punitive action against South Africa were reintroduced in the United Nations Security Council by Benin, Liberia and Mauritius. These resolutions offered a wide range of action as alternatives to the US proposal. The first resolution included a condemnation of the South African Government's crackdown on political opponents and a call to release political prisoners and abrogate bans on individuals and organizations. The second resolution castigated South Africa for its continued defiance of past United Nations requests, and declared apartheid to be a threat to international peace and security. The third resolution requested member states to stop the sale of all kinds of arms and military equipment to South Africa, refrain from aiding in the nuclear development of that country and prevent corporations from providing any form of direct and indirect assistance to the South African Government in its military buildup. The fourth resolution sought to impose a ban on government or private investments, loans or credits to the South African Government.⁸¹

On 27 October 1977, Carter officially announced the US support for mandatory United Nations sanctions against all arms sales to South Africa, thereby establishing a formal precedent for action by the United Nations. He also expanded the US' own arms embargo against South Africa to include items such as spare parts for C-130 transport aircraft and other equipment like small executive airplanes that could be used for either military or civilian purposes. Carter said that South Africa had rejected the efforts of the US to work harmoniously together towards a peaceful solution of the problems of Southern Africa and the elimination of apartheid by taking away the rights of free press and eliminating many of the organizations that had been working toward improved

80. G. Hovey, U.S. is said to agree to arms sanctions against South Africa, *The New York Times*, 26 October 1977, pp. A1, A7; South Africa: The making of United States policy, 1962 - 1989, microfiche collection: National Security Files, fiche 00794: *Telegram*: Secretary of State to All African diplomatic posts, 28 October 1977.

81. D. Shannon, U.S. action seen today on S. Africa, *Los Angeles Times*, 27 October 1977, p. 5; Anonymous, UN council split on S. Africa bans, *Chicago Tribune*, 27 October 1977, p. 2.

equality for all the people of South Africa. He therefore felt that it was important that the US expressed in no uncertain terms its deep and legitimate concern about these actions. He denied that a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa amounted to intervention in the internal affairs of that country, claiming that the US was not trying to impose a blueprint or timetable for racial change in South Africa. Instead, the US wanted to continue working with South Africa in the hope that the South African Government would not sever itself from the rest of the world but rather move in a rapid and evolutionary way toward granting all people of South Africa equal human rights.⁸²

On the same day, the Western members of the Security Council, i.e. the US, Britain, France, Canada and West Germany met to discuss a concept recommendation requesting increased pressure on South Africa to change its policy of apartheid. Three concept resolutions had been presented to the Security Council: the first would have banned foreign investment in South Africa, the second would have ended nuclear cooperation with South Africa, and the third would have stopped the arms procurement of South Africa. None of the Western members of the Security Council were however willing to accept full economic sanctions against South Africa. At the end of the meeting, a general agreement was reached to accept a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa, subject to renewal every six months. An alternative draft resolution to this effect was drawn up, which, if accepted, would direct all United Nations members to cease any provision of arms to South Africa, including the sale and transfer of arms, ammunition of all types, military vehicles, and equipment and material for the manufacture of arms and ammunition, paramilitary police equipment, and spare parts.⁸³

82. Anonymous, U.S. in van of new pressure, *Evening Post*, 28 October 1977, p. 1; G. Hovey, President says U.S. backs U.N. arms ban against South Africa, *The New York Times*, 28 October 1977, pp. 1, 8; Anonymous, Transcript of President's News Conference on Foreign and Domestic Affairs, *The New York Times*, 28 October 1977, p. 14; E. Randolph, Carter backs UN ban on arms to South Africa, *Chicago Tribune*, 28 October 1977, p. 1; Anonymous, Arms ban yes – economic sanctions no, *The Natal Witness*, 27 October 1977, p. 1; Anonymous, President Carter's News Conference on October 27, *Department of State Bulletin*, 21 November 1977, pp. 718-719; Anonymous, National Newspaper Association interviews President Carter, *Department of State Bulletin*, 5 December 1977, pp. 798-799.

83. A.J. DeRoche, *Andrew Young: Human Rights Ambassador*, p. 90; H. Robertson, SA 'threat' to world peace, *The Star*, 28 October 1977, p. 1; Anonymous, Carter sê ja vir wapenverbod, *Die Burger*, 28 October 1977, p. 1; E. Randolph, Carter backs UN ban on arms to South Africa, *Chicago Tribune*, 28 October 1977, p. 1; South Africa: The making of United States policy, 1962 - 1989, microfiche collection: National Security Files, fiche 00796: *Telegram*: Secretary of State to American embassies, 29 October 1977; M.R. Benjamin, Africa hits 'loopholes' in U.S. arms embargo effort at U.N., *The Washington Post*, 29 October 1977, p. A1.

