

The Kennedy administration and the institution of an arms embargo against South Africa, 1961 – 1963

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Introduction

The sharpening of the world struggle against colonialism in the period after the Second World War brought political independence within twenty years to practically every former colonial territory north of the Zambezi River in Africa. The emergence of these independent states in Africa started to gradually force changes in the United States policy towards Africa, and also in the voting behaviors of the United States in the United Nations. It was during this time that South Africa became the 'black sheep' of the world community, primarily since it had a white minority government, in relation to the rest of Africa where the end of colonial rule resulted in black majority governments. South Africa also held a mandate over South West Africa (presently known as Namibia), and stubbornly refused to give it up - thus gaining the wrath of the world community even more. Consequently, by the late 1950's, the Afro-Asian campaigns in the United Nations against the apartheid policy of the South African Government, gained strong momentum. Despite all these

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campaigns, however, South Africa generally enjoyed the support of the United States. The latter consistently vetoed almost every resolution directed against South Africa by the Afro-Asian nations in the United Nations, although it constantly expressed some strong verbal opposition against the South African policy of apartheid.¹

It seems that the foreign policy of the United States during the years after the Second World War, had been marked by caution, compromise and the tendency to maintain a low profile. This presumably served as the reason why the United States initially supported South Africa against the onslaughts of the Afro-Asian nations in the United Nations. According to this policy, called the Acheson policy after a directive by Dean Acheson, the US Secretary of State from 1949 - 1953, the United States reasoned that the United Nations was not competent to intervene in the domestic matters of South Africa, or any other country for that matter. However, from 1958, this view slowly started to change. In that year, the US Department of State Bureau of African Affairs was created, and, for the first time, the United States voted for a United Nations resolution which expressed concern and regret over the South African apartheid policy. After that, some systemic relations between the United States and South Africa gradually emerged, although the United States continued to reject the imposition of punitive measures against South Africa, including a restriction on the sale of arms.²

The question that could be asked, though, is what the objectives of the United States were in opposing punitive measures against South Africa? Part of the answer to this is that the United States had important military and economic interests in South Africa. The latter was of great strategic importance to the United States. This included free access to the sea route around the Cape, which was especially important in case the Suez Canal had to be closed because of war. Then there was the factor of South Africa being a proven and committed Western ally in terms of global conflict, like the First and Second World Wars. After the Second World War, this role somewhat changed when South Africa became part of the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) strategic planning for the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Lastly, the

1 ANC OF SOUTH AFRICA, "Great Power Conspiracy", Pamphlet, (c1962), p. 1; D. PRINSLOO, *United States Foreign Policy and the Republic of South Africa* (Pretoria, Foreign Affairs Association, 1978), p. 48; R.W. WALTERS, *The Formulation of United States Policy toward Africa, 1958 - 1963* (D.Phil thesis, The American University, 1971), p. 331.

2. R.W. WALTERS, *The Formulation of United States Policy toward Africa, 1958 - 1963*, p. 31.

South African Government's opposition to communism made it a staunch ally to the United States. The whole issue of anti-communism indeed seemed to play such a big role in the formulation of the United States foreign policy, that the African National Congress, a black South African liberation movement, expressed its concern in the early 1960's that the United States was blinded by anti-communistic hysteria.³

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On 21 March 1961, 69 black South Africans were killed in police action against demonstrators who were resisting the notorious pass law system. This event, called the Sharpeville massacre,⁴ elicited numerous heated debates in the United Nations General Assembly on the South African policy of apartheid. The Afro-Asian nations accused the Kennedy Administration of supplying the South African Government with arms, even though Kennedy and his administration took a strong stance against the police action in South Africa. Consequently, the Afro-Asian nations called for a complete trade boycott and an arms embargo against South Africa, which the Kennedy Administration at first vetoed. However, by November 1961, the Kennedy Administration started to realize that military relations with South Africa could create a major predicament for the United States. As a result, some serious concerns on the issue of military cooperation with South Africa were raised. The Kennedy Administration realized that the South African Government's policy of apartheid had not only become a primary target of the Afro-Asian countries in the United Nations, but also of a large segment of public opinion in the United States and Western Europe. This made it difficult for the United States to show any support for South Africa whatsoever. On the contrary, the South African Government's anti-communistic stance, geographical location and cooperation in United States military

3. R.W. WALTERS, *The Formulation of United States Policy toward Africa, 1958 - 1963*, pp. 331, 334; D. PRINSLOO, *United States Foreign Policy and the Republic of South Africa*, p. 56; ANC OF SOUTH AFRICA, "Great Power Conspiracy", p. 22.

4. The Sharpeville massacre was front page news in major newspapers in the United States for a number of days (*Los Angeles Times*, 22 March 1960, pp. 1, 13; 23 March 1960, pp. 1, 10, 18; 24 March 1960, pp. 20, 21; 25 March 1960, p. 6; 26 March 1960, pp. 1, 5; 27 March 1960, p. 10; 28 March 1960, pp. 8, 25; 29 March 1960, p. 1; 30 March 1960, pp. 2, 7; 31 March 1960, pp. 2, 30; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 22 March 1960, p. 5; 23 March 1960, pp. 1, 2; 24 March 1960, p. 5; 25 March 1960, p. 2; 27 March 1960, p. 11; 28 March 1960, p. 5; 1 April 1960, pp. 6, 7; 2 April 1960, p. 2; 3 April 1960, pp. 14, 25; 5 April 1960, pp. 2, 13).

objectives, also weighed heavily upon the mind of the Kennedy Administration.⁵

When Kennedy assumed office in January 1961, military cooperation with South Africa fell within a category of mutual benefit. In late 1960, South Africa agreed to the establishment of a United States missile tracking station near Pretoria. It was a one-year contract, which was to expire on 31 December 1961. The Kennedy Administration thus faced a deadline for the renewal of the contract. As Kennedy was dedicated to the space program of the United States as well as the latter's need for uninterrupted missile testing, negotiations for the extension of the contract commenced in mid-1961. However, the South African Government made it clear that it would only renew the contract if the United States would assist in the build-up of the South African arms industry. Given the fact of the fierce opposition to South Africa in the United Nations at that stage, especially by the Afro-Asian nations, the US Ambassador to the United Nations, Adlai Stevenson, strongly opposed any new arms sales to South Africa. Dean Rusk, the US Secretary of State, was sympathetic to Stevenson's concerns, but he also reminded Stevenson that the missile station in South Africa was necessary for United States security. Stevenson however did not share Rusk's sentiments on the matter, and responded that United States relations with the rest of Africa were also important to United States security.⁶

