

US/South Africa House Study Probes Arms Embargo Breakdown

[AN] A staff study for the House Subcommittee on Africa released late last month, focusing on arms embargo violations by the Space Research Corporation, has concluded that arms shipped illegally to South Africa made major contributions to that country's defense capabilities. The study also asserts that the Space Research case shows the failure of government agencies to implement the embargo effectively, even though it has been official policy for nearly two decades.

It was in August 1963 that President John Kennedy first committed the government to ban the export of combat equipment to South Africa — a voluntary step by the U.S. But the embargo has been binding on all United Nations members ever since Security Council Resolution 418 in 1977, for which the United States voted.

The case considered by the subcommittee was the export, between 1976 and 1978, of approximately 60,000 155 mm extended range artillery shells, at least four 155 mm guns, and technical assistance by the Space Research Corporation, a Vermont-based company with facilities straddling the U.S.-Canadian border. The equipment was sought by South Africa after the confrontation in Angola with Cuban troops, and was used by South Africa to develop its own G-5 artillery gun, billed as the most advanced in the world.

The weapon may even have been used to fire a test South African nuclear device over the South Atlantic in September 1979, according to charges in a British television special, "World in Action", in October 1980.

The House Subcommittee staff report does not mention the possible nuclear connection, which was the subject of an inconclusive White House investigation. Its focus, rather, is the government machinery that permitted such a massive evasion of the

SWAPO On The Attack In Namibia

[AN] In a series of guerrilla raids beginning in mid-April, the Namibian independence movement SWAPO has launched a major military action that has surprised many observers by penetrating some 150 miles inside the heavily fortified territory.

About 100 guerrillas were reported to have crossed the well-guarded Angolan border with Namibia in the north and to have reached the white farming district around the mining town of Tsumeb, 200 miles north of the capital Windhoek. As of April 22, the South African Defense Force said nine of its soldiers had died in the raids, along with four civilians and 19 guerrillas. No independent confirmation of any of the figures is available.

After a series of raids deep into Angola — including a major invasion last November and a large incursion last month — the South Africans suggested they had contained the guerrilla threat. Facing sharp questioning in Parliament, Defense Minister Gen. Magnus Malan called the SWAPO actions "suicide missions" and hinted at additional attacks in Angola in retaliation.

The guerrillas were said to have attacked South African troops, firing Soviet-made RPG7 rockets at an armored troop transport. Raids on several white farms, where SWAPO troops planted land mines, were also

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arms embargo and let it continue even after the first reports of suspected violations appeared in the press. In their investigation the subcommittee staff interviewed fifty individuals and obtained information from six government agencies.

In hearings held by the subcommittee on March 30, William B. Robinson, director of the State Department's Office of Munitions Control, sought to defend his agency's procedures in passing on Space Research Corporation's applications. Representative Howard Wolpe (D-Mich.), however, criticized the "legalistic" character of Robinson's approach, stressing that the purpose of the hearings was not to assess blame but to learn how the system could be corrected.

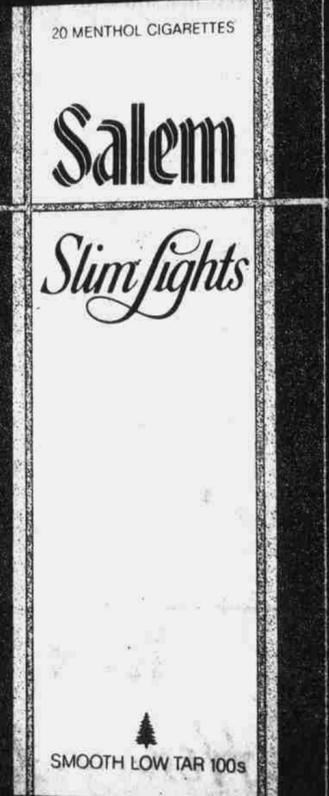


WASHINGTON—Argentina's Ambassador to OAS Raul Qui Jano, (l) talks with St. Lucia's Ambassador Barry Auguste (r) during OAS debate on resolution on Falkland Islands crisis. Talks between Argentina and Great Britain are feared on their last leg before fighting starts. UPI Photo

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