

SOUTHERN AFRICA~THE TIME TO ACT!



NATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY LOBBY SOUTHERN AFRICA - THE TIME TO ACT

Wednesday 21st March

Lym/97A/0015/11

Briefing Paper No.1: SOUTH AFRICA'S POLICIES OF AGGRESSION AND DESTABILISATION

Background:

South Africa has been engaged in an escalating war of aggression and destabilisation against all the neighbouring African states in the region, especially since Zimbabwe's independence in April 1980. Angola has been the main target; South African forces have been occupying a large area of Southern Angola since August 1981. As well as direct South African aggression, the Pretoria regime has been training, equipping and financing anti-government groups like UNITA in Angola and MNR in Mozambique. All the independent states in the region have been targets of South African aggression, including the tiny Kingdom of Lesotho, which is entirely encircled by South Africa. On 9th December 1982 South African commandos entered Lesotho and killed 42 South African refugees and Lesotho nationals in the capital, Maseru. The capital of Mozambique, Maputo, has also been attacked by South African commandos as well as aerial bombing by the South African Air Force

South Africa has also actively destabilised the economies of neighbouring states. The burden borne by these states has been immense; the economic damage inflicted on Angola has been estimated at over ten billion dollars. The aim of these policies has been to try and re-establish South African domination of the entire region. The independent states have resisted these pressures; for example, the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) was formed in 1980. It consists of the independent states in the region and its aim is to reduce their economic dependence on South Africa. In early 1984 various agreements were reached between some of the states in the region and South Africa; it is premature to judge what will be the results of these arrangements.

British Government Policy

South African aggression could be halted if the major Western countries used their influence and adopted effective measures against South Africa. The British Government has refused to do so. Instead, it has pursued a policy of pressurising the independent states to reach agreements with South Africa. It has blocked effective measures in the United Nations Security Council. Its record of aid to the Frontline States and SADCC is facing mounting criticism.

POINTS FOR ACTION

Will you please put the following questions to your MP:

- a) Will you urge the British Government to use its influence and pressurise South Africa to abandon its policies of aggression and destabilisation?
- b) Will you urge the Government to undertake not to use the veto to protect South Africa from international action arising from its acts of aggression?
- c) Will you urge the Government to increase its programme of aid to the independent states in the region?
- d) Will you urge the Government to reconsider its decision not to increase its aid to SADCC, as announced in January this year?