Chester Bowles, the US Under Secretary of State, shared Stevenson's concerns. He felt that as a result of the agreement on the tracking station, the United States was under direct and indirect pressure to make concessions to South Africa. Bowles felt this would be costly to the United States in the United Nations, as well as to United States relations with the world in general. A few problems related to this problem: Naval maneuvers involving United States warships, with additional vessels from the South African and British navies and Portuguese observers,

5. R. LEONARD, *South Africa at war: white power and the crisis in Southern Africa* (Hill, Westport, 1983), p. 132; J.P. MCWILLIAMS, *Arm Scor, South Africa's arms merchant* (McMillan, Washington, 1989), p. 13; A.M. SCHLESINGER, Jr. (Ed.), *The Dynamics of World Power: A documentary history of United States Foreign Policy, 1945 - 1973* (New York, 1973), p. 432; PAPERS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, National Security Files, Box 2. Letter: Chester Bowles to McGeorge Bundy, 21 September 1961; M.S. VAN WYK, *The 1963 United States arms embargo against South Africa: Institution and Implementation* (MA, UP, 1998), pp. 11, 18.

6. T.J. NOER, *Cold War and black liberation* (University of Missouri Press, Columbia, 1985), p. 134.

were scheduled for late October and early November 1961. If it was not for the leverage provided by the South African Government with regard to the tracking station, the United States would not have considered participating in these maneuvers. Furthermore, the impact in the United Nations when reports of these maneuvers became known had to be carefully weighed. At the same time, South Africa was considering the purchase of \$100 000 worth of aircraft from a United States corporation, a transaction that required licenses. If it were not for the tracking station, the reaction of the Kennedy Administration would certainly be negative, as public opinion generally would assume that the primary use of these aircraft would be to suppress internal disorder in South Africa. Bowles believed that if the United States were to take part in the naval exercise, it would probably have to pay a heavy political price in view of a highly explosive United Nations session in which the attitudes of the Afro-Asian countries would have been of decisive importance.⁷

In May 1962, the US Department of State issued a memorandum in which the importance of United States economic and military interests in South Africa were discussed in the light of the policy problems that it created. The main policy problem that the Kennedy Administration faced was that it desired to obtain privileges in the military and space field, while the South African Government desired to purchase certain military equipment from the United States. Certain objectives and lines of action were suggested, including great emphases on the role that anti-communism played in the formulation of United States foreign policy. Also emphasized was that the basic alignment of South Africa, as a strategic area remained an objective of the United States foreign policy, although close relations with South Africa would only become desirable when its external policies have further evolved. In conclusion, it was recommended that the United States had to continue cooperating with South Africa in the military field in matters that related to external security and those directly related to communist subversion.⁸

In June 1962, the Political Committee of the US Advisory Council on African Affairs discussed the matter of United States military relations with the South African Government. It was noted that, on the one hand,

7. PAPERS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, National Security Files, Box 2. Letter: Chester Bowles to McGeorge Bundy, 21 September 1961; T.J. NOER, *Cold war and black liberation*, p. 134.

8. PAPERS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, National Security Files, Box 2, p. 7: Memorandum: Republic of South Africa: Department of State guidelines for policy and operations, May 1962.

the United States was unalterably and publicly opposed to the apartheid policy of the South African Government on moral, political and economic grounds - an opposition that had been made clear both in the United Nations and in private diplomatic approaches to the South African Government. On the other hand, the United States had maintained cordial relations on all matters that did not relate to apartheid, such as scientific and cultural cooperation and exchange, space vehicle tracking stations and trade. In line with this policy, arms, ammunition or military equipment, which could be used to suppress the black majority, were not to be sold to South Africa. Shortly afterwards, in a secret memorandum, this fact was again emphasized as one of the Kennedy Administration's policy objectives, although it had been recognized that the cutting of arms shipments to South Africa could pose difficulties in the face of the then expanding United States space and military program.⁹

In the meantime, the world community became increasingly outspoken on the subject of apartheid. In April 1962, the *Guardian*, a British newspaper, pleaded the institution of at least an arms embargo against South Africa. In June 1962 the Ghanaian president, Kwame Nkrumah, strongly attacked countries that rendered military assistance to South Africa. He said that the Security Council of the United Nations consistently declared that the racial discrimination in South Africa was threatening world peace, but in reality some of the permanent members of the Security Council, for example the United States, were openly supplying the South African Government with arms. Comments like these slowly started to tighten the screw on United States policy concerns with relation to South Africa. This fact somewhat worried significant role players in the United States Government, like Adlai Stevenson. He was quite aware of the feelings that especially the Afro-Asian countries in the United Nations had concerning South Africa. He suspected a generally negative posture during the UN General Assembly meeting on Africa, which was due for October 1962. Therefore, he suggested that the US Secretary of State explain to key African foreign ministers some of the United States' arms control policies with regard to South Africa.¹⁰

9. National Archives Washington, D.C., General Records of the Department of State, Records of G. Mennen Williams, Box 15, Subject File 1961 - 1966, Advisory Council on African Affairs, 1962: 3-4, Report: Advisory Council on African Affairs - Political Committee; PAPERS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, National Security Files, Box 2, 20: Secret memorandum: The White Redoubt.

10. ANON., "Wapenboikot teen Suid-Afrika gevra", *Die Burger*, 19 April 1962; ANON. "Skerp aanval oor militêre hulp aan S.A", *Die Burger*, 22 June 1962; PAPERS OF

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Stevenson had been proven correct in his assertion. The Afro-Asian countries strongly recommended the institution of sanctions against South Africa, and tried their utmost to gain enough votes (a two-thirds majority) for this step to be taken. The Kennedy Administration however did not support them in this action, claiming that sanctions were not a suitable measure to convince the South African Government that their policy of apartheid was wrong. They argued that sanctions would also have a negative impact on the very people that it was intended to help, namely those who were oppressed by the policy of apartheid. The debate was further intensified by the Soviet Union attacking the United States for ignoring the issue of human rights in favor of its investments in South Africa and for using the latter to protect its military and economic position in the southern part of Africa. The Kennedy Administration, in answer, emphasized that it had already accepted a policy by which the provision of all arms that could be used to enforce apartheid, was prohibited. In November 1962, a historic resolution was laid before the General Assembly of the United Nations. For the first time in the history of the United Nations, the General Assembly by a huge majority recommended that member states take effective measures against South Africa, including the imposition of an arms embargo. The United States voted against the resolution.¹¹

For the remainder of 1962 and in the months up to August 1963, the question of United States military cooperation and assistance to South Africa was continually raised. It appears as if the major policy issue was how to best influence the racial policies of the South African Government in a constructive direction, while at the same time maintaining correct and mutually advantageous relations. The fact that South Africa was strategically important to the United States for reasons discussed earlier, still played a major role, as well as the whole issue of

PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, National Security Files, Box 2: Telegram: Stevenson to Secretary of State, 20 September 1962.

