

11th November 1967

The Rt Hon. Harold Wilson OBE MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON SW1

Dear Sir,

The Anti-Apartheid Movement is alarmed and astonished by the recent reports that the Cabinet has been considering the lifting of the embargo upon the supply of arms to South Africa.

It was at a rally organised by this Movement that you personally committed the Labour Party to support the policy of an arms embargo. To that commitment has been added the obligation to support the United Nations on this point. Recent events, far from weakening the case for an embargo, have still further strengthened it. South Africa is now in a position of open conflict with the United Nations, not only with regard to her internal policy, but also with regard to her continued occupation of South West Africa and her non-compliance with a mandatory resolution of the Security Council on sanctions against Rhodesia. South African armed forces are in Rhodesia illegally, for the purpose of supporting the rebel regime. The strength of the South African armed forces has been quite blatantly used as the basis for threats against Zambia, a member of the Commonwealth.

Press reports have suggested that there might be a revival of the distinction which the Conservative Government sought to draw between "arms likely to be used for purposes of internal suppression" and other arms. This was always an unreal distinction, but in the light of the circumstances mentioned above, it would be an irrelevant distinction even if it were a real one. The South African racial conflict has already become an international conflict. Any increase in the military strength of the South African Government is capable of influencing the course of that conflict. Any British contribution to the military strength of the South African Government would be a hostile act against all those who are involved in that conflict on the side of democracy.

We accordingly urge you to issue an early public statement making it clear that the arms embargo is still Government policy.

Yours faithfully,

S. Abdul  
Hon. Secretary