

ADDRESS TO PRESIDENT AND FACULTY MEMBERS  
PITZER UNIVERSITY

19TH FEBRUARY 1985.. CALIFORNIA.

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"APARTHEID AND AMERICAN STRATEGIES AND TACTICS IN THE  
STRUGGLE FOR A JUST SOCIETY IN SOUTH AFRICA"

Because there is heightened debate about apartheid and American responses to it, it is appropriate that I talk about a Black South African perspective of South African/American relationships and President Reagan's policy of constructive engagement. For many years I have lamented the fact that the United States never had a defined policy towards South Africa. This is my twelfth visit to the United States and I have long recognised the need of America, as the world's leading democracy and as the world's most powerful nation, to accept the responsibility of doing something constructive and effective to assist the Black struggle for liberation and to become a factor in the process of change in South Africa.

As a politician involved in the politics of reality I recognise that Western nations formulate foreign policy around their national vested interests. I know of no Western Government which has been toppled because it mishandled the South African situation, and I know of no Western political party which has won or lost a national election because of its stand on the South African issue. And yet wherever I go Western party politics takes cognisance of the South African situation and in the vast majority of instances where I have seen this happen, I have noted that South Africa is largely a pretext for raising issues of national policy. Every Western country has citizens who are concerned about the morality of their Government, and the question of apartheid has frequently been raised by pressure groups as an issue with which to challenge the morality of government.

For a great length of time there has been an apparent concern rather than a real concern over apartheid. Western Governments seem to discharge their obligations as they see them by making the right noises at the United Nations, making the right statements at Prime Minister or President level, being sympathetic to Black South African refugees, and to one or another extent devoting a portion of the funds that are available for development aid to South African organisations working for change. Black South Africa has experienced a kind of international tokenism, a kind of symbolic opposition to apartheid, and we are aware of the extent to which real political, material and diplomatic aid to South African exiles has been withheld.

Black South Africa sent a Mission into Exile from the African National Congress, and for a decade or more, they knocked on Western doors in vain and finally turned to the socialist world for succour and support. The way the West treated the Mission in Exile was indicative of the symbolism of its politics. Apartheid in South Africa has endured in one form or another for nearly three generations and it is only now latterly that there are any signs of real concern leading to possible practical and constructive involvement in bringing about change in South Africa. Decade after decade the West evidenced a kind of impotence to assist in bringing about change, and to a very real extent the West was hypocritical in its condemnation of apartheid as it supported successive South African Governments who were busy with the deepening, broadening and extension of apartheid measures by Whites in the interest of Whites at the expense of Blacks in South Africa.

South Africa was created by Western influences. It was the British Government which presided over the Act of Union and supported the disenfranchisement of Blacks and it was all the Western nations put together, whose immigrants took up residence in South Africa, whose industries invested in South Africa and who profited from trading with South Africa.

We Black South Africans suffer the very strange disadvantage of not having been colonised long enough by a Western power. In the sixties and seventies when the West withdrew from colonial Africa, they withdrew in the circumstances of which the coming of independence was a concomitant fact. Because Britain withdrew its colonial interest in South Africa long before the great exodus from Africa, and left behind her an entrenched White minority elite, the whole political process in South Africa is radically different to the process elsewhere. White South Africans supporting successive South African Governments continued racist colonial practices long after Western countries had abandoned these practices elsewhere. Today Britain only accepts a vague moral responsibility for the position she herself created in South Africa, and other Western nations see South Africa as something out there in the distant part of the globe which they did not create, and for which they are not now responsible.

It is against this background of perceptions that Black South Africans must necessarily see the Reagan Administration's avowed aims to become constructively engaged in helping to bring about change in South Africa. From my point of view, I say this is a step which should be encouraged. As yet, I do not know how constructive the American engagement is going to be, and I am becoming increasingly concerned that the constructiveness of the engagement will be impaired by the policy being challenged at the party political level, instead of the policy challenging Americans at the national level.

America can survive without any interest in South Africa. American business could survive if it disinvested. The massiveness of American wealth gives it the luxury to choose whether to be involved or not to be involved in South African affairs. If it is going to be involved, and I think it should be involved, then it is imperative that Americans take apartheid out of the party political arena in the United States and mount an all-party effort to be involved constructively, and to be involved on the side of those who are striving to bring about fundamental change in the right direction.

The question obviously is what constructive engagement amounts to and as I know White South Africans, the policy that will have to be adopted must be characterised by a carrot and stick approach. So far we have seen a lot of carrot and little stick, but when one starts considering what sticks are available to the Reagan Administration, or to any other Administration which may follow this one, we run up against a twofold difficulty. State Department officials have told me over the years that the American Government does not interfere in the internal affairs of other nations, and reminding them of Viet Nam and American involvement in South America did not seem to present a convincing argument. It has been American policy not to interfere in the internal affairs of South Africa, and if there are to be any sticks behind the carrots of a constructive engagement policy, that is something which the Americans will have to reconsider. That then is one difficulty in looking at what sticks are available with which to beat South Africa.

The other difficulty is that sticks when used must be used against the culprits in apartheid society, and not against the victims of apartheid. The disinvestment stick may rap Pretoria over the knuckles but it would thrash Black South Africans and in both the medium and long term would be counter-productive. The isolation of South Africa economically and politically may in fact do no more than build a wall of immunity around White apartheid protagonists, and leave the South African Government in a position of encapsulated strength to be as brutal as they have ever been in the past. The economic sanction stick simply cannot only be aimed at White knuckles. Not only will it be a stick which thrashes Black South Africans, but it will hurt neighbouring States very much more than it will hurt White knuckles.

We have in Southern Africa truly impoverished nations such as Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mocambique. President Machel's signing of the Nkomati Accord and the fact that he has had perforce to take emergency action to re-open trade links with South Africa, is surely in itself an indication to Americans that they must think very seriously before attempting to do any damage to the South African economy.

