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Policy Statement of TransAfrica

TransAfrica

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Lary

POLICY STATEMENT OF TRANSAFRICA

December 1981

Introduction

TransAfrica, the Afro-American lobby for Africa and the Caribbean, seeks to fashion a more enlightened U.S. policy toward the aforementioned regions. The U.S. policies to date, couched wholly in terms of East-West geostrategic rivalry, have served to exacerbate economic, social, and military tensions in the world, the very opposite of what was proclaimed to be the original intent.

Caribbean and African peoples basically have been denied the opportunity to harbor legitimate aspirations for a better life and to follow what they perceive to be the best means of achieving their ends especially if the means differs from Western sanctioned ones. Thus, struggles for political and economic independence are often casted as "communist instigated" and dangerous. The typical U.S. response has been to reflexively side the presiding authoritarian elite or engage in economic subversion.

Over the years U.S. foreign aid not only has been meager but closely tied to the purchase of cost ineffective U.S. goods and the adoption of pro-western policies on the part of the recipient country. Moreover, instead of fostering economic development in the most needy countries, the bulk of aid has flowed to a select few: Israel, Egypt, the Phillipines, and Pakistan. Other countries with "lesser strategic" value receive negligible amounts meant to assuage criticism more than to stimulate development. Behind the rhetoric, the U.S., and for that matter the other Western countries, seem very committed to keeping the Third World divided and weak.

TransAfrica argues that the U.S. should strive to increase genuine understanding and cooperation between nations and to address such significant global issues as poverty, resource use, technology transfers, and international trade and monetary reform. Most instability in our view stems from poverty and injustice. U.S. long-term interests including Soviet containment would be best served by thoughtful, consistent, and humane policies. Arms races and the naked exercise of power only heighten the possibility of war, polarize relations, and divert precious resources from pressing social and economic problems.

The following are brief analyses and positions of TransAfrica on a variety of issues.

POLICY STATEMENT OF TRANSAFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa is distinctive in the world community due to its repression of segments of its population on the basis on race. Twenty-two million Africans, 3,000,000 "Coloreds" and 800,000 Asians are systematically denied basic civil liberties such as the freedom of movement, speech, press, assembly, and voting rights as well as equal economic opportunity. As a result of these inequities, the 4.4 million whites enjoy a living standard rivaled by few elites in other countries.

Since western investments and technology transfers (by far the largest dollar value on the African continent) buttress and dynamize the South African economy, it is TransAfrica's position that economic sanctions in conjunction with diplomatic pressure should be used in order to hasten the dismantlement of apartheid. Policies of "gentle persuasion" historically have proven effete. The South African minority has vacillated between cosmetic reform and bold resurgence of white supremacy. While expensive five star hotels and a few entertainment/sporting events have been integrated, political repression is widespread and the central features of apartheid remain.

The United States and for that matter the other western powers have to recognize the legitimate right to self determination and take forceful steps before the country is consumed in a violent conflagration. The West cannot ignore the inevitability of Black rule and therefore the West should do more to facilitate the transition of power rather than to forestall it.

The Reagan Administration, unfortunately suffers from a serious pox - rabid anti-communism. Reagan policymakers perceive external communist threats in the region as being more important when in fact the internal conditions - the persistence of apartheid and the acquiescence of the West in apartheid practices -- proffer the Soviets an angle of attack and serves to radicalize the Africans. To compound the problem, the United States is promising a military alliance and normalization of relations with the Pretoria Regime since South Africa is vehemently anti-communist. This confusion between cause and effect and foreign policy instruments and objectives is not only regrettable but dangerous. Many believe the anti-communism rhetoric is nothing but a rationalization for pure economic greed and an affinity with the white settler culture.

By portraying African nationalistic movements as Soviet-controlled puppets negates past experience and perpetuates the myth that non-European leaders and peoples cannot think and act independently. Robert Mugabe, while a guerilla was casted as a Soviet lackey yet in power has proven to be moderate and shrewd. Similarly, the leadership in Somalia, Egypt, and Sudan have expelled large corps of Soviet technicians and troops, showing their independence.

U.S./South Africa policy should strive for social justice and long-term stability. The U.S. stands to alienate not only Black South Africans who will one day control the country but the rest of mineral rich Black Africa by wavering on the one issue that unifies all independent nations on the African continent.

