

U.S. Policy and South Africa

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The problem of United States Policy on South Africa is the problem of the limits of power, which, turned inside out, is the problem of the limits of responsibility. The parameter of the discussion may be stated as follows: The activists, or interventionists, argue that the United States, as the most powerful nation on earth, as the leader of the Western world to which South Africa belongs, and as the second most important trading partner and capital supplier of South Africa, must bear a part of the blame for the continuation of the policy of apartheid which the United States government condemns. As against this, the advocates of restraint remind us that our country, powerful as it is, has neither the right nor the power to shape the world in its own image, that the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations is a sound one, and that we have a long way to go in guaranteeing human rights to our own citizens before undertaking to do so for those of other nations.

I shall attempt first to show that the dilemma posed by the non-interventionists is a false one and then to indicate the dimensions of feasible intervention. Let me make it clear, at the outset, that I am speaking of something less than unilateral, military intervention.

It can be freely conceded that no country, however powerful, can in today's world take it upon itself to enforce its notions of right conduct upon all other countries. The days of the word of God made manifest by the sword are, happily, gone, although their semantic traces linger on in our diplomatic language, as on the frequent occasions when our official spokesmen lapse from talk of national security into talk of making the world safe for freedom, democracy or human dignity. Such talk is senseless, not because these ideals are not worth fighting for, but because no nation in modern times has ever fought to secure them for others. In other words, every time our country has employed force against another country in the twentieth century, we have operated on the domino theory, on the assumption that, if we did not make a stand there, we might eventually be unable to make a stand here.

It will do no good, therefore, to argue with our policy-makers that we have a moral responsibility so to use against or withhold our power from South Africa as to bring down the evil edifice of apartheid. They want to know: how much of a threat is it to us?

In order to answer this question, we must graduate from dominoes to chess, a step which our government seems either unwilling or too busy to take. The first disastrous consequence of our inaction on South Africa is the continuing loss of American prestige and goodwill in the rest of Africa. Professor Franck will deal with this aspect of the problem in a few minutes. The second reason for acting now, rather than later, is that now there is still time: time to align the United States with South Africa's government of tomorrow,

time to avoid bloodshed on a scale unprecedented in modern African history, time to avert the risk of escalation into world conflict, perhaps even time to create a genuinely multiracial society in South Africa. Most important, if we intervene now on the side of those fighting for the ideals we cherish, we may, for once, be spared the agony and humiliation of later intervening on the side opposed to them. It simply will not do to say, as Ambassadors Stevenson and Flimpton have repeatedly said in the UN debate on sanctions: South Africa is a danger to peace, all right, but not a clear and present danger yet. When it becomes clearer, and when it is upon us, there will be time enough for sanctions, which should only be invoked as a last resort.

The reason this approach will not do is that, by the time a potential trouble spot in the world of the sixties erupts into crisis, it enters the cold war and when it does that, we find ourselves on one side - and more often than not the wrong one - not because we want to be there, but because our cold war adversaries have backed the other side first.

So far as the South African issue in the United Nations is concerned, the United States has been the country that just can't say yes. For twelve long years, from 1945 to 1957, we refused to talk about South Africa's racial policy in any but the vaguest terms, abstaining on votes of censure and seeking to shift the discussion from specific measures to lofty platitudes. In 1959, Mr. Charles A. Sprague had this to say, in opposing, on behalf of the American delegation, the creation of a UN Commission on the Racial Situation in South Africa:

"Let us not impute evil purpose or lack of intelligence to the people of South Africa ... We would leave enforcement to the lively conscience of the citizens of each country and to the power of the public opinion of the world".

Incredible though it may seem now, it was not until 1958, when South Africa had been on the UN agenda for thirteen years, that we took the bold step of going along with an expression of "regret and concern", while finding "condemnation" still too harsh a term for our diplomatic sensibilities. Sharpeville was a turning point: On March 22, 1960, five years ago to the day, the State Department, in an unprecedented - and since unrepeated - departure from diplomatic protocol, issued a statement outside UN channels, deploring "violence in all its forms", expressing the hope that "the African people of South Africa will be able to obtain redress for legitimate grievances by peaceful means" and voicing regret at "the tragic loss of life resulting from the measures taken against the demonstrators". Thereafter, it became impossible for our delegation not to join, in the General Assembly and the Security Council, in the repeated, almost universal, expressions of revulsion at the turn-back-the-clock, head-in-the-sand, world-opinion-be-damned policy of the South African government. Still, whenever we have been challenged to back our words with action, we have, with the few exceptions noted below, found reasons for abstaining or voting "no".

