

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOUTH AFRICAN
CRISIS AND AMERICAN ACTION

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"AFRICAN CONTINENTAL DYNAMICS
AND INTERNATIONAL PRESSURES"

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the Policies of Apartheid of the Government of the
Republic of South Africa

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Mr. Chairman,

I am happy to greet this Conference on "The South African Crisis and American Action", convened by prominent public organizations in the United States, in order to consider ways and means to contribute towards the end of racism in South Africa.

The Special Committee on Apartheid, established by the General Assembly over two years ago to review constantly the various aspects of the South African problem, and of which I have the honour to be the Chairman, has emphasized the crucial importance of public awareness of the implications and dangers of South African racism to the United Nations efforts to resolve the situation by international action. Economic sanctions, the only effective peaceful means now available to the international community to put an end to this cancer of racism in the southern part of Africa, can be successful only when they are supported by the Great Powers and the major trading partners, as well as the broadest segments of world public opinion.

The United States, as a great Power and a permanent member of the Security Council, bears a special responsibility with regard to mandatory action by the United Nations and the effective implementation of such action. The United States is also the second largest trading partner of South Africa and the second largest investor in South Africa - next only to the United Kingdom - and her support is of the greatest importance for the imposition of collective economic sanctions. Moreover, the United States, as the leader of alliances which include the major trading partners of South Africa, has a crucial role to play in ensuring that all States implement the decision of the United Nations.

We have, therefore, watched with great interest and appreciation the efforts of the American Committee on Africa, and the other organizations sponsoring this Conference, in enlightening the people of the United States on the realities and consequences of rampant racism in South Africa, in expressing solidarity with the efforts of the courageous fighters against injustice in that country and in supporting decisive international action to secure a peaceful and just settlement of the problem.

I need not explain to you the injustice of apartheid - whatever new propaganda terms in which it is clothed from time to time - whether it is "separate development" or "separate freedom" or "orderly and peaceful coexistence". Apartheid means that an African in South Africa has less than a tenth of the income of the White; that African children die twenty-five times the rate of White children; that the cost per African pupil in school is one-fourteenth of the cost per White pupil. Apartheid means that Africans have no vote, except in some subordinate bodies, and that a thousand Africans a day are jailed under so-called pass laws which deny them freedom of movement and employment in their country. Apartheid means that families are broken up and that an African woman cannot visit her husband in town without a special permit from the magistrate certifying her desire to conceive a child.

Above all, apartheid means an endless humiliation of the African people in their own native land by a White minority led by racists who have the audacity to claim to be Christian and civilized.

The people and the leaders of Africa, resurgent after centuries of tribulations, have proclaimed to the whole world that they will not tolerate the humiliation of their brothers anywhere and that the struggle of the South African people is, indeed, the struggle of all the two hundred million people of Africa. Every independent state of Africa has realized that its own independence is not complete so long as the African people remain subject to oppression in South Africa or in the Portuguese colonies or in other territories. The first act of every independent African state in recent years has been to break relations with the regime in Pretoria.

At the Addis Ababa Conference in 1963 and at every African conference, the African States have called on the Powers to choose the friendship of the racists and the colonialists or the friendship of the African people and the independent African States. Africa today is one body: you cannot step on a man's toes and seek to shake his hands warmly as a friend.

We are determined that the dignity of the African people in South Africa should be restored. We are convinced that they will win, by peaceful means if the world is prepared to act in time and with firmness, or by violent conflict if they are forced to choose that path. The whole of Africa will be with them in whatever path they are obliged to choose.

We call for world-wide economic sanctions under the auspices of the United Nations because we prefer peaceful means and economic sanctions are now the only effective peaceful means.

We call for economic sanctions because, unlike the short-sighted racists, we look forward to a future in which all the people of the country, whatever their colour or religion, can live together in harmony on the basis of the recognition of the equality of all men.

While we in Africa feel closest to racism in South Africa, it is not the problem of Africa alone but of all humanity. It is one of the most serious challenges to the very existence and survival of the United Nations.

This problem has been before the United Nations for many years, but there is a growing realization today that this is not just one of the many agenda items or one of the many disputes or crises, but a major threat to international peace.

After the Sharpeville incident five years ago, the United Nations Security Council recognized, in a resolution on April 1, 1960, that the situation in South Africa, if continued, might endanger international peace and security.

The situation has not only continued for five years, but steadily worsened. Despite the Security Council resolution, there was the State of Emergency, the mass arrests all over the country, the banning of the African National Congress and the Pan-Africanist Congress, the Sabotage Act, the 90-day law and a host of other signposts on this descent to disaster.

Indeed, for a few weeks or months after Sharpeville, there was some hope that wisdom would prevail. World opinion was shocked. The stay-at-home strikes by African workers, the tumbling of share prices and fall in the reserves led to hints that there may be a re-assessment. But these hopes were short-lived, as the Great Powers refused to go beyond verbal condemnation of apartheid when the regime in Pretoria mobilized all its forces to suppress the resistance. Indeed, very soon, the main trading partners were vying with each other for trade with South Africa, offering her loans and rushing to invest in the country. They have supplied an enormous amount of war material and the military budget of South Africa today is five times what it was at the time of Sharpeville.