Many of the African states reacted favorably to the Western resolution. However, some of the more radical African states rejected it and demanded on 28 October that the resolutions presented by them earlier be brought to vote at the next Security Council meeting. They sharply criticized some loopholes in the Western resolution, saying that it made no mention of halting all nuclear cooperation with South Africa and failed to bar the granting of licenses to that country for the production of such military items as armored cars or jet fighters. Furthermore, they expressed concern over the failure of the resolution to specifically state that the arms embargo was being imposed under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, which authorized measures against nations that constituted a threat to the maintenance of international peace and security. They felt that the **situation** in South Africa was a threat to international peace and security, while the Western resolution only stated that the **supply of arms** to South Africa was a threat to the international peace and security. Lastly, they said that the timing factor of six months was totally unacceptable, as the South African Government of the time was not one that could ever be supplied with arms. The US was however reluctant to compromise on this point, arguing that a permanent arms embargo would make the ban simply punitive and remove any incentive for South Africa to change its racial policies. Also, any effort to remove a permanent ban later would undoubtedly be vetoed by the communist governments of the Soviet Union or China. On the reference to Chapter VII, the US argued that the omission of any direct reference to Chapter VII was inconsequential, since the language of the Chapter and the resolution actually said the same thing. Privately, however, the Western countries argued that if South Africa was specifically cited under Chapter VII in an arms embargo resolution, the African states would quickly seek economic sanctions by arguing that the nature of the South African Government had already been established.⁸⁴

Despite the objections to the Western resolution by African states, the US, along with the other Western nations, indicated that they could not agree with the way in which at least three of the African resolutions were drafted. The US especially wanted to avoid having to veto the African resolutions. Accordingly, all efforts were made to avoid these resolutions being brought to a vote. The US embassies in African states were ordered to

84. M.R. Benjamin, Africa hits 'loopholes' in U.S. arms embargo effort at U.N., *The Washington Post*, 29 October 1977, p. A1.

make contact with the highest available local official in order to bring some important key points of the draft Western resolution to their attention:

- It was in line with Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, i.e. the call for an arms embargo was based on the finding that further shipments of arms to South Africa would represent a threat to peace.
- It represented abandonment of a position of seventeen years duration by Western powers and a decision, together with the African nations, to take specific, mandatory measures with respect to South Africa.
- If adopted, it would represent the first time that the United Nations has imposed Chapter VII sanctions on a member state.
- It demonstrated the willingness of the Western countries to work together with African states to press for peaceful change in South Africa.

The embassies were asked to emphasize that the four African resolutions would in all probability encounter a veto from the Western nations, which would be a serious setback to the common objective. Instead, the African countries must recognize that the process of achieving racial equality and justice in South Africa would be a long term effort in which cooperation between the African states and the Western countries would be an indispensable element. The US requested that African representatives to the United Nations be asked by their governments to work for a compromise solution in which the African resolutions would not be pressed to a vote. It warned that should the situation in the Security Council result in wholesale defeat of resolutions and no apparent consensus, South Africa could get an entirely misleading impression that they actually enjoyed support in the Western countries.⁸⁵

On 31 October 1977, the US through Ambassador Andrew Young responded to the African nations' criticism that the Western resolution did not even mention a halt to all nuclear cooperation with South Africa. Young said that although he personally favored an embargo on nuclear exports to South Africa as further pressure to alter its apartheid policy, matters had gone too far for such an embargo to be a realistic possibility. South Africa had at that stage already developed a capable nuclear potential, although it was

85. Anonymous, Africans in U.N. press South Africa curbs, *The New York Times*, 29 October 1977, p. 3; South Africa: The making of United States policy, 1962 - 1989, microfiche collection: National Security Files, fiche 00796: *Telegram*: Secretary of State to American embassies, 29 October 1977.

not fully known to what extent. For that reason, the US could not risk ending its 20-year policy of cooperation in nuclear technology with South Africa, as it would only encourage that country to turn to the separate development of its capacity to produce nuclear weapons. Young did however warn South Africa that if it exploded a nuclear bomb, its neighbors would be able to obtain much more sophisticated nuclear weapons, but not from the US. With this statement he hinted that it might be obtained from the Soviet Union. In a separate interview, Brzezinski confirmed this fear, i.e. that the Soviet Union might be tempted to take action that would exacerbate and fuel the conflict in Southern Africa. He added that tightened US sanctions on military exports to South Africa were therefore aimed in part at avoiding a Soviet intrusion in the region. The prime concern of the Carter Administration was that the growing racial conflict in South Africa did not become an ideological conflict, which would involve the intrusion of foreign powers.⁸⁶ Thus, the Carter Administration found itself in basically the same position as that of Kennedy in 1963. On the one hand, the arms embargo was an effort to somewhat counter the pressure from the African states in order to maintain the economic, strategic and anti-communistic privileges of South Africa, while simultaneously trying to polish the image of the US in the eyes of the African states.⁸⁷

On the same day, the efforts by the US to avoid a vote on the African resolutions proved abortive when the African nations stated during a Security Council debate that Carter's announcement of a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa fell short of the expectations of the international community. They still felt that any measure that was less than full Chapter VII sanctions would be inadequate to change the political situation in South Africa. The US along with Britain and France vetoed the three African resolutions, stating that it would only support a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa, and nothing else. They believed that a mandatory arms embargo would already be an appropriate response by the Security Council to the South African crackdown on 19 October. On nuclear arms, Young stated that the US agreed that South Africa should

86. B. Gwertzman, Young rejects ban on atom fuel sale to South Africa, *The New York Times*, 31 October 1977, p. 1; Anonymous, Young keer vir kernverbod, *Beeld*, 31 October 1977, p. 1; Anonymous, Young hints at N-bomb build-up, *The Citizen*, 31 October 1977, p. 1; CBS, Presidential Assistant Brzezinski interviewed on "Face the Nation", *Department of State Bulletin*, 5 December 1977, p. 801; Anonymous, U.S. fears Soviet move in S. Africa, *Chicago Tribune*, 31 October 1977, p. 5; South Africa: The making of United States policy, 1962 - 1989, microfiche collection: National Security Files, fiche 00797: *Telegram*: Secretary of State to All African diplomatic posts, 29 October 1977.