Here is part of the sorry record:

In the Fifteenth Assembly (1960-1961), the United States voted for resolutions urging the Union of South Africa to cease arbitrary imprisonment and deportation of South West Africans, (A/Res. 1564) and condemning the notorious police action in the Windhoek location (A/Res.1567), but abstained on a resolution inviting the Committee on South West Africa to investigate conditions on the spot and make recommendations for peace and self-government (A/Res.1568).

In the 16th Assembly (1961-1962), the United States partially reversed its previous stand on South West Africa by voting for a resolution to establish a Special Committee on South West Africa (A/Res. 1702), but voted, in the Special Political Committee, against a draft resolution recommending sanctions, and helped to defeat amendments to another resolution which would have called the Security Council's attention to the South African situation as a threat to the peace and called upon member states to deny South Africa support, in the form of arms, and petroleum.

In the 17th Assembly (1962), a resolution calling on member states to break diplomatic relations with South Africa and boycott South African goods was adopted by a vote of 67 in favor, 23 abstentions and 16, including the United States, against (A/Res. 1761). The United States also failed in efforts to amend a resolution condemning South Africa for its continuing refusal to cooperate with the UN with respect to South West Africa, and calling the situation there a threat to international peace and security. The US - sponsored amendments would have substituted the words "deeply deplores" for "condemns" and would have categorized the threat to the peace as potential rather than actual. After the defeat of these amendments, the United States did vote for this resolution in its original wording (A/Res. 1805).

In the 18th Assembly (1963), the United States, along with every other member except Portugal and South Africa itself, voted for resolutions condemning South Africa, asking it to grant unconditional release to political prisoners, appealing to members to contribute to

relief and assistance to the families of those persecuted for opposition to apartheid, and asking the Security Council to consider the critical situation in South West Africa (A/Res. 1881, 1978, 1979). However, on a resolution stating that "certain powers or certain financial groups" were lending continuing encouragement to South Africa, urging member states to refrain from

supplying petroleum to South Africa and asking for an investigation of the role of international mining companies in South West Africa, we voted "no", in the company of only five other countries, Portugal, Spain, South Africa, France and the U.K. (A/Res. 1899).

In the 19th Assembly of recent, unhappy memory, there was, of course, only one vote, and that not on South Africa.

The one major step which the United States has taken in compliance with the call of the world community for action against South Africa has, paradoxically, helped to highlight the inherent hypocrisy of our position. On August 2, 1963, Ambassador Stevenson announced in the United Nations that our government had instituted an embargo on the sale and shipment to South Africa of arms and military vehicles, to become effective at the end of 1963. For if we determine, as a matter of national policy, that the government of South Africa is so repressive, so insensitive to world opinion, as to warrant the drastic and unusual measure of placing a ban on the sale of arms through private channels, how can we go on denying that the situation warrants the withholding from South Africa of other forms of private American assistance which the South African minority uses to perpetuate its reign of terror against the overwhelming majority of the citizens of that country? No one, least of all official Washington, believed that an American arms embargo would make South Africa militarily impotent, given the variety of other sources available, particularly from Europe. Yet our position with respect to restraints on trade, investment and the flow of technology is that, so long as such bans are not uniformly imposed by all the countries with which South Africa has commerce, it would be an empty gesture for the United States to "go it alone". What strange morality is this, which says "We need not remove ourselves from the murderers' side, for if we do so, others will take our place?" How doubly strange, coming from the people claiming the leadership of a large portion of mankind. On the blockade of Cuba, on the admission of Communist China to the United Nations, on participation in the Vietnamese war, we have not hesitated to engage, among our allies, in some of the most stupendous arm-twisting efforts in history. Why then this unseemingly coy coyness about exercising leadership, among the Western alliance, on behalf of a policy which has been endorsed and pleaded for by a clear majority of the United Nations and which we ourselves concede would be just and practical if universally adopted?

Let us now consider what steps our government could take if it had the will to take them.

1. Diplomatic Relations

The optimum objective here would be to follow the example of Pakistan, India and the United Arab Republic in breaking off diplomatic relations entirely. A realistic objective would be for our State Department to apply its considerable ingenuity to the task of

demonstrating our disapproval of the policies and conduct of the South African government, in various ways falling short of a complete break.

If it is precedents we want, there is no dearth of them. Although South Africa's Jewish community is second only to that of this country in its financial contribution to Israel, that country recalled its ambassador to South Africa over a year ago, has not filled the vacancy and does not propose to do so while apartheid endures. Chile has taken a similar step. Yugoslavia, Costa Rica, Czechoslovakia and the Philippines, as well as several African countries, have all broken consular relations. Japan, which was considering opening an embassy in South Africa some years ago, decided against it.

Granted that the huge volume of U.S. economic involvement with South Africa requires some sort of official U.S. presence, must it be at the ambassadorial level? Even if it is unofficial policy in certain State Department quarters - as it seems to be - to cool the ardor of American business circles for an even greater slice of the South African profit pie, how seriously can businessmen be expected to take that policy while we continue to maintain a full diplomatic establishment in the Republic?