11. ANON., "V.S.A. verwerp sanksies teen Suid-Afrika", *Die Burger*, 20 October 1962, pp. 1, 6; ANC OF SOUTH AFRICA, "Great Power Conspiracy", p. 1; ANON., "Sanksiebesluit teen S.A.", *Die Burger*, 7 November 1962, p. 1; ANON., "V.V.O. stem sanksies - Afro-Asiate kry groot oorwinning", *Die Burger*, 7 November 1962, pp. 1, 6; PAPERS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, National Security Files, Box 3: Airgram: USUN to Department of State, 28 January 1963; LYNDON B. JOHNSON LIBRARY, National Security Files, Box 76, File: Africa General Memo's & Miscellaneous, Vol 1, p. 1: Report: Chronology of the recent steps taken by the United States to induce the South Africa Government to change certain policies, 10 March 1964; SALVO: Krygkor 20 Armscor (Pamphlet, Undated), p. 10.

anti-communism. For this reason, the US Embassy in Pretoria recommended that continued support be given to military programs of South Africa's bona fide anti-communist efforts, particularly as they related to external defense or participation in joint anti-communist activities by the so-called "Free World". This support had to be provided in the form of United States military equipment and the formal training of selected South African military officers in United States military schools. The US Ambassador to South Africa, Joseph Satterthwaite, also recommended that the United States had to consider making a "*qualified but cordial acceptance*"¹² of the South African Government's invitation to participate in the so-called CAPEX naval exercise that was to be held off the coast of Southern Africa in July and August 1963. The United States participated in this exercise in 1959, 1960 and 1961. In 1961 the question of participation occasioned a broad review of foreign policy objectives in the US Department of State with respect to such defense exercises, and it was decided that there should be no direct or indirect encouragement to the South African Government to assume that the United States military units would participate in any future joint exercises. However, Satterthwaite felt that the United States should participate in the 1963 exercises, particularly in recognition of the South African cooperation in United States space and other military programs. He furthermore felt while any form of military association with South Africa had serious drawbacks from an African point of view, naval cooperation was the military field furthest removed from apartheid. Also: the South African Government had permitted the United States Navy the facilities of the naval base at Simonstown, and had met United States requests to conduct secret military operations there, even though no details about the nature there-of were given. On the other hand, what stood like a pole above water was the fact that the Kennedy Administration was cautious about public knowledge of any military cooperation with South Africa, as they feared the consequences that it could have especially in the United Nations. Indeed, Satterthwaite did recommend that the South African invitation be accepted with the proviso that publicity be minimal and United States personnel be cautioned that participation in the naval exercise was not routine and would be considered afresh on every future occasion. The United States

12. As quoted in National Archives, Washington, D.C., Box 11: January - December 1963, File 1: Signature and Clearance, GMW, Letter: G Mennen Williams to Johnson, 18 January 1963.

in the end participated in the exercise, but, after that, its participation in the CAPEX joint naval exercises ceased.¹³

In March 1963 the South African Naval Chief of Staff requested the United States Naval Attaché in Pretoria to ascertain informally whether the Kennedy Administration would be willing to entertain a request to permit the purchase of two or three modern conventional attack submarines of about 1 700 tons each, and would provide crew training for key South African naval personnel. Ambassador Satterthwaite again positively reacted in recommending that the request be given favorable consideration, provided that the submarines were available. He also noted that the United States policy at that stage, with respect to South Africa, permitted the sale of military equipment for external defense. In a memorandum to Kennedy, Dean Rusk, the Secretary of State, stated that there were both benefits and difficulties inherent to the South African request. On the one hand, an affirmative reply to South Africa would aid the maintaining of good military relations, which was of consequence in the light of the importance to the United States of various US military facilities and rights in South Africa, particularly the tracking stations for Atlantic Missile Range operations, port facilities and over flight rights. Also, in the event of the Suez Canal being closed to the United States, South African harbor and dock facilities were virtually irreplaceable. On the other hand, the prospect of growing racial conflict in South Africa and of the intensified international condemnation of the South African Government, would make significant United States arms deliveries to South Africa increasingly costly in political terms. If the international position of South Africa continued to deteriorate, it was probable that the delivery of the submarines by 1966 could have highly unfavorable repercussions not only in the United States itself, but also globally. However, Kennedy himself, in answer to these memorandums, indicated a willingness to sell the submarines to South Africa.¹⁴

13. PAPERS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, National Security Files, Box 3: Secret memorandum: United States Embassy, Pretoria to Department of State, 18 December 1962; National Archives, Washington, D.C., Box 11, File1: Signature and Clearance, G. Mennen Williams: Letter: G. Mennen Williams to Johnson, 18 January 1963; ANON., "U.S. arms ban on South Africa is 'shabby politics'", *South African Observer*, September 1963, p. 9; D. PRINSLOO, United States Foreign Policy and the Republic of South Africa, p. 59.

14. N.D. HOWLAND (Ed.), *Foreign relations of the United States, 1961 - 1963, Volume XXI: Africa* (Washington, D.C., 1995), p. 627; PAPERS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, National Security Files, Box 3: Memorandum: Dean Rusk to President Kennedy, 16 March 1963; PAPERS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, National

South Africa on the verge of a United States arms embargo

By June 1963, the international pressure for the institution of punitive measures against South Africa was rapidly mounting, making the Kennedy Administration realize that it now came face to face with a new and decisive phase in the apartheid issue. Although Kennedy and most of his aides still rejected sanctions against South Africa, they now recognized the need for some action against the latter in order for the United States to preserve its influence with the newly independent African states, especially in the light of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) which was formed in May 1963. According to Mennen Williams, the US Under Secretary of State for African Affairs, the issue reached a point where a more vigorous stand against apartheid had to be taken, as in the opinion of the African countries, the United States could no longer rest its case merely on a verbal condemnation of apartheid. In the view of Williams, the time had come for a review of the United States' arms supply policy towards South Africa, as the partial arms embargo policy was equivocal, not an effective measure against South Africa and considered as inadequate by the African countries. He felt that the Kennedy Administration had to think in terms of a total arms embargo, as it was the only way through which both the world and the public opinion in the United States could be convinced that it meant business in its disapproval of apartheid.