87. M.S. van Wyk, *The 1963 United States arms embargo against South Africa: institution and implementation*, pp. 23-36.

remain free of nuclear weapons, that South Africa should sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and that South Africa's nuclear facilities be kept under international inspection. After the session, the US diplomatic posts in Africa were again instructed to emphasize that it was important to avoid extreme proposals that could give South Africa the hope that it could divide or discount the outside world.⁸⁸

In addition to the African nations' unwillingness to accept the proposed Western resolution, Carter was also confronted with a resolution from the US House of Representatives in which the South African Government's repressive measures against black and white opponents to apartheid was strongly denounced. Biko's death was specifically mentioned. The resolution was approved in the House and called on Carter to take effective measures against South Africa in order to register the deep concern of the US people about the continued violation of human rights in that country. An identical copy of the resolution was also introduced in the Senate, where it was unanimously approved. The acceptance of the resolution was important in the sense that it was the first time that the US Congress had formally spoken out against South Africa. Both the Democratic Party and the Republican Party supported the resolution and was therefore united in denouncing the actions of the South African Government. As the Carter Administration had indicated that it would take action against South Africa in one way or another, it also meant that it was united with the US Congress. This was very important indeed, as it demonstrated to other countries that the US Congress fully supported Carter's proposal for an arms embargo against South Africa.⁸⁹ In the face of such a rare unity in US power circles, Carter had no choice but to go ahead with the action he promised.

On 2 November 1977, Vance presented a review of unilateral US sanctions that the Carter Administration had considered since the South African crackdown on 19 October. As discussed earlier, Carter had already announced the extension of the US

88. E. Harsch, Carter vetoes UN sanctions against South Africa, *Intercontinental Press* 15, November 1977, p. 1214; K. Teltsch, 3 Western powers veto moves in U.N. to curb South Africa, *The New York Times*, 1 November 1977, p. 1; Anonymous, What Young told the Council, *Rand Daily Mail*, 2 November 1977, p. 15; South Africa: The making of United States policy, microfiche collection: National Security Files, fiche 00799: *Telegram*: United States mission at United Nations to Secretary of State, 1 November 1977; fiche 00800: *Telegram*: Secretary of State to All African diplomatic posts, 1 November 1977.

89. S. McBee, House censures 'repressive' South African tactics, *The Washington Post*, 1 November 1977, p. A13; A. Parker, US envoy aided anti-SA hate campaign, *The Citizen*, 2 November 1977, p. 1; Anonymous, U.S. 'not telling SA what to do', *The Natal Witness*, 2 November 1977, p. 1.

arms embargo against South Africa to include items such as spare parts and other equipment, but now Vance indicated that the US would also henceforth prohibit the export of all police equipment to South Africa, including grey area equipment. In addition, the US naval and commercial attachés to South Africa were recalled to the US as a punitive unilateral action. The commercial attaché was to take part in a full review of US commercial ties with South Africa. Vance reiterated that the US wanted to begin the progress towards the end of apartheid and full participation for all South Africans in the political processes. In the light of that, he offered the possibility of a new round of top-level meetings between the South African and US Governments after the South African elections set for 30 November 1977. This call was heeded that very same day by the US and South African ambassadors, who met amid the sharp recriminations between the two countries and agreed to do everything possible to repair the damage in the relations between the two countries.⁹⁰

Also on 2 November 1977, the fifteen members of the Security Council agreed on a revised resolution for a mandatory embargo on arms sales to South Africa. The new resolution was the result of a compromise between the Western powers and the African states. The Western countries dropped their insistence on limiting the ban to six months. The Africans in turn yielded on their key demand that the Security Council make a finding that the **situation** in South Africa represented a threat to peace and hence was subject to the stiff penalties provided under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter⁹¹. Instead, they accepted the Western formulation that the **acquisition** of arms and military material by South Africa represented a threat to peace. The new resolution thus called on all countries, including those not part of the United Nations, to immediately cease any provision to South Africa of arms, ammunition of all types, military vehicles and equipment and spare parts. In response to the demands by the African countries mentioned earlier, the revised text of the resolution also called for a review of all existing contracts and licenses under which South Africa had been able to

90. O. Johnston, U.S. recalls 2 S. Africa aides, halts arms sales, *Los Angeles Times*, 3 November 1977, p. 1; Anonymous, Amerika slaan weer: Attaché herroep, *Beeld*, 3 November 1977, p. 1; Anonymous, U.S. recalls two envoys from Republic, *The Natal Witness*, 3 November 1977, p. 1; Anonymous, V.S.A. roep twee hoë amptenare terug, *Die Volksblad*, 3 November 1977, p. 2; Anonymous, U.S.-S.A. envoys pledge to repair battered links, *The Argus*, 3 November 1977, p. 25; Anonymous, Bid to end SA-US Cold War, *The Star*, 3 November 1977, p. 27.

