



An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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LINKS BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA AND LOYALISTS

STEERING NOTE

1. The South African dimension to Loyalist activities in Northern Ireland appears to reflect two realities: first, the family ties and political sympathies that exist between sections of the Unionist Community in Northern Ireland and the significant émigré community in South Africa; Second, the opportunistic interest shown during the 1980s by the South African arms procurement agency, ARMSCOR, in obtaining for South Africa (a pariah nation subject to UN arms embargoes), valuable armaments technology from Shorts Brothers, the Belfast aviation and armaments company, which has a strongly Loyalist workforce.
2. Links between Loyalist groupings and sympathisers in South Africa are a source of continuing concern. A particular instance of this is to be found in the case of Brian Nelson, (convicted of a number of serious crimes including conspiracy to murder), who was the UDA's Chief Intelligence Officer and a British Army agent. Nelson, acting for the UDA, went on an arms procurement trip to South Africa in the mid-1980s. A substantial South African consignment of arms was imported into Northern Ireland in late 1987 by the UDA and two other Loyalist groups - some of these weapons have been used in murders since that time.
3. A very disturbing link between a South African government agency and Loyalist paramilitaries emerged in 1989. In April of that year the Government protested in the strongest possible terms to the South African Government because of the involvement of a member of the South African Embassy in Paris, in an apparent attempt by the Loyalist paramilitary group Ulster Resistance to procure

weapons, or funds for weapons, from the South African arms agency ARMSCOR, in return for a model of a Shorts Blowpipe missile which had been stolen from the British Army in Northern Ireland. Although the South Africans did not respond directly, Foreign Minister Botha issued a statement which emphasised his Government's opposition to terrorism and gave an assurance that it was "not supplying arms to any terrorist organisation."

4. Most recently the London "Independent" of 15 July 1992 gave prominence to an incident in April 1992 in which Loyalist paramilitaries reportedly aided undercover South African agents in an attempt to assassinate a political opponent (a former security policeman, now a member of the ANC, living under police protection in Britain). It was also reported by the "Independent" that a subsequent investigation authorised by President de Klerk concluded that those involved acted on their own authority, and that a further investigation was ordered.

5. The Minister may wish to reiterate our deep concern at any attempt to provide weapons, funds or cooperation to organisations or individuals who are engaged in the promotion of their objectives by violent means. In particular, we deplore the involvement of a South African Embassy official in a conspiracy which could only serve to promote terrorism in Northern Ireland. We have noted the views of the South African Government but we would welcome confirmation that the South African Government has taken appropriate steps to ensure a definitive cessation of contacts between officials of the South African government or its agencies and Loyalist paramilitaries.

Anglo-Irish Section
27 October, 1992

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