The people of South Africa have been left with no choice except to resort to violence in their struggle for elementary rights.

As the regime in South Africa refuses to deal with them as people but relies on its arms and its allies, the situation is fast moving towards a violent conflict. Let there be no doubt that a conflict in South Africa will not remain local and limited, but will inevitably have the most serious repercussions in Africa and, indeed, the whole world.

Many eminent statesmen have drawn attention to the danger of a "race war" sparked by apartheid in South Africa.

The United Nations Group of Experts on South Africa, led by Mrs. Alva Myrdal of Sweden and Lord Caradon, the present British Minister of State at the United Nations, wrote in its report:

"The coming collision must involve the whole of Africa and indeed the world beyond. No African nation can remain aloof. Moreover a race conflict starting in South Africa must affect race relations elsewhere in the world, and also, in its international repercussions, create a world danger of first magnitude."

United Nations Secretary-General U Thant declared in Algiers on February 3, 1964:

"There is the clear prospect that racial conflict, if we cannot curb and finally, eliminate it, will grow into a destructive monster compared to which the religious or ideological conflicts of the past and present will seem like small family quarrels. Such a conflict will eat away the possibilities for good of all that mankind has hitherto achieved and reduce men to the lowest and most bestial level of intolerance and hatred. This, for the sake of all our children, whatever their race and colour, must not be permitted to happen."

Sir Alec Douglas-Home, then Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, said at Southampton on 24 April 1964 that "the greatest danger in the world today - as deadly in its way as the atomic bomb - is the threat of racialism."

Lord Caradon, British Minister of State at the United Nations, declared on October 23, 1964, that in his opinion, the greatest danger facing the world was "racial conflict beginning in Southern Africa and involving the whole of Africa, and eventually the whole world."

"This is far beyond anything we have seen before in the Congo or Cyprus or Suez. This is a much bigger possibility of a colour war in which the world will inevitably be involved. It will not be sufficient to have a hastily-raised force to deal with the disorders on a vast scale."

In fact even Dr. Eric Louw, the well-known former Foreign Minister of South Africa, said on December 11, 1964:

"It seems to me that the world is forming up for a war between Whites and non-Whites."

In this context of the danger of a world-wide conflict undermining the very existence of the United Nations and all our hopes for sound relations between Africa and the West, the South African situation takes on a new and greater significance. It is not merely a problem of justice or human rights in one country, but of the future of humanity itself.

We are given various arguments and explanations as to the difficulties of enforcing economic sanctions. But the efforts and the sacrifices required are negligible compared to the dangers of inaction. The problem is not whether the world can afford to impose economic sanctions but whether it can afford not to take decisive action when peaceful means to stop the conflict are still feasible.

We are most distressed that instead of supporting the strongest international pressure and action, the main trading partners of South Africa continue to do business as usual. We wish to warn them that there will be no lucrative trade and no juicy profits when the day of reckoning comes, if they have been identified as friends of the present regime.

Speaking here in Washington, the capital of this great nation, I wish to make an earnest appeal to the people and government of the United States to realize the seriousness of the South African situation and to weigh every aspect of relations with South Africa on the basic test as to whether it promotes a solution or strengthens racism. You have come to understand the grave implications of discrimination at home: Africa has warmly welcomed your efforts to correct the situation. But we appeal to you not to ignore the implications of relations with the racists abroad.

The African States and the Special Committee on Apartheid have warmly welcomed the decision of the United States in 1963 to stop arms shipments to South Africa.

We welcome the decision of the United States to discontinue joint exercises with the South African Navy. We welcome the decision of the United States to continue multi-racial receptions at its embassy in Pretoria.

But much more needs to be done.

The foreign trade figures show a substantial rise in United States trade with South Africa. We ask you to consider seriously whether this helps to perpetuate apartheid or to bring it to an end.

reports

The news/on American investments in South Africa are extremely disquieting.

During the past two years, precisely since the General Assembly resolution of November 6, 1962, requesting Member States to cut off economic relations with South Africa, a number of American companies have announced large-scale investments in South Africa.

Ford Motor Company is investing over \$11 million; General Motors \$42 million; Chrysler, \$35 million.

Caltex is building an oil refinery in Cape Town. American companies are also engaged in exploration for oil in South Africa.

The Newmont Mining Company and the American Metal Climax are putting in some \$38 million into the copper mining project in eastern Transvaal.

American banks have increased the revolving credit to South Africa.

An agreement has been reported on the assembly of American aircraft in South Africa for use by the police and the armed forces.

These are but a few of the dozens of recent American investments in South Africa.

I would appeal to these corporations and others who may be contemplating investments to think of the implications and consequences.

These investments are going into such fields as automobile industry, and petroleum industry, which are being developed so that South Africa can resist economic sanctions and build up its military power for bloody suppression of any resistance by the people. The South African Government regards them as votes of confidence in its policies. They are being made against the earnest appeals of Chief Luthuli and other African leaders and against the decisions of a great majority of the United Nations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The crisis in South Africa is extremely explosive and fraught with the gravest consequences for the whole world. The government and people of the world have been patient for too long and the Great Powers have been indecisive. We can afford no further delay in taking decisive action.

I wish your conference all success in devising the means to promote such action.