91. See Appendix I.

manufacture weapons. All countries were furthermore forbidden to assist South Africa in the development of nuclear weapons.⁹²

On 4 November 1977, the Security Council voted unanimously to impose a permanent and binding arms embargo against South Africa through Resolution 418, stating that the action was taken under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. Chapter VII is the section of the Charter that deals with sanctions. Resolution 418 read as follows:

Recalling its resolution 392 (1976) strongly condemning the South African Government for its resort to massive violence against and killings of the African people, including schoolchildren and students and others opposing racial discrimination, and calling upon that Government urgently to end violence against the African people and take urgent steps to eliminate *apartheid* and racial discrimination,

Recognizing that the military build-up and persistent acts of aggression by South Africa against the neighboring States seriously disturb the security of those States,

Further recognizing that the existing arms embargo must be strengthened and universally applied, without any reservations or qualifications whatsoever, in order to prevent a further aggravation of the grave situation in South Africa,

Taking note of the Lagos Declaration for *Action Against Apartheid* (S/12426),

Gravely concerned that South Africa is at the threshold of producing nuclear weapons,

Strongly condemning the South African Government for its acts of repression, its defiant continuance of the system of *apartheid* and its attacks against neighboring independent States,

Considering that the policies and acts of the South African Government are fraught with danger to international peace and security,

Recalling its resolution 181 (1963) and other resolutions concerning a voluntary arms embargo against South Africa,

92. K. Teltsch, U.N. Council agrees on arms-ban terms against South Africa, *The New York Times*, 3 November 1977, p. 1; Anonymous, Security Council agrees on text for arms embargo, *The New York Times*, 4 November 1977, p. 9; Anonymous, U.N. in accord on S. African ban, *The Washington Post*, 3 November 1977, p. A21; Anonymous, Weste, Afrika nog haaks oor verbod, *Beeld*, 3 November 1977, p. 11; Anonymous, U.S. backs S. Africa arms ban, *Chicago Tribune*, 3 November 1977, p. 1.

Convinced that a mandatory arms embargo needs to be universally applied against South Africa in the first instance,

Acting therefore under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,

1. Determines, having regard to the policies and acts of the South African Government, that the acquisition by South Africa of arms and related material constitutes a threat to the maintenance of peace and security;
2. *Decides* that all States shall cease forthwith any provision to South Africa of arms and related materiel of all types, including the sale or transfer of weapons and ammunition, military vehicles and equipment, paramilitary police equipment, and spare parts for the aforementioned, and shall cease as well the provision of all types of equipment and supplies, and grants of licensing arrangements, for the manufacture or maintenance of the aforementioned;
3. *Calls* on all States to review, having regard to the objectives of this resolution, all existing contractual arrangements with and licenses granted to South Africa relating to the manufacture and maintenance of arms, ammunition of all types and military equipment and vehicles, with a view to terminating them;
4. *Further decides* that all States shall refrain from any cooperation with South Africa in the manufacture and development of nuclear weapons;
5. *Calls* upon all States, including nonmembers of the United Nations, to act strictly in accordance with the provisions of this resolution;
6. *Requests* the Secretary General to report to the Council on the progress of the implementation of this resolution, the first report to be submitted not later than 1 May 1978;
7. *Decides* to keep this item on its agenda for further action, as appropriate, in the light of developments.⁹³

Although it was not specifically stated under which of articles in Chapter VII the Security Council acted, it was clear that it was under Articles 39 and 41. Article 39 states that the Security Council is responsible to determine if any threat to peace existed, or whether a breach of the peace or an act of aggression took place. It then has to make recommendations or decide on measures to be taken under Articles 41 and 42 to maintain or restore the international peace and security. Article 41 provides that the

93. United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 418 (1977)*, 4 November 1977. See Appendix II for transcript.

Security Council may decide what measures not involving the use of armed force are to be employed to give effect to its decisions, e.g. complete or partial interruption of economic relations and communication and the severance of diplomatic relations. The embargo was mandatory, meaning that all the members of the United Nations were obliged to abide by it, in comparison with the 1963 arms embargo to which adherence was voluntary. Non-adherence or violation by any United Nations member could lead to that member being suspended or expelled. The embargo could only be lifted by a Security Council vote.⁹⁴

2.7 REACTION TO THE EMBARGO

The mandatory arms embargo instituted against South Africa marked the first time in the 32-year history of the United Nations that mandatory sanctions were applied to a member state. It also marked a major shift in policy by the US, Britain and France, who as recently as 1975 and 1976 had vetoed mandatory arms embargo resolutions against South Africa on the grounds that the South African Government did not constitute a threat to peace.⁹⁵ The institution of the embargo therefore drew worldwide attention and comments, indicating that it was indeed a major happening of the time.

Speaking just after the Security Council vote, Young remarked that a very clear message had been sent to South Africa through the institution of the embargo, namely that continuation on the course on which it had embarked, i.e. apartheid, would only lead to further strains on ties between South Africa and the rest of the international community. He called the institution of the mandatory arms embargo a stigma that would hopefully lead South Africa to end its policy of apartheid. He however added that if the South African Government showed a willingness to end apartheid and made

94. Congressional Quarterly Incorporated, *Historic Documents of 1977*, p. 823; Anonymous, Security Council cited threats to peace, *The New York Times*, 5 November 1977, p. 7; K. Teltsch, U.N. Council orders arms-sale sanctions against South Africa, *The New York Times*, 5 November 1977, p. 1; Anonymous, U.N. imposes mandatory arms ban on South Africa, *Los Angeles Times*, 4 November 1977, p. 2; Anonymous, U.N. votes to embargo arms sales to S. Africa, *Chicago Tribune*, 5 November 1977, p. 2; Anonymous, Sanksies: dis finaal, *Die Vaderland*, 4 November 1977, p. 1.

