

BUSINESS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
SOUTH AFRICA: THE EVOLVING CHALLENGE  
TO INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES

"BLACK DEMANDS"

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The US grass roots debate on constructive  
engagement and opposition to apartheid

Debate about South Africa and discussions about how best America can express its repugnance of apartheid has from a South African point of view finally taken shape as a debate by Americans about Americans for American party political purposes. In saying this, I am not in any way detracting from what very real and genuine interest there is in America in Black South Africa's suffering. There is genuine interest and for that we are grateful. But even those genuinely interested in doing something effective to assist the Black struggle for liberation in South Africa are now more often than not caught up in the web of party political interests in the United States.

Now that the Reagan Administration has enunciated a distinct policy towards South Africa which preceding Administrations had not done, debate about South Africa is being generalised at the grass roots level. As Mr. D.G. Austin of the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London says: "There is a vague notion in America that South Africa is like Georgia." The generalised debate appears to us to be resurrecting political sentiments and stances which are reminiscent of American domestic politics 20 years ago. White Americans are feeling the need to proclaim their rejection of racism on moral grounds and Black Americans appear to be resurrecting the kind of Black American solidarity which they experienced 20 years ago.

As a Black South African observer, it would appear to me that Black Americans use anti-apartheid sentiments as an expression of the reemergence of Black Consciousness in America. There is increasingly a re-identification with Africa amongst Black Americans, who are also using anti-apartheid as a means of highlighting their moral repugnance of racial discrimination, which they still encounter in the USA. There is a significantly high representation of the American Black middle class in the American protests.

Black South Africans would tend to agree when "The Economist" of 30 March 1985 states that anti-apartheid in America has taken on a life of its own, with ill-informed participants showing little or no interest in the practicalities for South Africa of what they are doing in the United States.

At one level, anti-apartheid activity is being used by left-liberals to lambast the Reagan Administration's conservatism. This is particularly evident in the Democrats' opposition to constructive engagement. President Reagan's crushing electoral victory has damaged the Democratic Party ego and the anti-apartheid lobby and the disinvestment lobby is being used by Democrats to increase their solidarity. The issue has become a unifying one around which a reorganisation of liberalism is taking place - a sociology Professor at Berkeley claims that the issue has precipitated greater faculty-student unity than anything since Vietnam.

One of the important components of the anti-apartheid protests in America is the extent to which protest activity focuses resistance to the re-emerging conservatism amongst White Americans. Anti-apartheid protest is serving, in the words of Mr. Randall Robinson, to "Develop a demanding constituency in this country for a different Reagan policy: the Reagan administration has almost entirely shut out Blacks." White nationalism is on the upsurge, says Courtland Milloy in "The Washington Post". Apartheid is thirty years old, and Americans have seen no need for this scale of protest before. Says Rep. Parren Mitchell "People are seeing the way Reagan supports the White South Africans and the way he treats Blacks here and are beginning to make a connection between the two."

While in a holding cell after being arrested outside the SA Embassy, Congressman Walter Fauntroy was asked by another prisoner why he was so concerned with South Africans when the

problems for Blacks in America were so bad, reports "The Washington Post". His answer discloses a further, though less publicised dynamic to the protests. In his answer: "... (we) talked of the link between the loss of American jobs to the cheap labour pools of South Africa and high joblessness here. As steel imports from South Africa increased, for example, jobs in the steel industry here are lost."

Clearly then, the anti-apartheid activism in the USA has become firmly entrenched as a domestic political issue serving a domestic political agenda. For this very reason the disinvestment issue has become a difficult one to handle. Support of constructive engagement has become synonymous with support of Reaganism, and while many do in fact support American foreign policy towards South Africa, making this public could easily be construed as support for other aspects of Government policy. The issue is a particularly difficult one for Democrats who would be seen to be betraying their Party if they supported constructive engagement.