Our diplomatic and consular establishment currently numbers about forty, including the embassy, located alternately in Pretoria and Capetown, and consulates in Capetown, Durban, Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth, but excluding military and USIA personnel. This compares with about the same number in Nigeria and thirty-three in Congo-Leopoldville.

Must we have all four consulates? Would it have been impossible to close one or two, with an official protest, when South Africa continued executing defendants in political cases in defiance of a U.S.-supported UN resolution asking her to release political prisoners?

Thought should also be given to closing the USIA libraries at Capetown and Johannesburg. If they are being operated in order to influence whites to our official views on race matters, we are wasting good taxpayers' money, which could undoubtedly be used to better purpose in some other part of the world. If it is the non-whites whose friendship we are trying to win, the best thing we could do would be to close the libraries as a public protest against the policies of their oppressors.

At any rate, closer attention should be paid to the manner in which the libraries currently operate. Are their facilities available and operated on an integrated basis? Do they employ American Negroes in supervisory capacities? Do they make available reading matter which is banned from the newstands, or do they conform with the decisions of the South African government as to what makes "safe" reading and viewing? How do they report the racial scene in the United States?

2. Direct Government Controls on Economic Involvement

The Export Control Act of 1949 (as amended) provides that "it is the policy of the United States to use export control... to further the foreign policy of the United States and to aid in fulfilling its international responsibilities". Other applicable legislation is contained in the Trading with the Enemy Act. So far, not a single step has been taken, under these or other laws, to implement our announced national and international responsibility with respect to South Africa.

Let us, again, distinguish between the desirable goal and the one capable of attainment. The former would consist of a complete embargo on the export to South Africa of all goods, services, capital and technology. The latter would consist of a selective embargo and would merely be a logical extension of the arms ban already in effect. Petroleum, as well as commodities, machines and technology needed by South Africa for the local manufacture of arms and other military equipment, are the first logical candidates for this kind of selective embargo.

Other types of possible control, none of which present insuperable legal or constitutional obstacles, would include a complete or partial ban on imports from South Africa and the closing of U.S. ports to South African ships.

One intriguing possibility for federal action lies in the field of FEPC legislation: are American firms eligible for government contracts if their foreign subsidiaries engage in racial discrimination in hiring and promotion, as those subsidiaries operating in South Africa are compelled to do? If they are eligible under present legislation, should they continue to be?

Other avenues for direct government action to be explored concern the tariff treatment of goods produced by non-unionized Africans under near-slave labor conditions, and the treatment of dividends, capital gains and royalties originating in South Africa. We have various tax incentives designed to increase the flow of American capital into certain countries; why not tax disincentives designed to accomplish the opposite purpose with respect to certain other countries?

3. Indirect Government Controls on Economic Involvement

Recently, the President called to the White House top executives of more than one hundred of the leading American companies engaged in foreign business and asked them henceforth to use restraint in making investments and loans abroad, as a contribution to our balance of payments deficit. Is it too much to hope that, on some similar occasion in the near future, the President (or the Secretaries of State or Commerce) will ask these same business leaders to approach

future investments in South Africa with the same kind of restraint, as a contribution to the fulfillment of our international responsibilities and to the improvement of the American image abroad?

A Congressional resolution on this subject, while less effective, would also be useful. Without some such official guidelines, corporate managers, including those who personally find the system of apartheid distasteful, would find it difficult to justify to their stockholders any decision not to take advantage of the extraordinary profit opportunities beckoning from South Africa. At least one top officer of an American company engaged in an important new project in the Republic has privately expressed this view.

4. Education and Training

One of the questions most frequently asked about South Africa by non-African experts is how it can be prevented from becoming another Congo. It usually turns out that, in the back of the questioner's mind, is the fear that, when control of the country vests in the non-whites, as it eventually must, they will be unprepared to exercise such control. The analogy is incorrect to the extent that the number of educated Africans, proportionately and absolutely, is far higher in South Africa than it was in the Congo when that country suddenly became independent in 1960. On the other hand, it is a fact that South Africa's non-whites have never been allowed to develop educationally at anywhere near the same pace as the white minority and, particularly in the last decade, the government has embarked on a deliberate and increasingly successful effort, built around the infamous Bantu Education Act, to set an absolute ceiling on the educational achievement of the non-whites.

Thus, there will be a shortage of cadres when freedom comes to South Africa, although it will not be as acute as in the Congo. But this time, we will not be able to blame the Belgians. What is needed, therefore, is a program of training and education vastly superior to the token effort now being undertaken by our government. Eager and able students of all ages are available wherever there are South African refugees; if any more were needed, they could easily be obtained from South Africa without the consent of the South African government.