Not all the members of the Kennedy Administration were however supportive of a total arms embargo against South Africa. In a memorandum to the Secretary of State, Alexis Johnson, the Deputy Under Secretary for Political Affairs, suggested that the Kennedy Administration also had to take into consideration a number of factors before moving toward a full embargo on the supply of arms to South Africa. For example, South Africa continued to be friendly and cooperative with the United States in a wide range of defense matters as discussed earlier. Furthermore, although the United States policy of the time, which attempted to draw a line between arms that could be used against an internal uprising in South Africa and those useful for defense against external attack, was not entirely satisfactory, it at least gave the United States some flexibility and enabled it to adapt its policy to changing circumstances. Also, a total arms embargo would seem to go far toward equating a friendly South Africa with the Communistic bloc. Lastly, Johnson asserted that unless all Western arms suppliers would

Security Files, Box 3: Memorandum, Alexis Johnson to Secretary of State, 14 June 1963.

also agree not to supply arms to South Africa, a total arms embargo on the part of the United States would only be a gesture of limited effect.¹⁵

In a letter to Kennedy dated 26 June 1963, Adlai Stevenson voiced his concern that the United States could find itself under direct fire in the UN Security Council meeting scheduled to start on 22 July 1963. His concern was based on proceedings of a conference of African heads of state that was held in Addis Ababa in May 1963. This conference resulted in the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). A resolution was drawn up at the conference, with a proviso that specifically called on the United States to choose between Africa and the "European colonial powers". Furthermore, a paragraph on the racial policies of the United States as well as an increasing demand for the institution of sanctions against South Africa, were also part of the proceedings. Stevenson was afraid that the African countries would present resolutions calling for far-reaching sanctions against South Africa in the light of these provisions. In such a case, Stevenson felt that the Kennedy Administration had to present an alternative resolution, which would put the United States morally on the right side and would call for measures of implementation that the Kennedy Administration could support and which would be reasonably satisfactory to the African nations. The minimum measures that Stevenson could foresee, were resolutions that would contain a condemnation of the South African policy of apartheid, recommendations against arms supplies that could be used to enforce this policy, and provisions for a 'meaningful' United Nations provision, although he could at that stage not clearly formulate what he meant by that. He felt very strongly that in the view of all these considerations, Kennedy's decision had to be in favor of future positive United States relations with the African countries. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) however had a somewhat more realistic outlook than Stevenson. They felt that although most of the African countries mainly relied on diplomatic and political pressure on the West to isolate and to apply sanctions against South Africa, they were far from unified - a fact that would have made it difficult for them to support their demands to the West. For this reason, most of the African countries expected that their more extreme demands concerning South Africa would be set aside for some time, although they regarded strong support from the United States as fundamental in achieving their objectives, as

15. COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS, Discussion meeting report (United States Government Publication, 1963), pp. 18, 25; PAPERS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, National Security Files, Box 3: Memorandum: Alexis Johnson to Secretary of State, 14 June 1963.

they believed that such backing would soon force the South African Government to heel.¹⁶

On 8 July 1963, it was asserted in an article in the South African newspaper *Die Burger* that the United States was considering a total embargo on the sale of arms and military equipment to South Africa. The assertion was based on the testimony of Mennen Williams before the US Congress House of Representatives' Committee for Foreign Affairs in May 1963.

Although Williams's testimony was censured, it was clear that the United States was considering the institution of an embargo on the shipping of military arms and equipment to South Africa. Brandford Morris, a representative from the Republican Party, had questioned Williams on this subject. Morris referred to allegations that the United States was supplying South Africa with arms, and wanted to know what the Kennedy Administration thought about a total arms embargo against South Africa. Williams replied that such an embargo had been discussed, but a definite policy had not yet been decided upon.¹⁷

In the meantime, Kennedy had instructed the US Department of Defense to study the impact that of a total ban on the supply of arms to South Africa. They were also instructed to compile information on what military items were scheduled to be delivered to South Africa. The Department of Defense dutifully provided the requested information, but not without opposition. From the standpoint of military security, they gave serious attention to resolutions against South Africa in the United Nations including, among other measures, an arms embargo. They felt that any position taken by the United States delegation at the United Nations would most likely alienate South Africa to some degree, resulting in significant United States military interests being jeopardized.¹⁸

16. A.M. KHALIFA, "The adverse consequences of military and economic assistance to South Africa", *Objective Justice* 8, Autumn 1976, p. 9; PAPERS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, National Security Files, Box 3: Letter: Adlai E Stevenson to President Kennedy, 26 June 1963; PAPERS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, National Security Files, Box 3: Memorandum: CIA, 11 July 1963.

17. ANON., "Wapens vir S.A.: V.S.A. dink aan verbod - Rooi inmenging gevrees", *Die Burger*, 8 July 1963, p. 1.

18. T.J. NOER, *Cold war and black liberation*, pp. 144 - 145; PAPERS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, National Security Files, Box 159, p. 1: Letter: R.S. McNamara to Dean Acheson, 11 July 1963; Box 3: Secret memorandum: For the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence (International Affairs), 8 July 1963.

The Kennedy Administration now sat with a thorny problem in its hands. On the one hand, if the tracking station and South African ports and airport facilities were denied, it would cause inconvenience and delays and increase costs, since other alternatives had to be pursued. Going hand-in-hand with this, was the reaction of the United States' NATO allies, and the possible divisive effect upon the alliance, should the United States choose to give support to a strong African resolution in the United Nations. Thus: some role players in the Kennedy Administration continued arguing that the use of ports, airports and tracking facilities in South Africa had to be important considerations for the maintaining of military cooperation with and facilities in that country. On the other hand, the military assets that the United States derived from South Africa had to be weighed against those that now sporadically became available to the United States in Africa, for example, communications and air bases in Ethiopia, Libya and Morocco. Given these considerations, other role players in the Kennedy Administration maintained that the basic objective of the United States had to be the avoidance of prejudicing the relationship that it had with both South Africa and the rest of Africa. Consequently, the issue of economic sanctions, an arms embargo or expulsion in the case of South Africa had to be based on general considerations of United States foreign policy. Some, like the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the US Department of Defense, concluded that the peacetime contribution of South Africa to the United States security was not extremely important. McGeorge Bundy, Special Assistant to Kennedy, supported them in this assertion. He investigated the importance of the missile tracking station in South Africa, and concluded that although a close relation existed between the tracking station and United States satellite photography, the station was not vital for the United States missile program to continue. Indeed: he did not even think that in the case of the United States taking a stiff line on the question of arms supplies for the South African Government, the tracking station would be immediately lost as a consequence.¹⁹

19. Council on Foreign Relations, Discussion meeting report, pp. 15, 18; PAPERS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, National Security Files, Box 159, pp. 1, 3: Letter: R.S. McNamara to Dean Acheson, 11 July 1963; PAPERS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, National Security Files, Box 3: Secret memorandum: For the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence (International Affairs), 8 July 1963; PAPERS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, National Security Files, Box 159: Memorandum: Joint Chiefs of Staff to Secretary of Defence, 10 July 1963; PAPERS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, National Security Files, Box 3: Memorandum: McGeorge Bundy to President Kennedy, 13 July 1963; T.J. NOER, *Cold war and black liberation*, p. 145.

