

THE WASHINGTON OFFICE ON AFRICA

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8 February 1982

The Honorable Ronald Reagan
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

It has come to our attention that Commerce Department regulations restricting the export of U.S.-origin products and technical data to the South African military and police (Export Administration Regulation 175) are under review. As a church-sponsored organization working for genuine majority rule in Southern Africa, we strongly urge the administration not to eliminate the existing controls on exports to South Africa, but to expand and enforce them to comply fully with the spirit of the United Nations arms embargo.

In 1981, the opponents of the apartheid system in South Africa have become the victims of the worse crackdown by the Pretoria regime in recent years. In the last few months we have received reports of numerous arrests, detentions, and bannings of trade union leaders, student leaders, church leaders, and journalists. Of utmost concern is the resurgence of deaths in detentions. Within the last two months, two of these deaths have occurred.

Abandoning these export restrictions at this time would send a clear signal to Pretoria that would encourage violations of human rights. It should be remembered that these controls were imposed after Steve Biko's death in detention in 1977. Biko's brutal and senseless slaying caused an international outcry and the United States signalled its protest with the export controls. These products under control, especially high-technology goods such as computers, greatly increase the efficiency of the South African military and police, the forces of repression in that troubled country. To lift the controls at a time of increasing repression would indicate to the world that the United States is willing to acquiesce with Pretoria's apartheid policy.

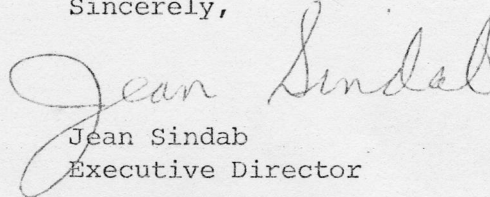
Surely, the political and moral ramifications of rescinding these regulations far outweigh any possible economic benefit gained from the restrictions' repeal. Just as your administration has enacted sanctions against Poland and the Soviet Union because of the crackdown in Poland, so too should you renew the already existing restrictions on exports to South Africa.

Mr. President, a consistent human rights policy demands the retention of these

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export restrictions. We hope you will give this recommendation serious consideration.

Sincerely,


Jean Sindab
Executive Director

cc: The Honorable Alexander Haig
Secretary of State

The Honorable William P. Clark
National Security Advisor

The Honorable Lionel Ulmer
Commerce Department Undersecretary

The Honorable Lawrence Brady
Commerce Department Assistant Secretary for Trade Administration

The Honorable Bohdn Denysyk
Commerce Department Deputy Assistant Secretary for Trade Administration

The Honorable Howard Wolpe
Chair, House Subcommittee on Africa

The Honorable Charles Percy
Chair, Senate Foreign Relations Committee

The Honorable Nancy Kassebaum
Chair, Senate Subcommittee on Africa

The Honorable Claiborne Pell
Senate Foreign Relations Committee

The Honorable Paul Tsongas
Chair, Congressional Monitoring Group on South Africa

The Honorable Thomas Downey
Chair, Congressional Monitoring Group on South Africa