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THE POLICIES OF APARTHEID OF THE GOVERNMENT  
OF SOUTH AFRICA

Letter dated 14 March 1972 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba  
addressed to the Secretary-General

The Special Committee on Apartheid, a body which has always had our respect and support right from its inception, has convened a special session to be held at United Nations Headquarters from 21 to 23 March 1972.

The purpose of this meeting, to which many organizations of different kinds have been invited, is to seek means of intensifying the international campaign against the disgraceful system applied by the régime of the Republic of South Africa.

The special session coincides with the twelfth anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre, which resulted in a tragic total of 69 dead and 200 injured, the casualties were all native South Africans, the legitimate owners of a country that has been wrested from them by a brutal minority, a minority which had no hesitation in shooting them down while they were demonstrating against one of the many "laws" introduced in South Africa to "legalize" the crime of racism.

It is a well-known fact that without the firm support of NATO, the South African régime would not have been able to dig itself in in South Africa or turn itself into the dangerous arsenal of weapons which are used not only to oppress the South African patriots but also to threaten the sovereignty of independent Governments throughout the southern cone of Africa. The Government of the United States of America is naturally in the forefront of the supporters of the Pretoria régime. This is proved beyond a shadow of doubt by nearly 1,000 million dollars' worth of Yankee investment in South Africa and the continued delivery of arms "for the defence" of that régime.

\* A/8700.

The Revolutionary Government of Cuba therefore wishes to reiterate its unshakable solidarity with the liberation movements of Africa, and particularly with the 15 million South African blacks and coloureds, and to draw your attention and that of the Special Committee on Apartheid to the announcement that the Yankee "Ministry of the Colonies" - the Organization of American States - will be represented by an "observer" at the solemn meetings from 21 to 23 March.

In April 1965 the OAS, in docile obedience to orders from Washington, made itself responsible for the brutal invasion of the Dominican Republic by 40,000 American soldiers, a massacre which confirmed its already traditional role as the bully of the Latin American peoples and the accomplice and concealer of the crimes of imperialism. Therefore, it now has no moral reason or right to occupy a seat side by side with progressives and the representatives of forward-looking organizations commemorating the Sharpeville massacre.

What difference is there between the victims of the Sharpeville massacre and those who were shot down at Santo Domingo, men who were struggling against what remained of the bloody tyranny of

No difference at all, except a short interval in time between the two events.

In Santo Domingo, the OAS, which was not even consulted by the United States Government, just threw in a handful of soldiers, officers and police from Brazil, Honduras, Paraguay and Costa Rica to be added to the tens of thousands of Yankee invaders. And so the so-called Inter-American Peace Force was formed merely by putting OAS armbands on the soldiers of the invading United States forces; and it shed the noble blood of the Dominican patriots and imposed a puppet government on them. By doing this, the OAS added one more item to its long record of infamy and ignominy.

But that is not all. In 1954, the Tenth International Conference of American States supported and condoned in advance the attack by an army of mercenaries financed, maintained and armed by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) on the progressive government of Jacobo Arbenz, who had had the audacity to carry out a moderate programme of agrarian reform which hurt the interests of the United Fruit Company, an American monopoly which owns more than 20 per cent of the best land in Guatemala. On 27 June 1964, when the so-called "Inter-American Peace Commission" was playing the comedy of sending its "observers" to Guatemala without the consent of the Arbenz government, Arbenz was overthrown by a brutal military coup, and that, for the time being, was the end of the Guatemalan people's hopes.

It is laughable that the OAS should now be sending "observers" to a session to combat crime and oppression in South Africa.

In the case of Cuba, in mid-1959, when the Government of the United States first began to come up against the unbreakable will of the Cuban people, the OAS aligned itself unmistakably, as usual, with the lackeys of the United States.

For instance, on 15 April 1961, when the United States ordered the bombing of Cuba as a prelude to the invasion of the Bay of Pigs, the OAS cautiously met to "consider" the situation. When the attack began two days later, the meetings were suspended. Definite orders had arrived from Washington.

When, irrefutable proofs in hand, Cuba went to the United Nations and denounced the American participation in this act of armed aggression, the OAS was sunk in lethargy.

The accusations of the Revolutionary Government of Cuba could not be denied or ignored, even by the President of the United States, who, on 20 April 1961, publicly recognized the full responsibility of the United States Government for the invasion of the Bay of Pigs.

As everyone knows, to the mortification of Washington and the OAS, the mercenaries were not able to claim the infamous honour of having carried out the orders of the imperialists. They were prisoners within 72 hours, beaten by the valour of a people which rushed to arms to defend its sovereignty despite its lack of military training at that time. When in October 1962 the United States threatened to annihilate Cuba with atomic weapons, the OAS - which, as always, had not been "consulted" until afterwards - ranged itself on the side of the aggressor, sanctioned its piratical action and approved the blockade of Cuba. A few years later, shamelessly bowing to the will of Washington, it imposed a total diplomatic, economic and trade blockade on Cuba as a "sanction" for the revolutionary and anti-imperialist policy consistently followed by the Cuban Government and people.

It would take too long to list all the crimes committed under the cloak of the so-called Organization of American States since its establishment in 1948.

The fact that the OAS is an aggressive and servile tool cannot be hidden behind any of the so-called "principles" proclaimed in the Charter of Bogotá, in violation of which the Latin American peoples are constantly being made the victims of aggression, threats and extortion, or by the OAS calling itself, quite unjustifiably, a "regional organization" of the United Nations. The "principle" of Punta del Este, according to which a country cannot at one and the same time be a member of the OAS and exercise its sovereignty through an economic and social régime of its own and an independent foreign policy, proves to the hilt that the OAS is a Yankee Ministry of the Colonies and not a regional organization in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter.