From about mid-July 1963, the matter took on a rapid pace. On 16 July 1963, six days before the Security Council meeting on the apartheid policy of the South African Government was due, the US Under Secretary of State, George Ball, agreed to Kennedy's proposal of an arms embargo against South Africa, but he emphasized that it did not imply that he was in favor of further action. In a memorandum to Kennedy, he envisaged frank discussions with South Africa. However, on the same day, Kennedy leaked the news of an impending United States arms embargo against South Africa to Julius Nyerere, the leader of the African state Tanganyika, during a discussion on the institution of sanctions against South Africa. Nyerere was asked to keep the news in confidence, as Kennedy wanted the embargo to be an independent United States action that was not dependent on the United Nations. Nyerere agreed, but the mere fact that he knew about the United States' intention, worried the US delegation at the United Nations. They were afraid that Kennedy might make a premature public statement of the arms embargo against South Africa. Kennedy was therefore requested by Stevenson to keep the intention secret until he could make the announcement in the United Nations. Stevenson was of the opinion that the announcement of the embargo in the United Nations could counter a more negative vote for extensive mandatory sanctions against South Africa.²¹

On 17 July 1963, a conversation took place between the US Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, and the South African Ambassador to the United States, Willem Naudé. Rusk asserted that his government was greatly concerned about the upcoming Security Council meeting. He felt quite sure that the United States would be under enormous pressure to support the expulsion of South Africa from the United Nations and the institution of mandatory sanctions against it, but assured Naudé that the Kennedy Administration did not intend to give in to this pressure. He mentioned the anticipated step of a United States arms embargo against South Africa, but emphasized that it had not yet been finally decided upon, and that it had not yet been made public. Naudé answered that it was ironical that the United States and South Africa were fighting side by side during the Second World War, and now the latter would be refused the supply of arms to use against a common enemy. Rusk's answer to this was a reminder of the fact that more than once in the past, South Africa had

T.J. NOER, *Cold war and black liberation*, p. 146; PAPERS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, National Security Files, Box 159, 1-2: Memorandum: George Ball to President Kennedy, 16 July 1963; N.D. HOWLAND (Ed.), *Foreign relations of the United States, 1961 - 1963, Volume XXI - Africa*, pp. 637 - 638.

21 . T.J. NOER, *Cold war and black liberation*, p. 146.

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been assured of the willingness of the United States to cooperate with South Africa as much as possible, but that the United States policy had to be based on its strategic interests and world opinion. Therefore, he hoped that Naudé would relate to the South African Government the fact that its racial policies were a heavy burden to the United States and that it was creating difficulties for the United States' strategic interests all around the world. Naudé's reply was that the South African Government certainly had to face up to the situation now that the strategic interests of the United States elsewhere were more important than those in South Africa.²²

While the conversation between Rusk and Naudé took place, Kennedy approved the recommendation that no further arms be supplied to South Africa after 31 December 1963. The same day, the United States delegation at the United Nations also indicated that they would favor such a policy step, provided that the timing of the public announcement there-of be planned very carefully, in the view of it being of critical importance for the position of the United States in the Security Council, should the US Department of State decide that they wanted to restrict a Security Council resolution on South Africa to a limited restriction only. Early announcement of the plan would have increased the pressure on the United States to accept a full arms embargo in a Security Council resolution. On 18 July 1963 Kennedy held a conference in the White House to discuss the policy that the United States had to follow in the planned discussion of the apartheid policy of the South African Government in the Security Council. He took a firm stand against apartheid, and stated that it was inimical to the future of South Africa and repugnant to the United States. He however reiterated that he was opposed to the expulsion of South Africa from the United Nations. That same afternoon, the Committee on Apartheid in the United Nations expressed satisfaction with the stance that Kennedy had taken, and recommended an arms and oil embargo against South Africa. It was already clear at this stage that the institution of an arms embargo against South Africa was a certainty.²³

22. PAPERS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, National Security Files, Box 159, 1-2: Memorandum of conversation: South African and the Security Council Meeting, 17 July 1963; N.D. HOWLAND (Ed.), *Foreign relations of the United States, 1961 - 1963*, Volume XXI - Africa, pp. 641 - 643.

23. PAPERS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, National Security Files 159: Memorandum: McGeorge Bundy to Secretary of State, 17 July 1963; PAPERS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, National Security Files 159, 1: Telegram: United States Embassy, United Nations to Secretary of State, 17 July 1963; "V.S.A.

Historia 46(1), May 2001, pp. 109-33.

On 24 July 1963, Ambassador Naudé discussed with Alexis Johnson the possibility of the United States refraining from selling any arms to South Africa, as he got the impression from Rusk the previous week that a United States arms embargo against South Africa might be a total one as from January 1964. He accused the Kennedy Administration of giving in to the demands of the Afro-Asian nations in the United Nations. He went on to say that he could not fully understand the logic behind an arms embargo, and was wondering whether it was the case of some of the African countries where the United States held space and military bases, threatening to withdraw these privileges. Johnson replied that none of these countries had said that they would throw out the United States if the latter did not end all arms sales to South Africa. However, the United States had to look ahead and try to maintain future access to these vitally important bases. Naudé then said that the United States ought to rethink its position, as South Africa could play a helpful role in Africa. Should the institution of an arms embargo go through unchanged, it would mean that all the past and future usefulness of South Africa was to no avail. Johnson replied that in the mind of the Kennedy Administration, an arms embargo was not a sanction. However, if the United States continued to sell arms to South Africa, it would ignore the sentiments of the leadership of the African countries – a factor that was important in the struggle against communism. In order to keep communism from gaining a foothold in Africa, the United States had to maintain good relations with the African leaders. Thus, the common interests of the United States had to be balanced against the interests of South Africa, and the most important interest of the United States was to prevent communism from gaining a foothold in Africa. The conversation ended on a frosty note as Johnson concluded that he was deeply distressed over the present state of United States relations with South Africa.²⁴

In the meantime, the issue of keeping the decision to impose an arms embargo against South Africa secret, was causing problems for the

besluit vandag oor S.A. - Steun verwag vir wapenboikot”, *Die Burger*, 18 July 1963, p. 1; “Oil and Arms embargo, but not expulsion”, *The Star*, 19 July 1963, p. 19; “Ambassador sees top Kennedy men on embargo”, *The Star*, 25 July 1963, p. 3.

