

Mozambican radio commentary on new S African aircraft (ME/8314/B/1: excerpts)

The South African government yesterday unveiled a new jet fighter plane, the Cheetah, which has been developed in secrecy... The sudden appearance of the Cheetah jet actually strengthens the case for international comprehensive sanctions against Pretoria. The fact is that South Africa relies heavily on external technology, components and plants for its own industry. Ever since the first UN Security Council Resolution calling for an arms embargo was adopted in 1963, Pretoria has boasted of its self-sufficiency in this field. When production of the Impala warplanes began in 1967, it was claimed that they were a genuine South African product. In fact, the Impala was the Aeromacchi MB-326 made under Italian licence. Most of the vital components were imported from abroad, including, initially, the Rolls-Royce engines. These engines were later manufactured in South Africa under licence granted by an Italian firm which had in turn received the original licence from Rolls-Royce in Britain. There are dozens of other examples that demonstrate Pretoria's dependence on foreign technology for the expansion of its military strength capacity. There is no reason to believe that the Cheetah jet fighter is (?any different). It is an upgraded version of the French Mirage which South Africa began producing under licence many years ago. The new development indicates the likelihood of clear breaches of the UN arms embargo.

Such breaches have secretly been made in the past by pretending that military materiel and technology being delivered to South Africa is actually for civilian purposes. This kind of camouflage would be much more difficult to apply if the international community imposed comprehensive sanctions against South Africa. (Maputo in English for Southern Africa 1100 gmt 17 Jul 86)