So far as aid to education and training are concerned, we should be dealing with the South African nation of tomorrow as if it were here today, for all the same reasons for which we give such assistance to other underdeveloped countries. The only thing which stands in the way of our doing so is respect for the present government of South Africa, than which no government on earth is less entitled to respect.

5. Exchange of Persons

The flow of South African visitors brought to our shores under the State Department's Cultural Exchange Program and the

somewhat smaller reverse flow of Americans going to South Africa continue unabated. During the last two years, only about 20% to 30% of those coming here from South Africa have been non-white. In previous years, the percentage was even smaller. A statistical breakdown of this program follows:

South Africans Brought to the United States

	<u>1949-1963</u>	<u>1964</u>
Educational Travel	2	--
University Study	88	13
Advanced Research	10	--
University Lecturers	3	--
Specialists	24	4
Leaders	<u>72</u>	<u>4</u>
Totals	199	21

Americans Sent to South Africa

	<u>1949-1963</u>	<u>1964</u>
University Study	3	--
Advanced Research	2	--
Teaching and Teacher Development	3	--
University Lecturers	13	1
Specialists	<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>
Totals	26	2

At the same time, leaders and representatives of the opposition, of the very groups who, according to our statements in the United Nations, have our sympathy and moral support, are denied access to the State Department and the White House, on the ground that this is not in accordance with diplomatic protocol.

The excuse offered for the continuing influx, at U.S. government expense, of members of the white, South African power structure is worse than lame; it is argued that exposure to American democracy at work may open the eyes of the South African visitor to the virtues of a egalitarian racial policy and so contribute indirectly to a reversal of his government's policy. Why not offer free courses in law enforcement to members of the Mafia?

Insofar as we do manage to bring in a certain number of non-whites, the comment made above with respect to the USIA libraries operating in South Africa is applicable.

6. Aid to Refugees

The United States has a long and honorable tradition of aid to political refugees, through private as well as public channels. In each of the last several years, our government has spent close to one hundred million dollars for this purpose, not one of which,

so far as can be ascertained from official publications, has gone to help the thousands of refugees from South Africa who are straining the already burdened welfare facilities of various newly independent African countries. We do make it possible for a certain number of refugee students to come to and study in this country. At the moment, thirty-eight refugees from South Africa and twenty-four from South West Africa are studying in the United States under this program. This, however, does not alleviate the problem of the thousands of individuals and, in some cases, entire families, who have risked their lives in order to save their lives, by escaping across South African police lines to Bechuanaland, Swaziland, Basutoland and thence to Ghana, Tanzania, Malawi, Kenya, Zambia and elsewhere. In each of the years 1963 and 1964, we spent \$4,000,000 to help Tibetan refugees. Will we spend half that amount in 1965 to help South Africans?

It should be noted that the United States has, so far, failed to respond to the appeal for funds to aid the families of the victims of apartheid, made by the Special Committee on Apartheid pursuant to a UN resolution adopted in 1963 (see p. 3 above). Several other countries have responded, including Sweden, which pledged \$200,000.

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In outlining some of the lesser steps which I believe our government should be pressed to take concerning South Africa, it has not been my intention to concede defeat with respect to the one and only step which, in my view, can bring about a non-violent solution in South Africa, the announcement of our readiness to support collective sanctions if the Verwoerd government persists in its blind and stubborn defiance of world opinion and common sense. I believe, rather, that these steps, interplaying with various efforts in the private sector which I hope to see emerge from this conference, will create a climate of opinion in this country within which the discussion of sanctions can be pursued with ever increasing likelihood of effectiveness.

Much thinking in Washington today, we are told, hinges on the South West Africa case currently pending before the World Court, which was on the agenda this morning. If that thinking is along the line that an unfavorable decision by the Court, followed by non-compliance by South Africa, will make it possible or imperative for the United States to alter its policy and take some real action on South Africa, well and good. If the thinking is that the pendency of the court case is merely a convenient reason for delaying any decisions, until new reasons are found for new delays, things are worse than even the Cassandras among us suspect.

I should like to end with a long question. One hears it said these days, by official spokesmen and their interpreters, that

our purpose in Vietnam is to demonstrate that "Communist-inspired wars of liberation" will no longer be tolerated, whatever the cost, and wherever they may break out. If this is now the official policy of the United States, if we fail to bring the Nationalists to their senses, by the withdrawal of American economic support and by collective action through the United Nations, thereby making an armed uprising inevitable, how many Chinese guns, Soviet ambulances and Algerian volunteers will we allow the African freedom fighters to receive (in the absence of any support from us), before we decide that theirs is "a Communist-inspired war of liberation"?

Washington, D.C.
March 22, 1965