24. Anon., “Ambassador sees top Kennedy men on embargo”, *The Star*, 25 July 1963, p. 3; PAPERS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, National Security Files 159, 1-2: Memorandum: United States Embargo of arms to South Africa, 24 July 1963; LYNDON B. JOHNSON LIBRARY, National Security Files, County File. Box 76, File: Africa General Memo’s and Miscellaneous, Volume 1, 1: Report: Chronology of the recent steps taken by the United States to induce the South African Government to change certain policies, 10 March 1964; T.J. NOER, *Cold war and black liberation*, pp. 146-147.

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United States delegation at the United Nations. Stevenson had to douse fires lit by both the Africans and the South African delegation. On 22 July 1963, a number of African delegates to the UN occupied Stevenson's office in protest against the United States inaction on apartheid and opposition to sanctions against South Africa. Stevenson told the demonstrators that he was doing his utmost to end apartheid in South Africa. However, when he was charged with having abandoned morality for profits and strategic interests in South Africa, he became agitated and left his office, shouting "*I will not be lectured to about moral issues*".²⁵ On 25 July 1963, the South African Minister of Foreign Affairs, Eric Louw, declared that South Africa would not participate in a meeting of the Security Council where charges against the racial policies of his Government were being discussed. He however showed concern about the important part that the Afro-Asian block, but particularly the thirty-three African member states, played in the United Nations. He also expressed his appreciation of the efforts of the United States, among others, in opposing resolutions in the Security Council which called for sanctions against South Africa and the expulsion of South Africa from the United Nations.²⁶

By the end of July 1963, the pressure from the African delegates at the United Nations for the expulsion of South Africa and for the institution of economic sanctions against that country, had thoroughly increased. It was alleged by prominent African leaders that they were not interested in a resolution calling for an arms embargo against South Africa, as the country already had the capacity to manufacture all the arms it needed to sustain the apartheid system. Stevenson was rather worried about the course that the issue was taking, and said that if the African leaders were really serious in taking such a hard line, the United States would be in the invidious position of having little positive to offer. But, nonetheless, he still believed that the United States could get strong support for arms restrictions against South Africa within the terms of Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter.²⁷

25. As quoted in T.J. NOER, *Cold war and black liberation*, p. 147.

26. T.J. NOER, *Cold war and black liberation*, p. 147; "Security Council discussions on S.A.: S.A. will not participate - Mr Louw", *South African Digest*, 25 July 1963, p. 2.

27. PAPERS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, National Security Files 159, Telegram: United States Embassy, United Nations to Secretary of State, 30 July 1963; PAPERS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, National Security Files 159, Telegram: Adlai Stevenson to Secretary of State, 31 July 1963.

Taking all the foregoing factors into consideration, the US Department of State undertook to review the situation in the Security Council, including the position of the United States on an African resolution requesting a total arms embargo against South Africa. In a telegram to Stevenson dated 1 August 1963, the question of when the United States intended to announce the cessation of the delivery of all arms and ammunition to South Africa, was discussed in the light of the South African Government being informed of such an intention already on 17 July 1963, as discussed earlier. The main problem seemed to be that the Kennedy Administration had difficulty in deciding how to relate the imposition of an arms embargo to the fact that it still had arms intended for South Africa in the pipeline, and did not wish to deny itself any future opportunity to provide the latter with highly technical arms should a common free world defense effort so required. Therefore, the US Department of State stated that it would prefer, if possible, to assure that an arms embargo resolution explicitly leave the United States some flexibility for making future deliveries of strategic items such as submarines or anti-submarine weaponry to South Africa, if the United States Government concluded that it would be in its national interest and/or necessary for a common free world defense effort.²⁸

Another worrying factor to the Kennedy Administration was the amount of support from other countries for an arms embargo against South Africa, instead of the hard line that the African countries were taking. Stevenson was therefore requested to discuss the problem frankly with potential sponsors of such a resolution, including the United Kingdom and France. Stevenson had to inform them of the intention of the Kennedy Administration to end all sales of military equipment to South Africa by the end of 1963, as an indication of the concern that the United States had with regard to the failure of the South African Government to end its policy of apartheid. However, it had to be made clear that certain sales contracts already existed for items such as torpedoes for submarines and air-to-air missiles, which the United States planned to honor. Furthermore, if a case of external aggression which demanded a common defense effort should develop, the United States might consider it necessary to provide highly technical equipment to South Africa, although it would not mean an effort in any way on the part of the United States to hedge or delimit its support of an arms embargo. If the African

28. National Archives Washington, D.C., LYNDON B. JOHNSON LIBRARY, National Security Files, Country File, Box 78: Africa, Union of South, File: Memo's and Miscellaneous, Vol. 1, 2: Telegram: Department of State to A. Stevenson, 11 August 1963.

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countries refused to accept such a provision, Stevenson had to indicate that the United States would support a provision recommending a total arms embargo, but with the understanding that the attitude of the United States was one of support to South Africa in a common defense effort. Lastly Stevenson had to stress that the Kennedy Administration was totally opposed to economic sanctions, and that the recommendation to deny arms to a member country of the United Nations, was a measure that could contribute to a peaceful settlement under Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter.²⁹

For the Kennedy Administration at this stage, the chances of passing a more moderate resolution on South Africa did not look too bleak. The US Department of State felt that the African countries only had eight votes for a mandatory arms embargo; that France would abstain on any such resolution, and that the United Kingdom would probably go along with the United States. Indeed, for the African, Asian, Latin American and European delegates to the United Nations, it was quite a controversial matter. Some expressed the belief that it could be possible for an arms embargo restriction to pass, while others felt it would be rather difficult. But, whatever the case, it was certain that the United States would support the institution of a formal arms embargo against South Africa. The Department of State felt very strongly that in the light of the fast-moving events in the Security Council, it had become evident that it would be in the best interests of the United States Government to act promptly in publicly announcing the decision to impose a full arms embargo against South Africa by the end of 1963. Accordingly, Stevenson was authorized to take the initiative of announcing it in his upcoming Security Council speech.³⁰

29. National Archives Washington, D.C., LYNDON B. JOHNSON LIBRARY, National Security Files, Country File, Box 78: Africa, Union of South, File: Memo's and Miscellaneous, 2-6, Telegram: Department of State to A. Stevenson, 1 August 1963; PAPERS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, National Security Files 159, 2-5: Telegram: Department of State to A. Stevenson, 1 August 1963.