I am making these preliminary remarks well aware that today's discussion is not about America but about South Africa. What I will go on to say is endorsed in Inkatha and by millions of Black South Africans. I have initially, however, to point out that Black South Africans are saying something significantly different to what Black Americans like Randall Robinson are saying. I am asking us to distinguish between Black South African views and an American presentation of those views. It is Black South Africans - ordinary Black South Africans, rank and file grass root people - who bear the yoke of apartheid and to whom the international community must entrust the South African struggle for liberation.

#### The South African Government's response to the need for change

The pace at which the Government is responding to the desperate need to bring about change pushes the prospect of normalising South Africa as a civilised, democratic, industrial country into the remote future.

- The South African Government still insists that the country is a country of minority groups and entertains no thoughts about a single democratic system of government in a unified state.
- The South African Government still insists that the Whites as a minority group have got the exclusive rights to final decision-making in 87 per cent of South Africa which they appropriate for themselves.

## The bottom line questions

The bottom line discussion about South Africa today must be discussion of the questions whether circumstances for the politics of negotiation are propitious enough; whether the climate being created by the now-recognised White dependency on Black and Black dependency on White is in fact favourable enough to bring about a negotiated future, and whether or not the Government of South Africa has read the writing on the wall clearly enough to make them grasp the thorny nettle of change firmly enough. I simply do not know the answers to these questions.

When you take everything the Government has done; when you take everything the State President has said; when you take everything that Dr. Viljoen has said; and when you take everything that Mr. Chris Heunis and Mr. Pik Botha have said, and you read it all together, you read only that the Government recognises the need for change and expresses the will to change. But when you isolate that which has been done and examine it in the cold light of day, the first step towards real change has not been taken.

Until the South African Government assures leaders such as myself that it is prepared to negotiate about the sharing of power in the real sense of those words, there is simply no negotiating table. I was appalled by Mr. Chris Heunis' statement to a press conference for diplomats and foreign and local media representatives on the 24th May 1985. He outlined the Government's strategy in an eight point plan. These are:

1. Commitment to a negotiated search for peaceful solutions.
2. The maintenance of democracy.
3. Political participation for everybody in all decision-making processes affecting their lives.
4. Determination to prevent domination of one group by another.
5. Rejection of discrimination on the grounds of race, colour or religion.
6. Determination to remove it.
7. Endorsement of the principle of sovereignty of law.

8. Pursuit of a joint declaration of intent to emerge from negotiations.

To the uninformed or to the wishful thinkers these points seem to indicate a revolutionary departure from previous National Party thinking. Mr. Heunis says in his point 3 that the Government is committed to political participation for everybody in all decision-making processes affecting their lives. This remains a classical apartheid statement and is a rejection of the notion that Blacks and Whites need to share power. There is no decision taken by the South African Government which does not affect the lives of every one of the country's citizens. This point attempts to preserve the fatal flaw in the new constitution of dividing interests into "own affairs and "general affairs." This statement by Mr. Heunis precludes me from any negotiating table around which he would want to sit. And the point I am making is reinforced by Mr. Heunis' last point in his eight-point plan for a new South Africa. The last point he made was the Government is committed to "the pursuit of a joint declaration of intent to emerge from negotiations."

Before I am prepared to go to a negotiating table, I want to know what I will be negotiating about. Unless I know that all the negotiators around the table have accepted the need for power-sharing between Black and White at all levels of government, I know that there will be nothing worth negotiating about. Mr. Heunis finds himself in the unenviable position of having chaired a Special Cabinet Committee which has attempted to negotiate within his meaning of the word, and now finds that he has in fact been playing constitutional marbles. Mr. Heunis will have to have the courage to tell the people he has attempted to negotiate with that real negotiations have not yet begun. I stand among a group of important South Africans waiting for real negotiations. Dr. Gerrit Viljoen who is present here today will yet have to bear the cross which Mr. Heunis is placing on his shoulders. As Minister of Co-operation, Development and Education, he has direct responsibility to millions of Black South Africans which cannot be discharged because of Mr. Heunis' inability to grasp the thorny nettle of change firmly enough.