95. Congressional Quarterly Incorporated, *Historic Documents of 1977*, p. 823; U.N. Council orders arms-sale sanctions against South Africa, *The New York Times*, 5 November 1977, p. 1.

progress in that direction, there might be reconciliation between the two countries.⁹⁶ In his own words: *"It is our fervent hope that the Government of South Africa will begin to talk and listen to its own people, black and white, Asian and colored, English- and Afrikaans-speaking, and work with them in moving away from the disaster which threatens that country."*⁹⁷

In a memorandum as well as a press conference a few days after the Security Council vote, Vice President Mondale emphasized that the Carter Administration stood firm by its conviction that steps had to be taken against the South African Government to let it know that its disregard for human rights and dignity would not be tolerated by the rest of the world. Therefore, the imposition of the mandatory arms embargo was more than just a gesture. It represented a significant change in US policy. On the short term, the effect of the embargo and the US' own additions to it might be largely psychological, but on the long term it would deprive South Africa of certain materials. Furthermore, whatever materials South Africa might be able to obtain abroad, would be obtained with difficulty and at greater cost. He warned that the US was prepared to take further steps against South Africa should the latter still refuse to move away from its discriminative policy of apartheid. However, for the moment the Carter Administration decided against taking measures that would end trade and investment with South Africa, i.e. economic sanctions. He denied that the US had vetoed economic sanctions against South Africa on the basis of Western economic interests, saying that the US could have gone further, but that there was no international consensus for economic sanctions against South Africa. Moreover, it could result in South Africa's virtual isolation, possibly drove the South African Government to even greater defiance, and end whatever influence the US Government might have in bringing about peaceful change in South Africa. The arms embargo was therefore designed in part to give the US diplomatic flexibility to react as necessary to the situation in Southern Africa.⁹⁸

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96. A. Young, U.N. Security Council condemns South Africa's Apartheid policy and imposes a mandatory arms embargo, *Department of State Bulletin*, 12 December 1977, pp. 864-865; Anonymous, U.N. votes permanent ban on sale of arms to S. Africa, *Los Angeles Times*, 5 November 1977, p. 1; Anonymous, Veiligheidsraad eenparig, *Beeld*, 5 November 1977, pp. 1-2.
97. As quoted in Anonymous, Move on SA seen as momentous, *Eastern Province Herald*, 5 November 1977, p. 2.
98. Carter Presidential Library and Archives (Atlanta), White House Central File, Subject File, CO 141, 1/20/1977-1/20/1981, Box CO-53, 7/1/77 - 5/30/78: *Memorandum*, P. Tarnoff to Vice President Mondale, 9 November 1977; Anonymous, Mondale warns of further action, *The Argus*, 7 November 1977, p. 13; Anonymous, Nog stappe kom as SA nie oppas, sê Mondale, *Die Volksblad*, 7 November 1977, p. 3.

Secretary of State Vance confirmed that the US was considering further steps against South Africa when he told a group of black leaders in Washington that the Carter Administration planned to increase its economic and diplomatic pressure on the South African Government. He said that the Carter Administration considered recalling all US commercial attachés from South Africa. However, the Carter Administration was not willing to decrease US diplomatic representation in South Africa by recalling the ambassador permanently. It was crucial to have an ambassador in South Africa to keep the Carter Administration up to date on developments in the country and to make policy recommendations. Vance furthermore again rejected a proposal to cease all cooperation on nuclear technology and research with South Africa, as it would hamper efforts by the US to get South Africa to agree to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.⁹⁹

The South African Government reacted angrily to the US announcement of a mandatory arms embargo, even before the Security Council endorsed it. On 26 October 1977, South African Defense Minister P.W. Botha reacted in a telephonic interview with the *New York Times*. He said that South Africa had a strong enough arms industry to surmount an international embargo in a way that will astonish those seeking an end to white rule in South Africa. He nonetheless added that a decision to impose a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa would deprive the latter's forces of some needed conventional arms, although it would not seriously weaken its overall fighting capacity. He said that only the US and the Soviet Union possessed the power to overwhelm South Africa, even if the latter was forced to produce all its own arms. Concerning Carter, Botha made some harsh comments. Apparently he did not think that Carter was capable of being President of the US, as he must surely have known that one cannot prescribe to another country how to go about its way. He added that he was of the opinion that the US was in a bad state of affairs on account of a temporary Government. Turning to Young, Botha said scornfully that he should attend some new school of diplomacy. Interestingly, the following day Botha denied that he had an interview with the *New York Times*. But he did not deny making the comments, saying that he had spoken to a reporter over the telephone under the impression that the latter only wanted some background information. He made it clear to the reporter that he was

99. Anonymous, V.S.A. wil erger druk, sê Vance, *Die Oosterlig*, 8 November 1977, p. 1.

not willing to conduct a formal interview over the telephone, and therefore he could not accept any responsibility for the report.¹⁰⁰

A few days later, P.W. Botha reacted again, saying that Carter's action of imposing a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa was not unexpected. He assured South Africans that they need not worry about the practical impact of a mandatory arms embargo. He said that the local arms industry was able to produce all the weapons needed for the protection of the country's borders. This included small arms as well as heavy artillery. In addition, the development and establishment of a local missile industry had been completed, and significant progress had been made in making the country's shipbuilding industry operative. Progress had also been made with the production of other strategic weapons, although he declined to say what these entailed. Thus, Botha reiterated, the South African armed forces would be able to cope with any attacks mounted by black forces, even if they were supplied and trained by the Soviet Union. But Commandant P.G. Marais, the Armscor chairman at the time, did not fully agree with Botha. He said that while South Africa was able to completely fulfill its own need of armaments for unconventional warfare, and almost completely in armaments for conventional means, the country was still not able to produce heavy bombers, ships and submarines. He doubted whether the country would be able in the future to manufacture these heavy equipment.¹⁰¹