30. LYNDON B. JOHNSON LIBRARY, National Security Files, Country File, Box 78: Africa, Union of South. File: Memo's and Miscellaneous, Vol. 1, Memorandum: W.H. Brubeck to President Kennedy, 2 August 1963; T.J. NOER, *Cold war and black liberation*, p. 147; "U.S. to explain stand on S.A.", *Pretoria News*, 2 August 1963, p. 1; PAPERS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, National Security Files 159, 1: Telegram: Department of State to the United States Embassy, Pretoria, 3 August 1963.

The institution of an arms embargo against South Africa

On 2 August 1963, during a Security Council debate on the apartheid policy of South Africa, Adlai Stevenson announced that the Kennedy Administration had decided to prohibit the sale of all arms and military equipment to South Africa after the end of 1963, pending an end to the apartheid policy of the South African Government. Existing contracts providing for limited quantities of strategic equipment for defense against external threats, such as air-to-air missiles and torpedoes for submarines, would be honored, and if a world crisis demanded a combined defense effort, the embargo would be lifted. The United States would however continue to oppose mandatory sanctions against South Africa, as it would only result in hardship for all the people of South Africa, including those who were already suffering under the policy of apartheid. That in its turn would lead to violence, and the United States could not accept bloodshed as the only alternative to apartheid. Stevenson urged those who were trying to expel South Africa from the United Nations, to instead try to build a bridge between them and South Africa. In spite however of this statement, his speech was severely critical of the South African policy of apartheid. He recited discriminating actions by the South African Government and accused it of calculated retrogression, concluding that the situation was busy deteriorating. He said that although it was true that there was rarely a society in the world where some form of discrimination did not exist, the apartheid policy of the South African Government denied the worth and dignity of humans. For this very reason, the Kennedy Administration had decided to express its feelings with as much restraint as it could possibly muster. It was not only in the interest of the United States to take such a step, but also in the interest of South Africa and of a world that had suffered enough from bigotry, prejudice and hatred.³¹

Stevenson's speech quite clearly reflected a central element of the United States arms embargo policy towards South Africa, namely that it was not a desire to control the trade of arms that might fuel political conflict in South Africa, but rather a desire to withhold United States support from a government that enforced a policy of race segregation. In

31. U.S. tells U.N. it will halt arms sales to South Africa", *New York Times*, 3 August 1963, p. 6; "U.S. ends arms shipments to South Africa", *Chicago Tribune*, 3 August 1963, p. 1B; "Wapenverbod teen S.A. aangekondig - V.S.A. hou deur eger oop", *Die Burger*, 3 August 1963, p. 1; "U.S. will halt arms shipments to S. Africa", *Los Angeles Times*, 3 August 1963, pp. 1, 8; "Excerpts from U.S. statement on South Africa", *New York Times*, 3 August 1963, p. 6; T.J. NOER, *Cold war and black liberation*, p. 148.

other words, the United States embargo on the shipment of arms and military equipment to South Africa was not the product of an arms control objective, but rather an expression of United States anti-apartheid sentiment.³²

The reaction of the arms embargo

Stevenson's announcement was met with lukewarm reaction from the African countries in the United Nations. The Liberian Secretary of State and the Tunisian Foreign Minister, both supporters of extreme measures against South Africa, and critical of the United States foreign policy with regard to South Africa, said that the cessation of arms sales to South Africa represented an important advance in the policy of the United States with regard to South Africa. Neither of them however commented particularly on whether any qualification of the arms embargo was acceptable, but said that if worldwide conflict occurred, it was only natural that the United States would reserve the right to furnish South Africa with arms.³³ The rest of the African delegates were generally pleased with Stevenson's condemnation of apartheid in the Security Council, and described the arms ban announcement as a step forward in the policy of the United States with regard to South Africa. They however claimed to have found little comfort in Stevenson's appeal for moderation and the opposition of the United States to sanctions against South Africa. Spokesmen of the African countries in the Security Council stressed that the situation in South Africa was worsening, and said that they no longer saw any grounds for the hopes of the United States that conciliation and an appeal to reason would have any effect on the South African Government.³⁴

In the United States, the reaction to the arms embargo was mixed. Some liberals and Afro-Americans saw the embargo as a moralistic principle that had apparently triumphed over profits. Others, like some newspapers and members of the Anti-apartheid Movement, however pointed out that

32. "Excerpts from U.S. statement on South Africa", *New York Times*, 3 August 1963, p. 6; Armscor Archives, File no. 1/17/6/1, Volume 4: 1979 - 1988, Division: Executive Management, Foreign Affairs and Organization, Paper: Prepared for a Five-College Conference on South Africa, 14 April 1978.

33. PAPERS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, National Security Files 159, pp. 2-3: Telegram: United States Embassy, United Nations to Department of State, 1963-08-03.

34. "Lukewarm reaction to speech by Stevenson", *Pretoria News*, 3 August 1963, p. 1; "U.S. stand at U.N. fails to satisfy Africans", *South African Digest*, 8 August 1963, p. 3.

South Africa was nearly self-sufficient in arms production, and that the move was severely diluted by Stevenson's statement that weapons that were already agreed to before the announcement of the embargo, would be delivered, as well as the right that the United States reserved to sell arms to South Africa in future if the maintenance of the world peace so required.³⁵

From the South African governmental side, Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd's reaction was that the South African public should not feel uneasy about the announcement, and that he would comment on the decision later at a more suitable time. South African Foreign Minister Eric Louw at first had no comment on Stevenson's announcement of the arms embargo, saying that he could say much in reply to Stevenson's speech, but as the Security Council was still in session, he chose to say as little as possible for the time being. He did however mention that it was a matter for the South African Department of Defense to handle. The Minister of Defense, Jim Fouché, was however also not prepared to comment on the announcement. Nonetheless, the general feeling in political circles in South Africa was one of shock, with some observers going as far as to say that the action amounted to a serious diplomatic setback for South Africa and a victory for the Afro-Asian countries in the United Nations.³⁶

The South African press gave extensive coverage to the arms embargo, and the majority favored the view of the South African Government. Most agree that the announcement of an arms embargo against South Africa was not as serious as it sounded at first hearing, as it was only a continuation of the anticipated compromising attitude of the United States. The latter had only taken the step to win the favor of the African nations, while it simultaneously wanted to ensure that normal trade with South Africa could continue. Most newspapers also shared the view that the arms embargo would not affect the position of South Africa military – in fact, it would result in an even bigger South African defense budget for 1964. Some went as far as to say that South Africa would still be able

35. T.J. NOER, *Cold war and black liberation*, p. 149; "No arms for South Africa", *New York Times*, 4 August 1963, p. E8; "Supplying of arms to S.A. 'shameful'", *Pretoria News*, 5 August 1963, p. 9.