The problems of government are always exacerbated during times of transitional politics. The management of change is always problematic for a Government and the management of radical change is a task any government attempt to steer away from. The South African Government is no different from any other government and shows every sign of pussy-footing around issues which should be handled with open certainty. It has not as yet taken a single step

towards power-sharing with Blacks and it has made no statement of any intention to do so.

#### Black reaction to reform moves

There is such widespread rejection of the new constitution that one is justified in talking about it as a total Black rejection. The new constitution has hardened Black political attitudes, increased Black anger and strengthened radicalism in Black politics. The vehemence with which Inkatha, UDF, AZAPO and the External Mission of the ANC reject the new constitution is not a passing vehemence and it is not simply political posturing. Inkatha as a membership organisation of almost a million members is in touch with Black opinion in every walk of life, and every Inkatha leader knows that the Movement would shed support overnight if we did anything to legitimise the new constitution while it:

- contains racially demarcated constituent elements
- recognises that White South Africans have exclusive rights to final decision-making in 87 per cent of the country
- does not bring into being a national parliament jurisdiction over the whole of South Africa as we know it.

There may be differences between South Africa's Black political groupings about tactics and strategies in the struggle for liberation, and there may be differences of opinion as to what kind of future South Africa is envisaged, but being a Black political activist is sine qua non with being an opponent of apartheid.

In looking at Black political organisations in South Africa, one must realise that differences in tactics and strategies are related to visions of the future. The ANC's Mission in Exile aims to establish a revolutionary government presiding over a Marxist State. The United Democratic Front aims to establish a popular government over a socialist state and they share this view of the future with AZAPO, although they differ with each other about terminology, and are in fact killing each other, and differ about the role of Blacks in the struggle. All three of them are anti-capitalist and all three of them share at minimum the view that the country must be made ungovernable so that we can start from scratch with social, political and economic engineering.

Inkatha has never adopted a view about the nature of the South African state in medium or in long term. I hold that it is the people's prerogative to organise their society along the lines of their choice. I have the kind of faith in ordinary people which enables me to look at short-term and medium-term goals without fearing that they will make long-term goals impossible to achieve. I believe that you cannot make South Africa ungovernable without doing irreparable damage to the country's economic growth base, and I believe that pragmatism demands the recognition that the free enterprise system, certainly in short and in medium term, and perhaps for longer, is vitally necessary to sustain real economic growth and to underpin real reform in radical change.

I share with millions in South Africa, and many more millions across the world, a deep humanitarian concern for the quality of life of ordinary people in South Africa, and a flourishing economy under a free enterprise system is for me and millions of others an essential concomitant of humanitarian concern. My rejection of disinvestment as a strategy however goes much further than humanitarian concerns. If the South African economy collapsed now, and the country was made ungovernable, it would simply remain ungovernable. A Massive influx of investment and a phenomenally high growth rate in the economy would not only serve humanitarian needs, but would ensue the medium and long-term governability of South Africa. There are vital political reasons why the South African economy should be boosted.

This is a view that is rejected vehemently by the ANC's Mission in Exile, by the UDF and by AZAPO. I am committed to tactics and strategies which will work today and which will not prejudice tomorrow, and I say simply that leaders in South Africa have no option but to let the day after tomorrow look after itself.

#### **The real challenges facing Black South Africa**

The real challenge facing Black South Africa is not to:

- develop protest politics as a central political strategy
- prepare for an armed struggle which has been a myth for 25 years and will be a dream for another 25 years
- make South Africa ungovernable which will destroy the foundations on which future governability must depend.

The real challenges facing Black South Africans are to

- mobilise and organise Black constituencies which have bargaining power
- develop the politics of democratic opposition as an essential precursor to democratic government.
- root all policies, all strategies and tactics and all visions of the future in membership-based political movements.

