

THE U.S. AND SOUTH AFRICA: Proposals for U.S. Policy Initiatives

I. SUMMARY: The United States commitment to change in southern Africa must be made clear, or this country will face the international consequences of a de facto U.S.-Apartheid alliance. Therefore, initiatives are needed by the United States in its South Africa policy, especially in view of the widely-held impression that the U.S. provides economic support for apartheid.

1. The U.S. should give aid to the victims of apartheid.
2. Economic support of apartheid should be terminated at all possible points; therefore the U.S. should end its South African sugar quota.
3. The U.S. should not have any installations in South Africa which can be located elsewhere and which compromise racial egalitarianism.
4. The U.S. must consider integrating its Embassy in South Africa.

II. PROPOSALS:

A. The U.S. Should Support the U.N. Trust Fund for South Africa.

In December, 1965, the United Nations General Assembly voted to establish a Trust Fund for South Africa: 95 in favor (including the United States); one against (South Africa); and one abstention (Portugal). The Fund was established both because the scope of South African Government repression against those who oppose its policies had widened; and because it had become increasingly difficult to collect money for relief within South Africa, while external private sources were unable to fulfill the growing need for aid.

The purposes of the U.N. Trust Fund are:

1. To give legal aid to those charged under apartheid legislation. At present there are some 8,000 political prisoners in South African jails, with countless others banned or deported to "transit camps." New cases of need for legal aid occur daily, as well as for funds to challenge the resentencing of people for substantially the same offense.
2. To provide relief for dependents of persons persecuted by apartheid laws. There are at least 50,000 wives, children, and other relatives dependent upon men who have been jailed, banned, or "endorsed out." These families which have lost their breadwinner are virtually without any means of survival, except through outside help.
3. To fund the education of prisoners and their children. Many prisoners attempt to convert their prison time into some positive value by taking correspondence courses. These courses are quite expensive. In addition, children who are not provided with free state education, must have funds to attend school. This is a burden which weighs heavily on their fathers in jail.

It is estimated that between \$500,000 and \$750,000 is the minimum annual requirement for South African defense and aid. As of April 1968, the U.N. Trust Fund had received contributions or pledges worth \$532,102 from a number of U.N. member nations. Large contributors include Sweden (\$196,000); France (\$30,000); Denmark (\$119,000); UK (\$40,000); Netherlands (\$27,000).

Although the U.S. Mission to the U.N. requested an allocation of \$150,000 for the U.N. Trust Fund (and the U.N. Education and Training Program for South Africans), the amount was whittled away during Senate discussions of the Foreign Assistance Act in 1967. It is this type of monetary cutback which should not pass unnoticed, particularly since the United States has spoken out in fervent tones against the evils of apartheid. Congress should realize the importance of contributing to the U.N. Trust Fund for South Africa, not only because the U.S. endorsed the creation of the Fund but because it is our international responsibility as a wealthy nation to aid the victims of apartheid, particularly in view of American economic involvement in South Africa. Recently American government officials including Vice-President Humphrey, condemned the trial of 35 South West Africans in Pretoria as illegal and inhumane. It was the U.N. Trust Fund for South Africa which helped pay for some of the reported \$100,000 defense costs of this trial. The disparity between American condemnation of this specific trial and the lack of American funds for the work of the U.N. Trust Fund is obvious in the paltry size of the U.S. contribution of \$25,000 to the Fund. This one grant would have barely paid for one quarter of the cost of the defense in this one case. It is well understood that future trials, a number of which are in the offing, will increase the need for more and more defense and aid funds channeled through the U.N. Trust Fund.

B. The U.S. should eliminate the quota for South African Sugar.

The sugar quota system: how it works. World sugar prices tend to fluctuate wildly as a result of climatic and agronomic conditions. To assure American consumers a steady supply of this commodity, Congress passed a Sugar Act in 1948. This Act set the terms for the quantities of raw sugar to be bought on the U.S. market through a system of quotas allocated to domestic and foreign producers. In recent years world prices for sugar have been much lower (about 2.2¢ per pound) than the subsidized prices paid by U.S. buyers (about 7¢ per pound). This price subsidy aids not only domestic growers, but also provides handsome profits for foreign suppliers.

The South African sugar industry and the U.S. quota. Until 1961 South African sugars were sold on the British market and given a subsidy under Imperial Preference regulations. Then South Africa became a Republic to avoid British anti-apartheid pressure and left the Commonwealth, thereby losing the preference. Britain now buys no sugar from South Africa.

But in 1962, the U.S. gave South Africa a quota for the first time and granted the South African sugar industry a guaranteed percentage of the U.S. market. This made South Africa the 10th largest foreign supplier of sugar to the U.S. In addition, South Africa has received temporary quotas and prorations amounting to almost double the original quota of 60 million pounds. The Administration wanted the guaranteed quota to be more than three times this amount, but Senator Wayne Morse asked that it be reduced.

