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## EPISCOPAL CHURCHPEOPLE for a FREE SOUTHERN AFRICA

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Statement by William Johnston, President, Episcopal Churchpeople for a Free Southern Africa, before the Fourth Committee of the United Nations, New York, 9 October 1987

Two weeks ago a conservative American weekly journal, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT, ran a page on Namibia - one of the rare instances when that nation has been mentioned at all in the US press. After noting 'a bewilderingly diverse cast' of players - South Africa, Angola, SWAPO, the United Nations, Cuba, the Soviet Union, the United States, UNITA - the story teller focuses on what he thinks is going on inside Namibia, by quoting members of the so-called 'transitional government'. These 'leaders of Namibia' are depicted as struggling in a twilight world to bring the country into independence.

Not many of the American and other Western public know that what Pretoria and its allies overseas puts out is mis- and disinformation. Far too often the Western press and media pay scant attention to Namibia or too easily accept ready print-outs from the South African Defence Force and other apartheid-state agencies. Much of the public is not aware that SWAPO is pre-eminent in Namibia or about the role and responsibility of the United Nations. The public do not know about the Ai-Gams Declaration issued last year in Windhoek. That manifesto signed by SWAPO, smaller political parties, women's groups and student organizations and by the Council of Churches in Namibia - in all representing the overwhelming majority of Namibians - rejected 'the succession of Pretoria installed puppet governments of which the so-called Transitional Government is the latest creation' - because the TG was forced on the Namibian people by Pretoria; kept in power only by 'the sheer brutal force' of South Africa's army and police, including the special terrorist unit Koevoet; and because the TG is not elected 'and has



no mandate from the Namibian people'.

Puppetry is one factor in Pretoria's armory in trying to stave off the inevitable coming of liberation in South Africa and in Namibia. The apartheid state and its friends are using every device to influence the unwary and to hang on to uneasy and wobbling supporters. The show of strength and cohesiveness by Namibia's workers during last July's/August's strike by the Mineworkers Union of Namibia and the show of solidarity from trade unions in the United States, the United Kingdom and Western Europe sent chills through Pretoria officials and their allies in oppression, the transnational mining corporations exploiting Namibia's wealth and people. The South African security police struck hard at SWAPO and trade union leadership. Furthermore, in an attempt to gull Namibians and to muddle the perception of the outside world, Pretoria has been concocting tame 'trade unions' almost by the week.

A phony 'government' in Windhoek and spurious 'unions' are matched by suddenly manufactured religious groupings. Their obvious aim: to undercut the Council of Churches in Namibia. The NAMIBIAN newspaper in Windhoek is keeping close watch on these outfits and is smoking out what is behind them. A group called Christian Action has flooded Namibia with leaflets attacking Ai-Gams, describing its adherents as members of a 'front organization...supporters of SWAPO, the ANC and UDF', supporters of 'communism which rejects God totally'. One of Christian Action's prime movers is a South African army colonel.

Two years ago Youth for Christ Namibia was established for 'training youth leaders of all levels of society to ensure Namibia of a stable Christian, anti-communist future'. That organization's board of directors are prominent businessmen. The vice chairman was the commanding officer of the Walvis Bay military area.

In July, the ever-alert NAMIBIAN reported on the Namibia Churches Union, a tribally-oriented composition which is being promoted in Western Europe by the public relations consultancy in the employ of the 'transitional government' in Windhoek.

These activities are minor beside sterner stuff. The war for the liberation of Namibia, for all of southern Africa from Pretoria's grasp goes on. It is not just the South African regime pitted against the independent countries and the liberation movements. Pretoria has many friends, however shadowy they may prefer to remain. A telling remark came three weeks ago in the South African parliament when Defence Minister General Magnus Malan stated that his government and that of the United States are agreed on these matters: the Angolan war and Namibia should be regarded jointly as a 'regional issue'; and, the Cuban presence in Angola and the war there should be resolved before attending to Namibia.

Southern Africa is the focus of increased military and political attention from the United States and its European allies. The South African regime's recent rightward lurch and the renewed determination of Namibian and South African liberation movements in their struggle for freedom have heightened a sense of urgency for the West. Southern Africa threatens to escape their influence and control.

An April 30 report in THE WASHINGTON POST told how the USA and its allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization 'have begun a major buildup of military facilities' in the Azores and Madeira island groups, strategically located in the Atlantic west of Gibraltar. The Azores have provided crucial way stations for air and naval traffic between North America and Europe, Asia and Africa. An American admiral spoke of a 'military plan, a contingency plan' in view of Soviet warships operating from Luanda and Lobito.



In February, THE NEW YORK TIMES reported on the CIA's use of the Kamina airbase in Zaire's Shaba province for delivering arms to UNITA. In a scenario similar to what we have heard and seen during last summer's Iran/Contragate hearings, large jet cargo planes brought in military shipments mostly at night in operations directed by a black American officer. Lighter aircraft then ferried the materiel on to UNITA's Jamba base. THE TIMES reporter was interrogated and warned before being released.

In mid-April, THE WASHINGTON POST wrote of a two-week joint USA-Zaire military exercise at the Kamina base, employing US special forces personnel. US officials insist that Kamina - with its very long airstrips and 750-bed hospital - would be used only for humanitarian food shipments and the like. But an updated Kamina would supply a modern and gigantic air force base in the heart of Africa, and, with South African air force bases in South Africa itself and in occupied Namibia, would command the entire region, from the Atlantic to the Indian oceans, central Africa to the Cape.

A South Atlantic Treaty Organization to complement that existing in the North Atlantic has been a concept for at least 15 years. Conferences and symposia have been held on formalizing a security alliance among the USA, some at least of its European allies, South Africa and the cone states of South America. South African and Namibian newspapers ran a series of stories about the utilization of naval bases in those countries, with special attention paid to the Namibian port of Walvis Bay. NATO officials have admitted contingency plans concerned with the South Atlantic.

The South American wing of an envisioned SATO appears to be in abeyance. But recent indications are that the NATO powers are serious about extending an active reach well below NATO's assumed boundary of the Tropic

of Cancer. There is the strategic and potentially wealthy continent of Antarctica to be concerned about. Above all there is explosive southern Africa. In the midst of the region is Namibia, little mentioned, publicly ignored, shoved to one side, but the fulcrum upon which so much of the struggle depends.

Pretoria's brutal intent to keep its claws on Namibia can be seen in its actions in the last two days. The Namibia Communications Centre in London reports:

- Early on Wednesday morning, South African security police arrested Jason Angula, SWAPO's secretary of transport and personal secretary to the Rev Dr Abisai Shejavali, general secretary of the Council of Churches in Namibia, at his home in Windhoek. Mr Angula is being held under AG 9.
- Tonight a hostel housing over 5,000 unemployed and working men who had been living apart from their families in Katutura township, Windhoek, will be destroyed. The men are being dispersed to their home areas, chiefly in northern Namibia.
- Yesterday at Ombalantu hospital, a South African Defence Force troop suddenly opened fire on people waiting for medical treatment. One woman was shot in both legs. Another woman, pregnant, was shot in the stomach. Her baby was killed.

World disgust with the apartheid state rises and with it a renewed determination to end Pretoria's abominations. The movement to impose sanctions on South Africa grows steadily. We all sense the horror of increasing conflict. We all are frustrated by Pretoria's unrelenting grip on Namibia. Efforts to force Pretoria to obey the United Nations and get out of Namibia are blocked by the United States and the United Kingdom in the Security Council. Is this not a time to consider carefully the Uniting for Peace resolution - long on the books here at the UN - whereby it can be determined that the ultimate authority in this world body lies in the General Assembly?