Sanctions which do not hurt the economy and which do not bite deep

enough will not threaten Pretoria and force the National Party to abandon apartheid. The principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of South Africa and the absence of sticks which will hurt only White knuckles are questions which Americans will have to look at.

I would like to express the view that we find a dividing line between the principle of non-interference in a foreign government and the principle of providing humanitarian aid in circumstances of desperate need. Constructive engagement with South Africa if it is going to be productive of fundamental changes and the ultimate eradication of apartheid, will have to be enacted primarily through Black South Africa. America can lean on South Africa diplomatically and it can threaten and cajole, but when it comes down to a positive, practical involvement in the process of bringing about a just society in South Africa, Americans will have to choose Black working partners.

The State Department and universities in the United States will have to do a lot more research and commission a lot more research by South Africans about the nature of the political process and about the tactics and strategies which are constructive in bringing about change and which can be supported by a democracy such as the United States. I am deeply committed to bringing about change through non-violent means because I simply do not believe that our only alternative as Blacks is to opt for the politics of confrontation, violence and the armed struggle. I draw a very clear line between killing for political purposes and conducting a just war. For me, while there is even one stone which is unturned on the road to democratic, non-violent change no people have the right to resort to violence to bring about change.

I see South Africa as now beginning to shape up and becoming ripe for the politics of negotiation. The harshness of apartheid has always rested on economic and territorial apartheid. The obnoxious homeland policy was evolved under the misguided conception that White South Africa would become whiter over time and that Whites could establish a self-sufficient economy in which Blacks were simply migrant labourers. Disillusion has now been dispelled. There is now a total dependence of Whites on Blacks, not only as unskilled or semi-skilled migrant labourers, but there is today a dependence on Blacks which necessitates them being given a permanent location in so-called White South Africa and them in fact forming the majority of citizens in so-called White South Africa. The South African economy will ever-increasingly become the arbiter of what can or cannot be done politically. At this juncture of our history, we have passed the point beyond which White survival itself depends on Whites gaining Black co-operation. Blacks in turn are totally dependent on Whites and this irradicable, deeply rooted interdependence of Black and White creates the circumstances in which the politics of negotiation will become an ever-increasing necessity.

If Americans can do anything at all it is to help increase the bargaining power of Blacks, and the best way of doing this is by them devoting every possible and available resource to the development of Blacks in an economy which is assisted to grow vibrantly.

I have never judged my brothers and sisters to the north of me who have opted for a socialist future. Theirs is the right to choose as they wish and I must respect any nation's choice about how they wish to conduct their affairs. Black South Africans just do not have the luxury of that choice. As much as the spirit of Ubuntu-Botho in my own culture, which is a spirit of humanism, makes a decent socialist state attractive to me, all reality dictates that South Africa will remain locked into the north/south economic axis and that the free enterprise system can only be jettisoned with dire consequences. Black South Africa's population is growing at the rate of over three per centum per annum and until such time as socio economic circumstances curb birth rates, this rate of population expansion will remain a reality. This high birth rate level has already evidenced itself in the fact that over half of the 22 million Africans in the country are 15 years old and younger. When this population bulge moves into the reproductive years of its life, we will witness yet another vast increase in the Black population. In the world over, it has been shown that population increases diminish with prosperity and that they remain high in poverty. There is no prospect whatsoever of this new generation of young people, moving inexorably towards the reproduction phases of their lives. Having a birth rate curbed by affluence. Population growth rates are exponential and any curb on the productive capacity of the South African economy will condemn many millions of Black South Africans, and a great many more millions in the next generation, to abject poverty and inhuman circumstances.

I see the free enterprise system as the most potent instruction of economic development available to us and my responsibility to living people and not to Utopian ideals dictates that I accept the fact that we have no choice in the matter and that we have to continue to employ the free enterprise system to maximise the productivity of the economy.

This foretells a dramatic increase of White dependence on Blacks. Whereas as little as a decade ago job reservation was still on the statute books, now not only are there massive government-sponsored Black training schemes; not only does industry do everything in its power to develop Black technological skills, but it is now recognised in government, and in industry, that in future it will be absolutely essential to recruit Blacks into professional positions and into supervisory and managerial positions. If America as a capitalist democracy believes in its own values, then it should assist to bring about change by providing massive support for educational programmes and other betterment programmes.

The prosperity of Black society foretells apartheid indigestion, and the deepening of Black poverty foretells conflict, violence and strife which could assume such proportions that a race war and scorched earth policies on both the Black and White sides will set not only South Africa but the whole of Southern Africa back for many generations.

I have advanced a Black point of view, and I want to conclude by saying that this point of view is a point of view authenticated by millions of Black South Africans. As a Black leader I speak with the authority of one who is the President of the largest Black political organisation ever to have emerged in the country. If Americans have any respect for democracy at all, they should heed the voice of Inkatha. Inkatha's card-carrying membership has nearly reached the million mark and I make no pronouncement abroad which does not carry the judgment of my people. Whenever I return from abroad, I return to my people to report what I said in their name. What I have said today has not been said as my own view as an individual. Every value I have expressed and every attitude I have evidenced, are values and attitudes which are not only supported by Inkatha's Annual General Conferences, but are views and attitudes which gain me mass acclaim when I express them at Inkatha rallies in places like Soweto in the heartland of industrial South Africa where there is the largest concentration of Blacks in the country. I express the same views there as I express here and the people who attend my rallies in their tens of thousands support me to the hilt in what I am saying. I plead with Americans to continue their debate on South Africa with a deep awareness of what is at stake for us there, and ultimately what is at stake for the many millions of impoverished people in the whole sub-continent.

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