Angry comments also came from Foreign Minister Pik Botha, who called Carter's policy with regard to South Africa "dangerous" and accused him of applying double standards. He vowed that South Africa would fight to the bitter end: "*We are prepared for anything. Our survival is at stake. What should we do, surrender? In order to become acceptable? We won't do it. If the only alternative is between surrendering and fighting*

100. J.F. Burns, South Africa defies U.S. on arms, says it can surmount an Embargo, *The New York Times*, 27 October 1977, pp. A1, A9; Anonymous, Wapensanksies teen S.A. nie onverwags, *Die Volksblad*, 28 October 1977, p. 3; Anonymous, Verbod op wapens sal S.A. nie ondersit, *Die Burger*, 28 October 1977, p. 3; Anonymous, Sanksies sal S.A. nie knak – Botha, *Die Oosterlig*, 28 October 1977, p. 1; Anonymous, PW Botha ontken VSA-onderhoud, *Die Volksblad*, 28 October 1977, p. 1.

101. J. Foisie, South Africa views arms cutoff proposal calmly, *Los Angeles Times*, 29 October 1977, p. 6; Anonymous, SA kan nog nie bomwerpers en bote bou, *Die Vaderland*, 29 October 1977, p. 1; Anonymous, SA sells arms - Botha, *Eastern Province Herald*, 31 October 1977, p. 2; J. Theron, Defence Minister reacts to arms embargo: Local industry gives SA missile lead, *The Citizen*, 3 November 1977, p. 2.

it out, then surely you need not doubt what we'll choose."¹⁰² Nonetheless, he reiterated that there was no indication that the pressure on South Africa will decrease after the imposition of a mandatory arms embargo against the country. Rather, all the signs pointed to an increase in pressure on the country. On 4 November 1977, after the United Nations vote which imposed the mandatory arms embargo, Botha said that it was perhaps a good thing that South Africa now knew where it stood, i.e. that it was on its own and that it would have to struggle alone in order to survive. He said that the Carter Administration's decision to support the embargo would make it even more difficult to find possible solutions for the Southern African issues, as it will make South Africans more determined to defend their country. The embargo was therefore nothing else than an incitement of violence. He added that it was not so much the practical effect of the arms embargo that concerned South Africa. Rather, it was the principle involved. South Africa did not accept the embargo because it was not a case of morality. If it was, then the US should have asked for sanctions against more than half of the nations of the world where there was neither press freedom nor human rights.¹⁰³

Prime Minister Vorster reacted to the arms embargo by saying that many of the threats against South Africa were pure bluff, and that it was his job to decide when the bluff would end. He vowed to continue to make it clear to the world that South Africa would not go any further in meeting the demands that were being made. Some changes would certainly be made internally in South Africa, not because the world demanded it, but because it was right and just. He also said that South Africa was the prize in the struggle for Africa between the West led by the US, and the Soviet Union. They wanted to take away what the people of South Africa rightfully owned. Therefore, South Africa would not be compromised and told how to run its own affairs. Further comments came from the South African Minister of Finance, Owen Horwood, and the leader of the Progressive Federal Party, Colin Eglin. Horwood said that the US ought to realize that it needed South Africa as a bastion to communism in Southern Africa, where strife and

102. As quoted in Anonymous, S. Africa vows to fight on, calls U.S. two-faced on rights, *Chicago Tribune*, 29 October 1977, p. 1.

103. Anonymous, S. Africa vows to fight on, calls U.S. two-faced on rights, *Chicago Tribune*, 29 October 1977, p. 1; Anonymous, Pik Botha oor veto's: Druk op S.A. sal toeneem, *Die Burger*, 2 November 1977, p. 1; Anonymous, West vetoes sanctions against SA, *South African Digest*, 4 November 1977, pp. 1-3; Anonymous, Hypocrisy! Pik on UN arms ban, *The Citizen*, 5 November 1977, p. 1; Anonymous, 'Aanhitsing tot geweld', *Beeld*, 5 November 1977, p. 1; Anonymous, Verbod hits aan tot geweld, *Die Volksblad*, 5 November 1977, p. 5; Anonymous, South African Minister asserts arms ban may incite violence, *The New York Times*, 5 November 1977, p. 7.

chaos would only benefit communism. Eglin in turn said that the Carter Administration rushed in where angels feared to tread. He nonetheless had the impression that the statements and actions of the US were more concerned with posturing than with reform.¹⁰⁴

The South African Ambassador in the US, Donald Sole, reacted to the embargo by warning that the pressure that the embargo instilled on South Africa would not encourage those in South Africa who were in a position to influence the policy of apartheid. Rather, the way in which South Africa was pressurized in the foregoing weeks could have an opposite effect of defiance and an even more hard lined policy. Leaders of commerce and industry in South Africa also reacted, noting that the US arms embargo against South Africa would only strengthen the latter's resistance to outside interference in its internal affairs. Some felt that the embargo would have a hardening effect against the US and its products. Others were of the opinion that the embargo was an attempt to please the Third World. Many doubted that anything significant would come out of the embargo, other than strengthening resistance to the outside world.¹⁰⁵