NAMIBIA

Namibia or South West Africa has been under the domination of South Africa since 1918 by virtue of a League of Nations mandate. After World War II, the United Nations revoked the mandate and in 1968 ruled that South Africa illegally occupied the territory. Four years later the International Court of Justice recommended withdrawal. At each step South Africa balked. During this time the same system of racial discrimination practiced in South Africa was also introduced in Namibia. Western business concerns especially uranium mining companies came to play a significant role in the economy.

In 1965 the South West Africa Peoples Organization (SWAPO) launched a guerilla campaign to dislodge the white South Africans under the leadership of Sam Nujoma. The fighting continues today mostly in the northern part of the country from SWAPO bases in neighboring Angola.

In a calculated strategy to intimidate SWAPO's host, the Angolan people, South Africa continues to support an anti-government insurgency force, UNITA, led by Jonas Savimbi, and conducts a number of raids against civilian as well as SWAPO targets.

In 1978 the General Assembly at the United Nations adopted Resolution 435 calling for free elections and an orderly U.N. supervised transfer of power to the black majority. Five Western nations (France, Britain, Canada, West Germany, and the United States) were to persuade South Africa to agree while the African frontline countries were charged with winning the approval of SWAPO. SWAPO readily agreed and has even accepted a long list of concessions yet the peace remains elusive.

At the present time a set of constitutional principles have been tentatively accepted by the African nations but South Africa remains noncommittal. The Reagan Administration has struck a deal with the South Africans, namely if the South Africans implement an internationally acceptable settlement the U.S. will endeavor to remove that country's pariah stigma and usher it into the Western military alliance.

TransAfrica advocates a confrontational approach in dealing with South Africa. The racist regime in insincere by all indications and will only exploit the naivete of the U.S. attempting to portray itself as a nation beleaguered by communism. The ultimate fear is that the U.S. will mortgage itself to South Africa, making it a client state and surrogate defender of Western economic investments in the region.

TransAfrica strongly opposes all such measures. United Nations resolution 435 is an acceptable framework and pressure should be brought to bear on South Africa to accept it.

Western Sahara/Morocco

In 1975 Spain agreed to transfer control of the Western Sahara, a desert territory of 154,000 square miles, to two adjoining nation-states, Morocco and Mauritania. In exchange for financial compensation and access to the rich phosphate deposits. The vast majority of the population favored a United Nations supervised referendum on independence. In November of the same year, thousands of Moroccan troops along with a token Mauritania force invaded and occupied the Western Sahara. King Hassan of Morocco, one of the last absolute monarchs in the world, argued that the Saharan territory was part of a Greater Morocco before the era of European colonialism. Mauritania similarly laid claim to some of the Western Sahara on the same grounds. One of the founding principles of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was the respect and acceptance of inherited colonial borders otherwise the whole continent would be engulfed in a state of constant warfare.

Upon invasion, half of the 80,000 people in the territory fled to Algeria and the Polisario, the Saharan peoples nationalist organization formed in 1973, launched a guerilla war to dislodge the occupying forces. By 1978, Mauritania after a change of leadership relinquished all claims and entered negotiations to withdraw. She finally did so in 1979. Morocco then laid claim to the entire territory. But the Polisario with the financial backing and military assistance of Algeria and Libya succeeded in limiting Morocco's effective control to the northern third of the country.

Although Morocco's internal economic conditions deteriorated, King Hassan, a longtime ally of the U.S. requested significant arms transfers from the U.S.--helicopters, tanks, armored personnel carriers, and both fighter and transport aircrafts. President Carter and the Congress agreed to the sales although the terms of a 1960 bilateral agreement prohibited U.S. weapons from being used offensively outside Morocco's border. Films and photographs taken by the Polisario and Western journalists clearly showed destroyed and/or captured U.S.-supplied weapons. The Moroccan government has even stated its intention to continue using U.S. weapons in the Western Saharan since it is considered part of Morocco.

Instead of halting arm deliveries until the Moroccan government complies with the 1960 military agreement and agree to a negotiated settlement, the arm sales have gone ahead and the new administration is on record in staunch support of the teetering Hassan regime. These actions of the U.S. government negate the Saharans people right to self-determination. The United Nations, the OAU, and even Spain has urged an end to hostilities and a referendum. After the June 1981 OAU conference in Kenya, Hassan tentatively agreed to a ceasefire and a referendum but difficulties arose as to who would be eligible to vote. According to the Polisario, Hassan wants to exclude the refugees in Algeria. It is unclear what the actual population is since a census has never been taken but by most independent observations the vast majority of the population, 60-80% is outside the country in Algerian refugee camps. However, the initiative may be set back since October 13th, the Polisario jolted King Hassan with the daring capture of Guelta Zemmour garrison. Destroyed in the fighting were five aircrafts, two of which were American supplied. In response a delegation of high-level State and Pentagon officials visited Morocco in early November and entertained pleas for more U.S. backing and weapon transfers. Francis West, Assistant Secretary of Defense and leader of the delegation, was quoted as pledging stepped up military training.