That is why I have:

- called for a multi-strategy approach
- called on the State President to release Nelson Mandela unconditionally and unban individuals and organisations
- insisted that artificial apartheid barriers be dismantled which have been thrown up in divide and rule tactics so that Black South African politics can be normalised on a national level.

There will be no classical revolution in the country for as far as one can see ahead, and for as far as one can see ahead, the calls to use violence for political purposes and the calls to armed struggle will only divert Black South Africa from concentrating on that which urgently needs to be done in the here and now.

It is the harsh reality of oppression under apartheid which has distilled Inkatha out of Black experience. These same realities will continue to strengthen Inkatha and will distill other membership-based political movements out of ongoing Black experience.

It is far easier to find a coward behind a gun than it is to find a coward among those organising and leading democratic opposition to apartheid through non-violent means. It is easier to find those who totally despair among the ranks of those in the armed struggle than it is to find them amongst achievement-orientated democrats working within the harsh realities of South Africa to bring about change through non-violence.

## The need for the South African Government to make a Declaration of Intent with Black leaders

Black South Africans are not inclined to believe in promises of real reform. There is nothing in the National Party's track record which inspires Black South Africans to believe that the Government is serious in its intentions to bring about any real reforms.

The State President in a televised interview with Mr. Brian Walden as recently as Sunday, 29th May said that he will not accept a unitary state even if it is a federal union. He said White South Africans would not share power with Blacks in a sovereign parliament. He insisted on seeking solutions within a formula which accepts the rights of Whites to occupy and control 87 per cent of the country. He reiterated his commitment to the distinction between "own affairs" and "general affairs" and he clearly indicated that what he regards as general affairs could only be discussed between Blacks and Whites in consultative mechanisms, and he confined joint Black/White decision-making to the instruments of government such as the Development Bank.

This distinction between "own affairs" and "general affairs" is a distinction enshrined in the country's constitution. So-called "own affairs" is specified in Schedule 1 of the constitution as:

- social welfare
- education
- art, culture and recreation
- health matters
- community development
- local government
- agriculture
- water supply
- appointment of marriage officers
- election of members of the House of Parliament (relevant only to Indians and Coloureds as Africans are excluded entirely from the parliamentary process.
- finance in relation to own affairs
- staff administration
- auxilliary services necessary for administration
- the rendering of services with the approval of the President

General affairs is the residue of everything not covered by "own affairs." In his television interview, the State President said that he was prepared to talk about joint decision-making with

Blacks as far as it was possible (his words) only about things which affected their lives, i.e. about things which the constitution defines as "own affairs."

The State President went on to state that he has no intention of changing the present character of South Africa. To me, this was a mouthful. The present character of South Africa is what the whole world is screaming at South Africa about. It is what the Black liberation struggle is about. Apartheid is the present character of South Africa.

Quite clearly if this is the extent to which the Government has committed itself to share power and if these are the outer parameters it has prescribed as restricting the kind of changes which can be anticipated, then the country is heading for total disaster. That is only the end product we will have unless wiser counsels prevail, notwithstanding the State President's latest pronouncements.

I am absolutely certain that the politics of negotiation between Black and White in South Africa will not begin until the Government commits itself publicly to a programme of reform in a declaration of intent which Blacks are prepared to co-sign with the State President. I have been chided from a number of quarters for not hearing the State President as being fully committed to bringing about meaningful change. Those who thus chide me are not aware of the deep distrust which exists in Black hearts and minds about the stated good intentions of the National Party. I would be abandoned by my constituency if I turned to them and asked them to put Black South Africa's future in the hands of the State President because I believed he was a good fellow and would not let them down. Black/White co-operation in bringing about the kind of changes the country so desperately needs will remain beyond reach for as long as the State President refuses to put his name to a clear statement about the end product of the reforms he is now attempting to introduce.