The most prominent South African Zulu leader, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, applauded the arms embargo, saying that it was an important symbolic gesture. He believed that it was the nudge South Africans needed to move toward change. South Africa was at the crossroads of escalating violence and non-violent change; therefore, it was time for South Africans to get their minds of shooting one another and hasten the process of change. Nevertheless, he was of the opinion that the embargo would only have limited effect in practice, since South Africa was by far the strongest military power on the African continent. He stressed that whether black South Africans were for or against violence, the fact was that they had no weapons, and it was clear that Vorster was prepared for violence leading to suicide.¹⁰⁶

The South African press had a mouthful to say about the embargo in their editorials. The Afrikaans newspapers argued that the embargo would open the door for further

104. Anonymous, West vetoes sanctions against SA, *South African Digest*, 4 November 1977, pp. 2-3.

105. M. Eorwine, US embargo 'would harden SA line', *The Citizen*, 1 November 1977, p. 5; Anonymous, Veranderinge kom na 30 Nov., sê S.A. gesant, *Die Volksblad*, 5 November 1977, p. 3.

106. Anonymous, SA arms ban 'symbolic only', *The Friend*, 21 November 1977, p. 13; Anonymous, Arms embargo 'nudge' applauded, *The Daily News*, 22 November 1977, p. 2.

sanctions and that the future of whites in South Africa was at stake. In the light of this, South Africans were urged to unity and defiance, whatever the cost, in order to withstand the meddling of the outside world in the country's internal affairs. There was general agreement that the embargo was aimed at weakening the South African Government, thereby opening the door for the Soviet Union to gain a foothold.¹⁰⁷ The pro-Government English newspaper *The Citizen* responded hotly, stating that Carter was fooling himself if he thought that South Africa would just crumble before his remarks. The paper accused Young of being two-faced and a black racist: "*He is not motivated by human rights; he is motivated by the color of his skin*".¹⁰⁸ Finally, the editor asked if the banning of two newspapers and 18 organizations represented such a gross crime when considered that 80 percent of the world did not have a free Press. It listed several countries where gross atrocities against human rights were being committed, against whom no steps had been taken yet.¹⁰⁹

The response of other English newspapers was not as harsh. The majority felt that the embargo was a threat to South Africa's independence, but the South African Government nonetheless had to move fast to bring about reform in the country. However, the external pressure would hardly encourage reform. In agreement with the general feeling among the Afrikaans newspapers, the English ones also expected that the embargo would only lead to the unification of all South Africans who felt that their survival was being threatened. Some of the more liberal newspapers ventured even further by asking why the US picked on South Africa, when there were other countries that were undemocratic and even fascist in a murderous way. Different from *The Citizen* though, *The Argus* offered an answer to this question, namely that the South African Government dared to treat only white people as full human beings through countless

107. Anonymous, Nog hou (Editorial), *Beeld*, 4 November 1977, p. 10; Anonymous, Die begin van 'n proses (Editorial), *Die Oosterlig*, 31 October 1977, p. 8; Anonymous, Wapenverbod se wekstem (Editorial), *Die Transvaler*, 5 November 1977, p. 6; Anonymous, Onberekende nagevolge (Editorial), *Die Vaderland*, 2 November 1977, p. 18; Anonymous, Moet SA nog saamwerk? (Editorial), *Die Vaderland*, 8 November 1977, p. 12; Anonymous, Gevaarlike presedent (Editorial), *Die Volksblad*, 4 November 1977, p. 14; Anonymous, Eendragtig in weerstand (Editorial), *Die Volksblad*, 7 November 1977, p. 14; Anonymous, Glibberige paai-paadjie (Editorial), *Die Volksblad*, 8 November 1977, p. 10; Anonymous, Beste Antwoord (Editorial), *Oggendblad*, 29 October 1977, p. 8.

108. As quoted in Anonymous, The arms embargo (Editorial), *The Citizen*, 29 October 1977, p. 6. Note: These strong-worded accusations of Young was not at all accurate. Young has worked his whole life for racial integration and cooperation, not any sort of "black power" (A.J. DeRoche commenting on this study).

109. Anonymous, The arms embargo (Editor), *The Citizen*, 29 October 1977, p. 6; Anonymous, A threat to peace (Editorial), *The Citizen*, 31 October 1977, p. 6; Anonymous, Young gets his arms ban (Editorial), *The Citizen*, 5 November 1977, p. 6; Anonymous, Threats to world peace (Editorial), *The Citizen*, 7 November 1977, p. 6.

laws against non-white people. The South African Government regarded its motives as nationalistic and radicalistic, but the arms embargo was a clear indication that the rest of the world could not see the difference, because the consequences were the same, namely the deprivation of human rights.¹¹⁰

The US newspapers' reaction to the arms embargo varied markedly from the South African newspapers' response. *The Washington Post* commented that although the embargo was particularly symbolic for the US as one of the countries that had fairly conscientiously adhered to the voluntary 1963 arms embargo, the mandatory embargo came too late to have any significant effect on South Africa's ability to wage a conventional or guerrilla war. They reported that while South Africa was not fully self-sufficient in the production of heavy arms, it already produced a wide variety of small arms as well as a surface-to-air missile. The *Chicago Tribune*, *Los Angeles Times* and *The New York Times* largely agreed, reporting that some diplomats and other experts doubted that the embargo would have much effect as South Africa produced at least 60% of its own armament needs. Some even estimated the production at 75%, and foresaw that South Africa could eventually become totally self-sufficient in arms production. Nevertheless, the majority of the US newspapers agreed that the significance of the imposition of the arms embargo should not be underestimated. It reflected a sharp, though slow switch from the official US policy in the preceding years. It at least gave notice to the South African Government of the world's dismay at its suppression of moderate black opposition.¹¹¹