TransAfrica condemns the actions of both the Carter and Reagan Administrations in support of naked territorial expansionism. The Western Sahara is but another in a long list of cases where the U.S. abandons its democratic traditions in pursuit of economic greed, convenient military alliances, and reckless reaction to perceived

Western Sahara/Morocco (cont.)

communist plots. By actions such as these the U.S. only confirms its imperialistic, reactionary image and poisons relationships with the nationalistic leadership that usually emerges victorious.

Horn of Africa

President Siad Barre of Somalia decided to commit regular troops to a long festering secessionist dispute in the Ogaden regions of neighboring Ethiopia in 1978. The Somali people spill over borders with Kenya and Ethiopia and many have dreamed of being reunited into one state. In Ethiopia, the Somali nomads suffering under the brutal oppression of the central government have revolted sporadically, demanding independence or at the very least autonomy. The Somalia government over the years has covertly provided money, weapons, and training to the Ogaden insurgents.

The U.S. seeing this as an opportunity to further destabilize the Marxist dominated Ethiopia, supported Siad Barre's actions. Ethiopia at the time was fighting three wars of secession--the old empire was in decline. Somalia committed a gross miscalculation. She did not expect the Cuban/Soviet troops in the country to lead the counteroffensive. The better trained and equipped Cuban/Soviet contingent drove the Somali army back to its original border. In the process 1.5 million people streamed out of the Ogaden, creating the world's largest refugee problem.

In 1980 Congress voted to make all arm transfers to Somalia conditional on the absence of regular troops in the Ogaden. The debate then became clouded in geostrategic rhetoric. Administration officials argued that the U.S. had to secure Berbera, a northern Somali seaport, and stand by Somalia against the onslaught of communist troops because of the country's proximity to the Persian Gulf and the sea lanes that carry the bulk of oil to the West.

Fortunately, fighting has abated in the area and most of the attention is focused on keeping the refugee population alive. In TransAfrica's view, Somalia was guilty of violating the cardinal OAU's principle--respect for the artificial boundaries inherited from the colonial powers. As a result of grandiose dreams and superpower meddling, millions have been reduced to pitiful destitution and the economic future of the whole region dimmed. By pursuing an interventionistic policy the U.S. again only succeeded in making a bad situation worse. Ethiopia is ever more dependent on the Soviet Union, the Ogaden is an occupied province, and Somalia is so strapped it will have to rely on international relief for years to come.

Libya

Muammar Khaddafi's Libya has played a mixed role in international affairs, supporting legitimate liberation movements while at the same time allegedly sponsoring assassination teams, encouraging hijackings, harassing exiles, defending Idi Amin, and fanning sectarian unrest in neighboring countries. The image projected in the press is one of unpredictability and megalomania which seems to bear some truth.

TransAfrica complements Khaddafi on his substantial assistance to genuine liberation movements in Palestine, South Africa, Namibia, the Western Sahara, and El Salvador as well as the help given the newly formed governments in Nicaragua, Grenada, and Mozambique. However, other actions of President Khaddafi have been untenable and at times regrettable. Therefore, TransAfrica prefers neither to categorically praise

Libya (cont.)

or condemn. Each Libyan action should be judged on its own merit. Nevertheless, TransAfrica fears that the erratic record of Khaddafi will be used by the administration as the grounds on which to attempt a covert overthrow. TransAfrica believes that covert means are not needed.

Cuba/Grenada

Since January 1981 the keynote of the emerging Reagan Caribbean policy has been the isolation and sabotage of these two islands. Cuba has been castigated for being an arms conduit for the Salvadorean guerillas and Grenada has been suspected of becoming a Soviet/Cuban staging base. The later charge is completely without factual base.