36. South Africa: The making of United States policy, 1962 - 1989, microfiche collection, fiche 00053: Telegram: United States Embassy, Pretoria to Secretary of State, 3 August 1963; "U.S. tells U.N. it will halt arms sales to South Africa", *New York Times*, 3 August 1963, p. 6; "U.S. stand on arms stirs South Africa" *New York Times*, 5 August 1963, p. 2; "Arms ban may mean more tax to pay - S.A. could go it alone", *Pretoria News*, 5 August 1963, p. 1.

to obtain arms from the United States, as the latter was eager to maintain the strategic importance of South Africa. Almost every newspaper studied felt that one of the main consequences of the embargo would be the hastening of South Africa's own arms production to a level of complete self-sufficiency. To conclude, the overall view of the South African newspapers was that the United States was doing nothing constructive by instituting an arms embargo against South Africa.³⁷

Conclusion

The Kennedy Administration found itself caught between two fires by the middle of 1963. On the one side was South Africa, whose geographical location, opposition to communism and friendly cooperation in the United States military and space program was a major consideration. On the other side were the African nations who, being newly independent after several years of colonial rule, were very vulnerable to communist influence, and thus needed as much anti-communistic support from the United States as the latter could possibly provide. Basic human rights and the whole issue of majority rule played a major role in the thinking patterns of these countries, and, this not being the case in South Africa, made the latter the object of fierce attacks by the African and Asian countries in the United Nations. These attacks also resulted in accusations especially against the United States, as the world leader, of supporting the apartheid policy of the South African Government by providing it with arms and other forms of support.

Kennedy's answer to the whole situation was the institution of an arms embargo against South Africa. For his Administration, the embargo served two purposes. Firstly, they believed that the political situation in South Africa justified the refusal to sell any item to South Africa that could be used in the enforcement of the apartheid policy. And, secondly, they wanted to avoid the possibility that any actions by the United States

37. South Africa: The making of United States policy, 1962 - 1989, Microfiche collection: National Security Files, fiche 00053: Telegram: United States Embassy, Pretoria to Secretary of State, 3 August 1963; fiche 00054: Telegram: United States Embassy, Pretoria to Secretary of State, 5 August 1963; "Arms ban may mean more tax to pay - S.A. could go it alone", *Pretoria News*, 5 August 1963, p.1; Warning from U.S.A., *Pretoria News*, 5 August 1963; "Security Council likely to call for total arms ban - Resolution on S.A. being prepared", *Pretoria News*, 5 August 1963, p. 9; "S.A. sal waarskynlik vinniger sy eie wapens maak", *Die Burger*, 5 August 1963, p. 1; "Great asset (Editorial)", *Pretoria News*, 6 August 1963, p. 10.

could be branded as acquiescence in the racial policies of the South African Government. However, the fact that the decision to institute the arms embargo was only reached in August 1963, heightened the importance of the United States delegation at the United Nations in defending United States interests in the interim. But once the United Nations Special Committee on Apartheid was formed at the end of 1962, it became clear that the Kennedy Administration had to deal seriously with the issue of apartheid in order to bring satisfaction especially to the Afro-Asian nations who were pressing for sanctions against South Africa. For these Afro-Asian nations, the arms embargo constituted nothing more than a compromise from the part of the United States. They regarded it as an alternative to mandatory economic sanctions against South Africa. Furthermore, it was felt that the step taken by the Kennedy Administration could not have been a very difficult one, as the United States, unlike Britain and France, was not burdened by any traditional military relationship or responsibility to South Africa.

To conclude, one can assert that Kennedy always considered what steps would be in the national interest of the United States. In July 1963, he decided that an arms embargo against South Africa would serve the national interest of the United States better than extensive economic sanctions against that country. The apartheid policy of the South African Government, to him, was not the main issue. The main issue was rather influence with the African heads of state, since he needed their support in the battle against communism (or the Cold War). It seems to have been only Mennen Williams and Adlai Stevenson for whom the moral issue of apartheid was significant.

Opsomming

Die Kennedy Administrasie en die instelling van 'n wapenverbod teen Suid-Afrika, 1961 - 1963

Vanaf die 1950's, is veldtogte vir die instelling van afdwingbare sanksies teen Suid-Afrika deur die Afro-Asiatiese nasies in die Verenigde Nasies gevoer. Die rede vir hierdie veldtogte was die Suid-Afrikaanse regering se beleid van apartheid. In al die vroeë veldtogte van hierdie aard, het Suid-Afrika die ondersteuning van die VSA geniet, alhoewel laasgenoemde altyd die apartheidsbeleid van die Suid-Afrikaanse regering verbaal veroordeel het. Met die aanvang van die Kennedy Administrasie

in die VSA in 1961, het hierdie situasie egter begin verander. In Augustus 1963, is 'n wapenverbod deur die Kennedy administrasie teen Suid-Afrika ingestel. Hierdie wapenverbod was die eerste konkrete, praktiese stap wat deur die VSA geneem is met betrekking tot laasgenoemde se opposisie teen die Suid-Afrikaanse regering se apartheidsbeleid. Die VSA-aankondiging is 'n paar dae later gevolg deur die instelling van 'n vrywillige wapenverbod teen Suid-Afrika deur die Verenigde Nasies. Die Kennedy-administrasie het sy volle steun aan hierdie wapenverbod toegesê. In 1977 is die verbod versterk in die sin dat dit verpligtend gemaak is. Die doel van hierdie artikel is om ondersoek in te stel na die opbou tot die instelling van 'n wapenverbod teen Suid-Afrika deur die Kennedy administrasie in 1963. Dit sal insluit: die verdedigings- en strategiese belang van Suid-Afrika vir die VSA; die mate waartoe die Afro-Asiatiese state die besluit van Kennedy om 'n wapenverbod teen Suid-Afrika in te stel, beïnvloed het; en die rol wat Suid-Afrika as anti-kommunistiese bondgenoot vir die V.S.A. gespeel het.