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110. Anonymous, Why pick on us? (Editorial), *The Argus*, 28 October 1977, p. 20; Anonymous, The arms ban (Editorial), *The Natal Witness*, 29 October 1977, p. 29; Anonymous, Carter's grave move (Editorial), *The Cape Times*, 31 October 1977, p. 8; Anonymous, Off the hook – but still wriggling (Editorial), *Pretoria News*, 1 November 1977 in Comment & Opinion, *South African Digest*, 4 November 1977, pp. 21-23; Anonymous, Less stick, more carrot (Editorial), *Financial Gazette*, 4 November 1977, p. 7; Anonymous, A lesson from a friend (Comment), *Sunday Tribune*, 6 November 1977, p. 28; Anonymous, Smoke screens (Editorial), *The Friend*, 8 November 1977, p. 8.
111. D.B. Ottaway, Arms ban too late to hurt S. Africa, *The Washington Post*, 28 October 1977, pp. A1, A9; Editor, A South African arms embargo, *Chicago Tribune*, 29 October 1977, p. 8; Anonymous, U.N. imposes mandatory arms ban on South Africa, *Los Angeles Times*, 4 November 1977, p. 2; Anonymous, U.N. votes permanent ban on sale of arms to S. Africa, *Los Angeles Times*, 5 November 1977, p. 1; Anonymous, UN votes to embargo arms sales to S. Africa, *Chicago Tribune*, 5 November 1977, p. 2; Editor, Slow squeeze on South Africa, *The New York Times*, 5 November 1977, p. 20.

2.8 CONCLUSION

Jimmy Carter faced a difficult task when he took office as President of the US in January 1977: human rights activists worldwide expected him to take serious action against the South African Government because of its policy of apartheid. In addition, after a relatively quiet period in the first few years of the 1970s, the situation in South Africa exploded once more in 1976 with the Soweto uprising. Carter declared himself a fierce supporter of human rights, and vowed that he would do anything in his power to act against violators of human rights. The question was, did he seriously mean to take action or was it again just the same rhetoric that previous US Governments made themselves guilty off?

When the first ten months of the Carter Administration is scrutinized, it becomes clear that he was a bit more serious than his predecessors in his intentions to take action against South Africa. There is no doubt that the style of US policy towards South Africa changed. Carter applied a bit more stick to South Africa, in comparison with the Ford Administration who offered more carrot in an effort to gain South African support for Kissinger's Southern African initiatives. At first, only the changes in the style of US policy towards South Africa were visible, e.g. the appointment of proponents of human rights and racial equality in top positions in the Carter Administration, the foreign policy review that was ordered early in the Administration, the statements and opinions by the top members of the Carter Administration, etc. This was possibly to first register the message that relations between the US and South Africa were bound to deteriorate rapidly if South Africa did not start to walk on a road of domestic reform.

Substantive changes were not so clear at first. It was only after the arms embargo hearing in July 1977 that the first indications of action surfaced, i.e. when the Carter Administration through an executive order moved to end all grey-area sales to South Africa that had been permitted during the Nixon and Ford Administrations. Relations between the US and South Africa deteriorated further after the Soviet allegations of a nuclear site being built by South Africa in the Kalahari Desert. For the first time in the history of the Cold War, the US and the Soviet Union took a combined stand against South Africa. These events, along with Mondale's strong anti-apartheid stance during his meeting with Vorster in Vienna in May 1977, should have warned the South African Government that its old argument of being an anti-communist ally to the West would

probably not save it from action this time. Instead, the South African Government answered with increasing defiance and bitter comments directed at the Carter Administration. The renewed defiance culminated first in the death of Steve Biko in police custody and then in a crackdown on two leading black newspapers, eighteen black and interracial organizations and several prominent individuals.

The South African Government had shot itself in the foot with its hard-line policy, and the international outcry for punitive action became almost deafening. Carter had almost no choice but to act in some way. Interestingly, despite being fiercely outspoken on human rights, the Carter Administration still refused to impose anything more than a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa. Indeed, it was even reluctant to brand the situation in South Africa as being a threat to international peace and security under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. The only leniency that it gave in this regard, was that the supply of arms to South Africa was becoming a threat to international peace and security. Although Mondale and Vance made utterances of possible further steps against South Africa if the latter did not heed the warning constituted by the mandatory arms embargo, the fact is that the embargo did not really constitute anything new as far as US policy towards South Africa was concerned. On the contrary, the US had rather strictly adhered to the 1963 arms embargo, despite some weakening by the Nixon and Ford Administrations.

In the light of the above, one cannot help but wonder if the Carter Administration actually believed that a mandatory arms embargo would convince the South African Government to change its racial policies. It does not seem that way. Rather, it seems that it was again just a case of anti-apartheid rhetoric, disguised under a shadow of nothing more than very limited action on the part of the US Government. On the other hand, the limited action was perhaps because of the Carter Administration's desire to retain diplomatic flexibility, or maybe the desire to succeed with a settlement in Rhodesia. As stated at the beginning of this Chapter, the major effort by the Carter Administration to obtain a settlement in Rhodesia limited how much they could work on in South Africa. However, one cannot disregard the fact that the embargo was imposed under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, making it a symbolic act of significant importance at the time. One only need to study the array of newspaper articles that appeared in the last quarter of 1977 to fully realize the importance that the embargo carried at that point in history.