In an effort to fan internal unrest, the administration plans to construct a \$10 million radio station (Radio Jose Marti) which will beam 24 hours of "sharp edged" programming at Cuba. Voice of America already has a daily five hour program that is very credible and reaches the whole island. Cuba will probably respond by jamming the airwaves, causing broadcasting disruptions in the southern Florida area. During the summer Cuban authorities blamed the mysterious outbreak of dengue fever that afflicted 220,000 and killed 113 on the U.S. Infected pellets and viral deposits on leaves were allegedly found suggesting biological warfare.

In the case of Grenada, the chill and sabotage is even more blatant. In the spring, the U.S. lobbied aggressively to dissuade European countries from contributing money for the construction of a 9,000 ft. airport intended to bolster the islands tourist industry. Shortly thereafter, the Caribbean Development Bank was asked to exclude Grenada from a \$4 million grant in clear violation of the bank's charter. On the diplomatic front, letters of the Prime Minister and phone inquiries of the Grenada mission go unanswered. The credentials of Ambassador-designate Dessima Williams have not been accepted.

TransAfrica sees no fruitful end to the Cold War atmosphere. It only serves to heighten the insecurities of the two island states and increase their dependence on the Eastern bloc. These countries should be seen as pursuing alternative development strategies and thereby deserving of noninterference. Albeit the U.S. may be at odds with the political orientation of the two regimes, much can be gained by following a policy of tolerance. By having low-level diplomatic relations with Cuba anti-hijacking measures can be better enforced, the flow of drugs controlled, and the exchange of navigational and meteorological information occur. In the case of Grenada, the present behavior of the U.S. is mean-spirited and counterproductive. Full and equal diplomatic relations should be accorded the tiny island of Grenada.

In regards to Cuban arms transshipment, the U.S. should not be hypocritical. The U.S. has supplied weapons for years to the repressive, right-wing regimes in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua before the fall of Somoza. The U.S. again seems to be attributing the civil war in El Salvador to Soviet instigation when it is the objective conditions of widespread poverty, exploitive social institutions, and police violence that gave rise to the conflict. Instead of continuing to back a military controlled government that brutalizes its own population, the U.S. should be courting the opposition who in all probability will emerge victorious. A moratorium on all arms transfers, a ceasefire, and

Cuba/Grenada (cont.)

immediate elections should be advocated instead of trying to bolster a regime that daily loses more and more legitimacy. The present Reagan policies threaten only to engulf the country in another debacle. Guerilla wars are wars not so much of guns and bullets but wars of symbols and hearts. The leftist guerillas in El Salvador at the moment seem to be clearly winning the hearts of the masses.

In regards to the large deployment of Cuban troops overseas, TransAfrica generally disapproves. In the case of Angola, their presence is interconnected with the Namibian peace settlement. Militarism in the Third World should be actively discouraged. Foreign troop deployment whether Russian, French, Cuban, Libyan, or American should be avoided, they tend to stimulate arm build-ups and polarize relations in the said region. The use or reliance on military means represents a profound failure in the economic and political systems.

Angola

A Marxist-oriented faction, the Movement for the Popular Liberation of Angola (MPLA), came to power in 1975 with the backing of Cuban troops after the conflict had been internationalized by the CIA and South Africa. The MPLA despite its rhetoric has proven to be very pragmatic. It has refrained from nationalizing Western economic interests and gone to the ironic extreme of posting guards to protect Gulf Oil Cabinda refinery. Moreover, the Angolan leadership has welcomed Western investments and technical assistance and refused membership in COMECON, the Eastern bloc common market. Most countries in the world recognize the MPLA as the legitimate government with the exception of the U.S. among Western powers.

The U.S. government continues to rail against the presence of 18-20,000 Cuban troops and seeks to make their withdrawal a possible condition for a peace settlement in Namibia. The MPLA government claims with good cause that the Cubans are a deterrent force. During the 1975 civil war, South Africa invaded Angola twice on the side of pro-Western Jonas Savimbi's faction, UNITA, and marched within 60 miles of Luanda, the capital. In the north at the same time the CIA poured \$30 million in Roberto Holden's group, the FLNA, causing alarm in the U.S. Congress and prompting the passage of the Clark amendment. Since 1978, the South Africans have conducted over 2,000 sorties, aerial bombings and incursions into the southern provinces supposedly in pursuit of SWAPO, the Namibian nationalistic group waging a guerilla war against South Africa. As a result of the repeated attacks in southern Angola much of the infrastructure, commercial factories, schools, and hospitals have been destroyed. At Cassinga, in April 1980, some 800 innocent women and children were massacred. Under the rubric of "hot pursuit" South Africa has been waging a campaign of destabilization against Angola in the hope that the common people will grow tired of offering refuge to SWAPO. In the southeastern part of the country, Savimbi's UNITA with substantial backing from South Africa ties down a large proportion of the MPLA army. Although Savimbi cannot defeat the MPLA conclusively he succeeds in disrupting the economy and draining vital resources by keeping the central government on a war footing.