The South African province of Natal was built around the sugar industry in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Tens of thousands of indentured Chinese and Indian workers were imported and employed on the white-owned plantations because local Africans refused to work under the conditions offered. That was even before systematic apartheid. The Chinese were eventually sent home while the Indians stayed. (It

was here that Gandhi first used passive resistance.) African workers filled in the gaps. The working conditions were--and remain--poor for the 125,000 laborers. The average field worker's wage, including food rations and housing, equals only 86¢ per day.

Under Title III of the U.S. Sugar Act stringent conditions are set forth for sugar farm laborers including hours, age limits and "fair and reasonable wages." Although Title III applies only to domestic producers, it is hypocritical that the U.S. is willing to import sugar produced under the discriminatory South African system.

About half of South Africa's sugar production is exported. More and more acreage is being planted every year to meet U.S. and other foreign demands. In recent years, however, because of drought, South Africa has imported sugar from Brazil and the Dominican Republic and then resold it to the U.S. -- at profitable subsidized prices.

U.S. Decisions on the Sugar Quota. Each year between October 1 and December 31 the Secretary of Agriculture determines the sugar quotas for the following year, and if necessary, revises these quotas at other times during the year.

The President may withhold or suspend a quota if he finds that "the establishment or continuation of a quota or any part thereof for any foreign country would be contrary to the national interest of the U.S."

... This provision of the Sugar Act was invoked when the U.S. stopped importing sugar from Rhodesia in accordance with the application of United Nations sanctions against that country, and earlier in the case of Cuba. And, of course, Congress has the authority to amend or alter the Sugar Act.

The South African Sugar quota should be terminated! It has been stated that one of the purposes of the Sugar Act is to "permit nearby friendly foreign nations" to enlarge their trade with the U.S. Yet South Africa is not "nearby" and its vicious system of apartheid should make South Africa a country with which the U.S. would not want to be "friendly." Ending the South African sugar quota would reduce the incredible multi-million dollar profits which the white plantation owners receive from the U.S. and eliminate one of the many symbols of American support for South Africa.

REMEMBER: + It is not in the best "national interest" of the U.S. to support apartheid by trading with South Africa.

+ Trade with South Africa should be considered as Trading with the Enemy and placed under a licensing system.

+ An American lobbyist for the South African sugar concerns collected \$24,000 in 1964 and \$19,000 in 1965 for his work in Washington and success in raising South Africa's quota.

+ American consumers could be paying much less per pound of sugar if the quota system were altered.

+ The U.S. could aid developing African nations by importing more sugar from Swaziland and Madagascar, which are already included in the quota system, and from other sugar producers in Africa who are ignored under the present system.

+ The \$3 million or more in annual subsidies to the South African sugar industry could be used to send surplus food to famine-stricken Africans in the Transvaal (S.A.), and to help thousands of refugees who flee from South African apartheid.

What can be done? Write to the following officials asking for the repeal of the South African sugar quota, and when writing to Congressmen ask for Congressional hearings on the quota system and South Africa's participation.

The President of the United States, The White House, Washington, D.C.
The Honorable Orville L. Freeman, Secretary of Agriculture,
Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.

Your Congressman and Senators.

The Members of the House Committee on Agriculture:

The Honorable Frank J. Brasco (D.--N.Y.)

The Honorable John G. Dow (D.--N.Y.)

The Honorable Eligio de la Garza (D.--Tex.)

The Honorable Joseph Y. Resnick (D.--N.Y.)

Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry:

The Honorable George D. Aiken (R.--Vt.)

The Honorable Mark O. Hatfield (R.--Oreg.)

The Honorable Walter Mondale (D.--Minn.)

(Information from AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON AFRICA)

C. The U.S. Should Remove Its Tracking Stations from South Africa.

In 1960 a fifteen-year agreement was signed between the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and a South African Government Agency, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). It established the conditions for three American tracking stations in South Africa: an optical tracking station, a minitrack radio station and a deep space instrumentation facility. Although under NASA's administration, the facilities are operated and maintained by CSIR, and can be used for independent activities by the South Africans whenever it does not conflict with NASA's schedule. U.S. capital investment in the stations amounts to \$14.5 million, while annual operational costs are about \$2 million.

NASA Administrator James E. Webb has stated that the South African tracking stations are of "special significance" because of "their unique geographical location with respect to the U.S. launching complex at Cape Kennedy." But it should be noted that Africa, not South Africa, is the first land mass encountered after Florida. Moreover, according to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, William E. Lang, the work of the stations "has in large measure been completed." Mr. Lang testified that the United States "could live without South Africa," and that although the stations were still useful the "equipment (excluding radar) is in transportable vans and could be removed." In fact, the small space facility on the island of Madagascar could be expanded, alternate facilities sought, and certain naval vessels used to house other equipment.

The location of U.S. tracking stations in South Africa not only implies a certain political myopia in cooperating with the South African authorities and consequently depending upon them, but also demonstrates the ability of the United States to compromise its principles of racial equality. Apartheid at the tracking stations follows the usual South African pattern. Nonwhites are employed only in custodial and groundskeeping jobs, while South African whites have the professional engineering and technical positions. Among the various

American employees at the stations, none has been an American Negro, and the U.S.-South African agreement subjects all U.S. personnel to customary South African immigration regulations. In June, 1965, this issue came to the fore when Prime Minister Verwoerd said that his Government would see to it that the U.S. respect South African customs and laws with regard to the stations. He was referring to a "Whites Only" policy at the stations. The U.S. State Department had at an earlier point warned South Africa not to interfere with the stations and denied having accepted the "Whites Only" policy. But it remains doubtful that the U.S. was ever planning to violate the "gentlemen's agreement" and the brief controversy ended.