The OAS is not a regional American grouping. It does not represent the interests of the peoples of the region, and its action is not based on respect for the equality of its members. The OAS is and has always been since its foundation nothing but the instrument used by American imperialism to exercise its neo-colonial domination of the peoples of Latin America.

Ever since the time of Bolívar, Martí, Betances and Hostos, the Latin American peoples have striven to unite their countries precisely so as to defend themselves against the hegemony and oppression of American imperialism, which has conspired

against the independence and integrity of the countries of Latin America ever since they emerged to statehood. "Pan Americanism", which tries to fuse together in the same mould both the Latin American peoples and the imperialism which has always denied them liberty, has never been accepted by the broad masses of the Latin American peoples; indeed, on the contrary, they have always fought resolutely against it. The OAS is the rotten fruit of Pan-Americanism and the Monroe Doctrine. It has nothing to do with the history of our peoples, except as a point of reference in its centuries-long struggle for real independence.

To put the OAS on the same footing as the Organization of African Unity or the League of Arab States, which really are regional organizations and were established to defend the interests and aspirations of their peoples, is an unjustifiable affront not only to the Latin American peoples, but also to the African and Arab peoples. The OAS was established, not to serve the interests of the Latin American peoples but to keep them under the Yankee yoke. To give it an official status similar to that of the regional organizations of the United Nations system would be like putting South Africa at the head of the Organization of African Unity or giving the leadership of the League of Arab States to Israel.

To invite the OAS to participate in an activity sponsored by the Special Committee on Apartheid lowers the prestige of the United Nations and the bodies it has established, to combat colonialism and racism. In the long, murky and shameful history of the OAS there is nothing which could place it on the same footing as the fighters for equal human rights or the independence of oppressed peoples. There are territories under colonial domination in Latin America; some of them, like Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, are enslaved by Yankee colonialism. What has the OAS done to free those territories? In the United States and in some of its most outstanding supporters among the members of the OAS the most brutal forms of racial discrimination are to be found. Does the Special Committee on Apartheid know of any decision of the OAS defending the blacks who have been massacred in the United States, the Indians forced into "reservations" (the forerunners of the South African Bantustans), the hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans and chicanos who are the victims of discrimination, or the millions of American citizens who are segregated, despised and oppressed because of the colour of their skin?

Has the OAS ever supported the just claims of the Panamanians to sovereignty over the Canal Zone, usurped by the United States? Did it ever protest at the killing of Panamanians by the Yankee troops in 1964? What has the OAS done to resist Washington's recent pressure, manoeuvres and threats against the Latin American countries that wish to protect their natural resources? Has it ever ranged itself on the side of Chile, Peru, and Ecuador, or has it not rather connived in silence and, as always, served the interests of the American monopolists?

Can anybody recall any action whatever taken by the OAS to protest against United States interference in the internal affairs of the Latin American peoples? Has it ever done anything about the coups fomented by the CIA and the Pentagon? Has it ever complained about the bare-faced intervention of the United States, helped by its Brazilian henchman and some of its other lackeys against the Bolivian people in August of last year?

The OAS's record in connexion with other international problems which are a primary concern to most of the States Members of the United Nations is no better. The OAS has never said a single word in condemnation of apartheid or in favour of the liberation of the peoples of Namibia and Zimbabwe. It has never protested against the crimes of Portuguese colonialism. Nobody can recall a single decision by the OAS in favour of the Palestinian people or the Arab countries groaning under the Israeli occupation. On the contrary, the records of the sessions of the General Assembly clearly show the position of the United States, of the Brazilian subimperialists and of America's other Latin American lackeys with regard to these problems. Would it not be true to say that they have consistently supported South Africa, Portugal and Israel? Perhaps everyone has forgotten how the United States representative Diggs denounced his Government's collusion with colonialist and racist régimes and resigned from the United States delegation at the twenty-sixth session of the General Assembly in protest.

What right has the OAS, therefore, to take part as an observer in a meeting called to condemn one of the most abominable crimes of this century? What right has a totally useless organization which has lost all prestige and now merits only repudiation, scorn and condemnation to take part in such an event? What moral right has it to sit with the defenders of the South African patriots or any of their honourable representatives?

For all these reasons it is a scandal, an injustice, a violation of the principles and purposes of the United Nations, and most harmful to the anti-colonial and anti-racist cause, for the OAS to have been invited in this extraordinary way. It does not serve the interests of the peoples who are the victims of colonialism and racism. All it has done, in the eyes of millions of Latin Americans that have been despoiled by Yankee imperialism, is probably seriously to lessen their respect for the United Nations body which took the deplorable decision to send that invitation.

The Revolutionary Government of Cuba wishes to record its most energetic protest against this grotesque mockery of the United Nations and of the principles underlying the struggle against colonialism and apartheid. Reaffirming its unconditional solidarity with the African patriots, my Government expresses the hope that the necessary steps will be taken to correct the lamentable mistake made by the Special Committee on Apartheid and to prevent the inadmissible participation of the representatives of the Yankee Ministry of the Colonies, which would be an indelible stain upon the record of the Special Committee and would destroy its authority and bring all its efforts to nothing.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as soon as possible as an official document for the General Assembly.

(Signed) Ricardo ALARCON QUESADA  
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Cuba  
to the United Nations