#### The nature of the Declaration of Intent needed

The politics of negotiation demand that we drop all but the vital non-negotiable positions. A statement of intent therefore should be broad in scope and it should be such that it defines the minimal points of agreement beyond which negotiations can search for agreement on wider fronts. Because I have been asked so often what I mean by a statement of intent, I have now drafted the kind of

agreement which I am talking about as an indicator of the kind of document which could break the South African Black/White political logjam. It is a tentative draft because any statement of intent that will serve a purpose in South Africa would have to be co-authored by the signatories to it. I have taken the step of drafting a Declaration of Intent which I believe could serve as a discussion document. It is no more than a rough idea of what I have in mind when I talk about a statement of intent which I think the State President should author before negotiations between Black and White are possible. It reads as follows:

#### DECLARATION OF INTENT

We the undersigned hereby declare our commitment to serve God in obedience to His divine will for our country and together:

Recognise that:

- The history of mankind shows the need for adaptive change among all peoples and all nations.
- Nations which have managed to avoid the use of violence in the achievement of national objectives are the nations which have grown in wisdom.
- Both mistakes and lessons not yet learned led to errors of judgement in the mainstream politics in both the Black and White sections of our society.
- The South African people are a family of mankind, seeking to live in harmony in the African community of nations and seeking to do so by expressing civilised ideals in the practical social, economic and political affairs of our country.
- The South African constitution as it is now written is by force of history and reality a first step in constitutional reform which urgently needs the second step to be taken of enriching the constitution to make it as acceptable to the broad mass of African opinion as it has been made acceptable to the broad mass of White opinion.
- The Westminster model of government was not ordained by God to be the only form of good government.

We therefore accept:

- The need to make the preamble to the South African constitution of equal value to all the groups and peoples of the country by enriching the clause: "To respect, to further and to protect the self-determination of population groups and peoples" to include the notion that this can best be done by sharing power. We need to share power in such a way that no one group can dictate to any other group how to express its own self-determination, and we also need to share power in a formula within which the hallowed values of good government are not compromised.
- The need to preserve the constitutionality of the adaptive democratic process on which we will jointly rely in being subservient to the divine will for our country.

We will therefore together seek:

- To negotiate as leaders to amend the South African constitution to make it acceptable to all groups.
- To find an alternative political system to that which the world at large understands by the word 'apartheid' and also to seek an alternative political system in which universal adult suffrage is expressed in constitutional terms acceptable to all the peoples of South Africa.
- To give expression to the common citizenship of all South Africa's peoples without qualifying the meaning of citizenship for any group.
- To use the opportunities presented in practical politics at first, second and third tier levels of government to fashion national unity by deepening the democratic process, and to use the democratic process in explorations of what needs to be done to get the people to legitimise the instruments of government.

We therefore pledge ourselves:

- To express national pride and patriotism by insisting that South Africans will decide South Africa's future in the acceptance of each other as individuals and groups and the acceptance of each other's cultural rights to be who they are.

- To start where we find ourselves in history and to move from there to build on all that is positive and valuable and to change that which is negative and undesirable.
- Each to work in our own constituencies to develop a South African pride in managing our own South African affairs in harmony with internationally accepted standards of civilised decency without being dictated to from without.

Having thus declared we stand together to defend our right even with our lives to take the steps and the time needed to establish consensus between groups and to win support for our joint efforts in the South African family of nations.

And furthermore to stand together to defend South Africa from external onslaughts and to stand together to resist any use of violence which threatens the politics of negotiation aimed at national reconciliation."

As I have already explained, this is not a blue-print of what the State President should declare as a statement of intent.

There is undeserved Black generosity in this draft. In it I take a bold step forward and I sincerely believe that if the Government responded positively and accepted this kind of statement of intent, the mass following I enjoy could be persuaded to back me in the attempt I made to negotiate the kind of future they all so long for. A refusal by the Government to sign such a statement will alienate me and my constituency. The ball is now in the Government's court. The recent pronouncements of the State President leave me despondent, not just about whether change will take place, but about whether the fundamental changes which are so overdue can be implemented in time, if the State President is still so wedded to ideological apartheid.

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