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Paul E. Brink

CALL FOR TOTAL U.S. ECONOMIC DISENGAGEMENT FROM SOUTH AFRICA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PHILADELPHIA--The IBM, General Motors and Coca Cola changes in South Africa must be seen as interim steps toward the necessary total U.S. economic disengagement in that country, the American Friends Service Committee declared today.

"While we welcome their recent announcements," said Jerry Herman of the Quaker organization, "These firms still will be supporting and making profits from the apartheid system. We call on them to totally disengage economically in order to bring a new beginning for that troubled land and its oppressed majority."

Thomas Conrad, an AFSC researcher/author, who is one of the nation's foremost authorities on computer exports, said IBM's equipment has been used for years in sensitive and military/strategic ways as well as to repress the Blacks and other peoples. "IBM technology is widely used by local government officials, who are in the forefront of enforcing the apartheid system," he said. Their sale of South Africa operations will in no way limit their sales to South African authorities.

Herman, coordinator of AFSC U.S. programs on South Africa, said "GM, IBM, and Coca Cola, through payment of corporate taxes and in the case of GM and IBM, through provision of strategic items, will not cause South Africa's military budget to shrink. Therefore, there will be no restraint on South Africa's ability to wage violence and war against its neighbors and its own citizens."

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Editors: Herman and Conrad, who have travelled, written and spoken extensively, are available for interviews on issues of corporate withdrawal from South Africa and sanctions. Herman has been to South Africa, including Soweto, and heads AFSC's nationwide education and organizing work on South Africa. Conrad has testified before United Nations committees and is the author of an AFSC book: "Automating Apartheid." Conrad's original research on high-tech sales to South Africa is widely utilized by anti-apartheid activists and organizations around the world. Both are experienced with the media. The AFSC has staff based in Southern Africa and has been working on the issues involved for more than 25 years. Please call for details: Paul Brink (215-241-7060); (215-241-7000); (215-544-2038).

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