

March 1981

U.S. POLICY ON SOUTH AFRICA

The new United States administration has said that it has not yet formulated an Africa policy. American ambassador to the United Nations Jeane J. Kirkpatrick has stated that the USA is not prepared to debate the Namibia issue in the Security Council. British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington is reported to have urged Secretary of State Alexander Haig to make clear to Pretoria the US's determination for a peaceful solution in the International Territory. Haig - perhaps obsessed with El Salvador - did not respond. One instance of the US's attitude toward South Africa emerged in mid-February during debate at the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva. We print below excerpts from a statement by US representative Richard Schifter. It reflects the already existent support for 'evolutionary' change, the ritual 'abhorrence' of apartheid and, most important, condemnation of 'terrorism'. On 23 February, Schifter abstained on or voted against five resolutions calling for action against South Africa and in support of SWAPO in its liberation struggle in Namibia.

'Mr Chairman, the United States cannot endorse a system that is racist in purpose or effect. As long as the South African Government pursues actively and as a matter of policy the maintenance of a system of apartheid, my government will not develop the type of relationship with South Africa that we, and others, might wish.

'I will not chronicle the abuses under which a majority of South Africans must live. I am sure that other speakers here today will do so. What I do wish to concentrate upon is my government's belief that there is hope in the future for a peaceful process of change to occur in South Africa. To encourage that process, we will not turn our backs to this crucial issue nor indulge in moral posturing or idle gestures.

'As we look to the future, we can all agree that evolutionary change is necessary, not only because the system of apartheid offends fundamental values, but because any system which seeks by law and policy to keep 85 percent of its people in a subordinate position is unworkable and doomed to failure. But how do we then seek to encourage those in South Africa who support this course to gain and hold the initiative?

'Mr Chairman, strident rhetoric and the calls for radical actions are not useful in this undertaking. If there is no dialogue, the international community will not be heard within South Africa. Such rhetoric might encourage those prone to violence or further alienate those in South Africa who hold steadfastly to the status quo. Neither of these groups will enjoy our support. We cannot and will not aid or abet terrorism or terrorists, nor will we assist those who consistently stand in the way of change.'

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FROM PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN'S INTERVIEW ON C.B.S. TELEVISION CONDUCTED BY WALTER CRONKITE, TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 1981, IN ANSWER TO QUESTION ABOUT SOUTH AFRICA AND HUMAN RIGHTS:

THE PRESIDENT: 'No, no, I think that there's been a failure maybe for political reasons in this country to recognize how many people, black and white, in South Africa are trying to remove apartheid and the steps that they have taken and the gains they have made. As long as there's a sincere and honest effort being made based on our own experience in our own land, it would seem to me that we should try to be helpful....Can we abandon a country that has stood beside us in every war we've ever fought, a country that is strategically essential to the free world and its production of minerals we all must have and so forth...I just feel that, myself, that here if we're going to sit down at the table and negotiate with the Russians surely we can keep the door open and continue to negotiate with a friendly nation like South Africa.'

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE SUPPORTS A FREE NAMIBIA

The Episcopal Diocese of Alabama comprises the northern and central parts of the state of Alabama. It has since 1978 maintained a close relationship with the Anglican Diocese of Namibia and with the Suffragan Bishop there, the Right Rev. James Kauluma. Episcopalians in Alabama are well aware of the situation in Namibia and of the International Territory's military occupation by South Africa in defiance of the lawful authority, the United Nations. The Convention of the Alabama Diocese, meeting in Anniston on February 15, 1981, passed a resolution on Namibia by a 3 to 1 majority. We print here the operative sections thereof:

BE IT RESOLVED, that this One-Hundred and Fiftieth Annual Convention of the Diocese of Alabama request the Bishop to create a diocesan Committee for Namibia which shall be charged with the responsibility of monitoring political and social developments in Namibia, particularly as they affect the life and mission of the Church there, to inform the people of this diocese of such developments on a regular basis, to send assurances of our support to the Bishops and people of the Anglican Church in Namibia, and in consultation with our Bishop to send messages of concern regarding policies of our Government that affect the Namibian situation to appropriate persons in the legislative and executive branches of our Government; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Convention supports those United Nations resolutions which call for an immediate cease-fire and for free and fair elections in Namibia under the supervision and control of the United Nations; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Convention urges the United States Government to use its strongest influence, including economic sanctions against the Republic of South Africa if necessary, to insure that South Africa will cease to interfere with the process leading to freedom, independence and self-determination for the people of Namibia; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be sent to President Reagan, the Secretary of State, Senators Heflin and Denton, and all Alabama Representatives in the Congress.

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FOR A FREE SOUTHERN AFRICA

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