TransAfrica believes that steps should be taken to woo Angola away from Cuban/Soviet dependency. Greater U.S. economic involvement, technical assistance, and normalization of diplomatic relations would help. The immediate task remains to obtain a speedy settlement in neighboring Namibia which would allow the Cubans to withdraw and some form of reconciliation to occur between the central government and Jonas Savimbi.

African Refugees

In 1980 Africa was estimated to harbor 5 million or half of the world's refugees. Drought, civil strife, and war have caused this massive dislocation of people. Somalia and the Sudan host the two largest refugee populations, 1.5 million and .5 million respectively. Both countries rank among the least developed by World Bank standards with GNP per capita incomes of less than \$380 per year. International relief agencies and the host governments struggle valiantly to meet the minimal needs of these displaced people.

At the April 8-9th, 1981 United Nations pledging conference, the U.S. contributed \$285 million, the largest single amount. Nevertheless, the total contributions, \$559.8 million were considerably less than the amount African host countries sought which was \$1.2 billion.

TransAfrica assails the U.S.-African refugee policy on three counts. First, the U.S. spends disproportionately less per African refugee than for refugees of other nationalities or racial origin. For example, in 1979 an average of \$2000 was spent per Soviet Jew compared to \$26.68 per African. As the number of African refugees swelled the dollar allocation fell. In 1981, it is estimated \$15.42 will be spent per African refugee in contrast to \$43.30 on the typical Kampuchean in Thailand. Secondly, there exists a clear bias against refugees of African descent in the U.S. admission policies. Whereas the ceiling for Soviet and Eastern European entrants is 33,000, it is only 3,000 for Africans and Haitians are categorically denied refugee status. The administration argues that due to vastly different stages of socio-economic development Africans prefer not to relocate in the U.S.. However, several thousand Ethiopians most of whom came to the U.S. for higher education are presently deportable since the political situation in their homeland is considered stabilized. The 1974 revolution brought Marxist Mengistu Haile Mariam to power and in the reform period that followed property was confiscated and people detained. Resident Ethiopians fearing for their safety upon return overstayed their visas. At the present Ethiopia is still beset by problems--religious strife, two secessionist movements, drought, and a badly deteriorated economy, and continued human rights violations--yet the administration thinks otherwise. Interestingly, Russian defectors or Cubans are not forced to return to their homelands against their wishes. Thirdly, the U.S. does not pay much attention to the longterm resettlement needs of African refugee population. The looming danger is that the large indigent refugee communities will incite host country antagonism and so overburden the economic resources of that country that it will become unstable. Schools, clinics, farm implements, seed, livestock, and construction materials are needed in several countries where refugee repatriation is unlikely in the near future.

Haitian Boat People

Since 1972, 50-70,000 Haitians have braved 700 miles of open sea usually in flimsy vessels, seeking freedom and a better economic future in south Florida. During 1980 some 20,000 came in the wake of the Cuban boatlift. The U.S. government argues that Haitians are economic migrants and therefore ineligible for political asylum and refugee status. However, a July 1980 court case found strong evidence supporting patterns of persecution--arbitrary arrests, beatings, torture, and extortion experienced by Haitians returned to their homeland. These excesses violated the U.N. Protocol on Refugees and the U.S. Refugee Act. The court recommended that the Immigration and Naturalization Service cease its practice of gross due process violations. Despite the court decision, the Reagan administration has moved ahead to continue the discriminatory treatment by beginning interdiction of Haitian vessels on the high seas and introducing legislation to limit the number of appeals to one and streamline the

Haitian Boat People (cont.)

whole asylum and exclusion proceedings.