Other confrontations with South Africa's racial system have occurred, however, especially in regard to the landing of U.S. naval vessels at South African ports. In May 1965, the carrier Independence turned away from Cape Town upon being informed that integrated aircraft personnel would not be allowed to land. In February, 1967, crew and servicemen on the Franklin D. Roosevelt had their Cape Town leaves cancelled, as a result of civil rights and Congressional pressures on the State and Defense Departments. Their liberty permissions, under the existing South African conditions of apartheid, would have been an insult to the Negroes aboard since fully integrated activities are impossible. A few weeks later the missile-tracking ship Sword Knot avoided landing at Durban for similar reasons and under similar pressures. In all cases the ships were refueled or repaired without having to utilize South African facilities. U.S. policy regarding future stops at South African ports by U.S. naval vessels is "under review," according to Under Secretary of State Katzenbach, but it seems likely that without Congressional awareness and pressure, American ships will land in South Africa and thereby apparently condone apartheid.

The U.S. should clarify its policy on the existence of tracking stations in South Africa and on the use of other South African facilities such as sea-ports, particularly in light of our verbal condemnation of apartheid. Finally, Congress might well consider an investigation into the role of NASA and the Defense Department in influencing U.S. policy toward South Africa.

D. The U.S. Must Consider Integrating Its Embassy in South Africa.

Presently 84 American citizens are assigned to the Embassy in South Africa and its constituent posts. No black Americans have been assigned to work in South Africa. An official in the Office of Southern African Affairs of the State Department has stated: "South African officials have informed us that an American Negro diplomat would not be persona grata at present." The United States has compromised its stated position of assignment by qualification, not by race, to satisfy the racist policies of the South African government and to prevent a n y diplomatic incident with South Africa. Black Americans, of course, would be forced to face apartheid and all its implications and any complaints against this degrading system would cause diplomatic tension. This compromise should make Americans doubly sensitive since it would be highly unlikely that the United States would submit to a request from an African country for an all black staff in an American embassy.

A country with the stated values of racial equality, and with the world influence of the United States, cannot afford to submit to such a concession on this vital issue. Especially at this time in American history, to let South Africa define America's racial policies is directly to insult America's black population.

The American Government must make clear to South Africa that if "business as usual" in South Africa includes blatant racial discrimination and oppression, it is a "business practice" they will discourage, not merely by words but by confrontation if necessary. Surely America is in a strong enough position internationally to say openly to South Africa that black Americans will be employed in their Embassy on a par with the white staff. Nothing could remind South Africa more effectively of the falsehood of their myth of racial inferiority. This would help convince African nations that America is not just resorting to rhetoric to battle apartheid but is willing to use confrontation to prevent a compromise of their moral stand.

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ACTIONS REGARDING AMERICAN COMPANIES IN SOUTH AFRICA:

Over 250 American companies operate in South Africa, including most of the major blue chips. American oil, rubber, and motor companies are each dominant in their sections. In fact, the South African economy and political status quo rests on the confidence of international business, primarily British and American, in the economy. The presence of American business and industry helps produce a thriving and prosperous economy for white South Africa; an economy that has been accompanied by poverty and inhuman and oppressive laws for the African.

The United Nations General Assembly, supported by numerous church resolutions, has advocated economic boycott as one of the few peaceful avenues left for social change in South Africa. Individuals have been encouraged to attend stockholders' meetings of companies involved in South Africa and raise the issue of American business involvement, especially with companies whose exploitation of African labor for high costs is blatantly obvious. (See enclosed list of American companies with 35 priority companies marked. Several options are open to individuals and organizations who have stock in these companies.

1. Collective pressure is much more effective than individual pressure. Therefore individual stockholders or organizations with common concern should work collectively in their strategy toward companies. A first step is to ask, as a stockholder writing a letter, to what degree these companies are involved in South Africa. An attempt should be made to get a detailed breakdown of involvement; e.g., does the company have a factory, a branch office? How large are they? How many employees? Where are they situated? (E.g., are they border industries near the Bantustans?) Subsequent letters or calls would probably look for the following information -- basic questions on: (a) employment (numbers, race, job description); (b) wages: levels by race; (c) benefits: pensions, insurance; (d) unionization policy; (e) Job Reservation -- is this company exempt from the government's Job Reservation Act which limits certain jobs to whites?

2. Secondly, using this information, pressure can be developed to (a) improve working conditions for the Africans in the interim; (b) make the company recognize that their presence supports apartheid and therefore they should not consider any expansion or increased investment in South Africa; (c) look at withdrawal from South Africa as a long-term plan.

Based on information from the American Committee on Africa and research by the Council for Christian Social Action of the United Church of Christ. (June 1968)