TransAfrica condemns the inequitable and harsh treatment of Haitians and plans to counter the administration's legislative proposals. In our view the government has for too long used asylum as a propaganda tool to embarrass communist dominated countries, subordinating the merits of each case. Over 94% of the refugee slots have been allocated to Indochinese and Eastern Europeans. Whereas there is a civil war in El Salvador that has generated 180,000 refugees and Haiti ranks as one of the poorest and most repressive regimes in the Western Hemisphere, only 2,000 refugee slots have been set aside for the Caribbean and Latin America. Clearly, ideology and race are obscuring true humanitarian need. TransAfrica advocates the establishment of an independent asylum review board that would consider appeals and issue guidelines based on their expert assessment of conditions in the country. Secondly, the U.S. should alternatively pressure for reform and help to cultivate an effective opposition to the rapacious Duvalier regime.

Economic Development

Basic unfilled needs, exploitative arrangements, and despair stand as the main obstacles to self-sustaining growth and generalized prosperity. The challenge is formidable and complex. Development, it should be stressed, means more than wealth accumulation. It is also a transformation of social relations, values, outlooks, and the ecosystem. For this reason broad segments of the population need to participate so as to control the thrust, the pace, and widely disburse the benefits. Unfortunately, "cults of experts" and externally controlled development processes seem to be creating distorted, unbalanced societies.

Today Africa ranks low on quality of life indicators such as life expectancy, infant mortality rates, literacy, availability of safe water, incidence of diseases, and access to health care, making the continent the poorest region in the world. Moreover, the future looks grim. Declining agricultural output matched with rising population growth rates, increasing desertification, and acute vulnerability to external shocks all spell ill.

The Caribbean with the exception of Haiti ranks higher than Africa on most indicators of economic well-being, but the area has a special problem---microeconomies. Fourteen of the nineteen political entities in the lower half of the island chain each have less than 180 square miles in area or smaller than most mid-size American cities. Because of the small size and insularity economic opportunities are subscribed. For the most part the islands are dependent on the export of agricultural commodities such as bananas and sugar and the inflow of tourists who enjoy the scenic beauty. In order to break the cycle of poverty and external dependency greater regional cooperation and economic integration seem imperative. Regretfully, no serious Pan-Caribbean consciousness has emerged and the states remain divided along language lines and various spheres of outside influence.

TransAfrica views economic development as the major problem confronting the Third World and especially Africa and the Caribbean. The colonial legacy, the ongoing process of political consolidation, and external shocks also contribute to the general weakness of the two regions. What seems to be needed is strong indigenous leadership coupled with larger levels of foreign assistance, technology transfers, and structural reform of the trade and monetary system. The West as the main beneficiari

Economic Development (cont.)

of the status quo, of course, are reluctant to entertain such ideas. The task remains for the Third World and especially Africa and the Caribbean to force concessions. Since rational persuasion is effete, the real challenge lies in greater regional cooperation that will strengthen the bargaining position of the less developed countries by being able to present a united front. In a world of increasing interdependency it will be in the interest of the West to respond positively. To date the Eastern bloc has been quite limited in the amount and type of aid it can provide. Being poorer than the West, the East has tended to only provide weapons and technical assistance. Aid from the West, on the other hand, has usually been used to gain influence with the leadership, generate exports for the donor country, and force the recipient to adhere to the economic philosophy of the donor. Thus, great caution has to be exercised by Third World countries.

TransAfrica continues to advocate a serious commitment of energies and resources to alleviating the two region's problems. A world of glaring inequities threatens all, it increases the chances for supply disruptions, bankruptcies, war, and untold human suffering. Instead of emphasizing military security, the U.S. should focus on the root causes of instability. The present administration seeks to increase military sales by 200% while economic assistance remains constant at approximately .27% of the GNP, making the U.S. fifteenth in a list of seventeen donors and well below the 1% of GNP all Western countries are supposed to give. This emphasis only reinforces the shameful statistic--\$500 billion spent annually on weapons and half the world's scientists are engaged in the research and development of arms.

Nuclear Weapons Capability

TransAfrica generally takes a dim view of the spread of nuclear energy because of the safety hazards posed by the possibility of reactor accidents and the disposal of radioactive waste. More frightening, of course, is the possibility of nuclear materials being diverted for a clandestine weapons program. Although the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty with its extensive safeguards and international monitoring offers some comfort, quite a number of countries with suspect motives have not signed, among them Israel, Iraq, Brazil, India, Libya, Taiwan, and South Africa.

Fortunately, the Caribbean is a nuclear free zone. However, on the African continent the situation is different. Libya has openly expressed interest in obtaining nuclear bombs but to date has been unsuccessful. At the other end of the continent, much circumstantial evidence exists suggesting that South Africa possesses a small arsenal of nuclear weapons. In August 1977, Western intelligence agencies discovered a nuclear test site in the Kalahari desert and in September 1979 two intense light bursts with the telltale signature of an above ground nuclear explosion occurred in a remote portion of the South Atlantic off the coast of South Africa. U.S. authorities publicly attributed the flashes to very large falling meteorites. Other private, knowledgeable persons believed the intensity and the duration of the bursts greatly reduced the probability of natural phenomena.

Other research, nonetheless, shows that South Africa independently developed short range ground to ground and air to ground missiles between 1968 and 1971. In 1964, Allis-Chalmers a U.S. corporation, sold the South Africans an experimental research nuclear reactor called Safari-I and up until President Carter assumed power, the U.S. exported enriched uranium, plutonium, and thorium--all combustible nuclear materials--in small quantities for use in their research reactors. It has been suggested that either or both the diversion of these materials and the processing of uranium in its own reactors enables South Africa to garner sufficient weapons grade material. As a middle level power South Africa has delivery capability--bombers, missiles, and artillery.

Since 1978 there have been no U.S. enriched uranium pursuant to South Africa's failure to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Many observers think that South Africa does not want to divulge its technical secrets to the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Treaty monitors. With the election of Reagan and the warming of relations between the two countries, rumors abound about a deal in the making. The Reagan people want South Africa to agree to some nuclear ties. The administration, however, sustained a defeat when the South Africans obtained some enriched uranium supposedly from China and France, bound by a contractual agreement, began processing the fuel into rods for the large Koeberg reactor plant near the Cape of Good Hope that is scheduled to begin operations in 1985. From this 2,000 megawatt station, South Africa will be able to produce plutonium to make 100 or so nuclear bombs a year if she chooses to do so. With the the French deal, South Africa is now in a very secure position.

TransAfrica condemns the record of nuclear powers especially West Germany, France Switzerland, and the United States in transferring nuclear technology, trafficking, and exporting uranium without recipient adherence to strict safeguards. Economic greed and maneuvers to win influence may return to haunt us all. Nuclear capability in the southern hemisphere is not so much a necessity as a prestige item. Great restraint and discretion need to be exercised by all parties.

Soviet Union

TransAfrica views the Soviet Union as an imperialistic power just like the United States. Both superpowers seek to dominate and expand their orbit of influence over other countries to their advantage. Both seek to embarrass and contain the other. However, we do not believe the Soviets have a grand plot to capture the world or to strangle the West by seizing countries of either economic or geographic importance to the West. Russia is simply an empire state beset with a slew of problems: growing consumer demands; stagnant agriculture; a sputtering economy; unrest in Poland and the Asiatic republics; rapid population growth among non-Russian people who already are a majority of the Soviet Union's population; an ailing leadership; and a number of setbacks in Somalia, Sudan, Egypt, and Vietnam that not have been offset by equal strategic gains. As a result of these internal problems and a debilitating arms build up, the Soviet Union simply seizes opportunities as they appear in the Third World to increase its leverage.

The most typical scenario is one of open insurrection or civil war where one faction is fighting to oust a colonial master or an authoritarian, degenerate pro-western regime. The insurgent group usually has no choice but to accept Soviets arms and training since the ruling regime is backed the U.S. other another Western power. Prior to the outbreak of hostilities all peaceful means of reform failed and in the process political consensus shatters and opinions became polarized with the active opposition becoming increasingly leftist-oriented. If the insurgent, leftist faction succeeds the U.S. automatically responds in an adverse manner facing the nascent regime further into the Soviet embrace.

TransAfrica would argue that underwriting the arms bill for an insurgent group does not necessarily mean control of the group. Each nationalistic leadership should be assessed independently. Recent history has shown that nationalism is a stronger force than ideology and economic necessity the ultimate arbiter. Third World leaders have demonstrated their independence and should continue to do so. We see the main challenges confronting Africa and the Caribbean to be political/social reorganization and economic development, not ideological purity.

Socialism as a strategy for development has proven to be no pancea. Neither has capitalism. What Western observers and policymakers sorely need is empathy and a broader world view. The world can not be schematized into "us" and "them", it is an interdependent world where 3/4 of the planet's population is in the throes of disconcerting and rapid change. The ongoing modernization is both far-reaching and stressful. Accordingly, the stance of the West and the East ideally should be avuncular and tolerant. Most of the burden, of course, rest with African and Caribbean peoples themselves to maneuver for a wider berth and to control more of their destinies.