

External Affairs
Supplementary Paper

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APARTHEID POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA

Statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin, in the Special Political Committee of the United Nations, on October 18, 1963

Mr. Chairman,

The progress of the debate and the overwhelming vote in favour of Resolution 1881 of last Friday can have left no doubt of the desire of every member of this Assembly to induce the South African Government to change its racial policies. However, while we are all agreed upon the objective which we wish to achieve - the realization of a free society in Southern Africa with equal rights for all individuals and races - there is no agreement on the means to this end.

There have been demands from some members that South Africa should be expelled from the United Nations or that the Security Council should impose other sanctions on South Africa in order to force its Government to change its policies. Because we believe that the South African Government's racial policies are abhorrent and degrading and offensive to human dignity does not mean that the best remedy is to force South Africa outside the boundaries of the world community. Expulsion would make it even more difficult to persuade the white population of South Africa to seek a way out of their present untenable position and could conceivably intensify the difficulties of the non-white population. (In this context, a reminder of Prime Minister Pearson's statement in plenary on September 19, 1963, was made here.)

This Assembly has a most serious responsibility in this matter. My Delegation believes that only if we act with restraint is there any possibility of convincing the present Government of South Africa of the necessity to come to terms with the great movement of independence and freedom which has swept through the continent of Africa during the past 20 years. If we pass a resolution condemning South Africa's policies but calling for action which, because of lack of unanimity regarding the means to be employed, in practice will not be carried out, we will be closer to a peaceful solution to this problem.

There have been a number of ideas expressed in this debate which, if developed further, might show the way towards the solution of this problem. Of particular interest has been the suggestion that a means must be found to reassure the white minority that if they grant political rights and, ultimately, political power to the black majority, they will not in turn themselves become the victims of racial discrimination. Perhaps we should be asking ourselves - why does the Government of South Africa persist in a policy which is universally condemned? There is clearly no ready single answer. But one can ask - is fear one of the principal reasons? If this is so, we should be concerned that the motives which impell us to speak on behalf of those now deprived of human rights will have equal application in relation to any violation of human rights for which provision is made in the Charter. It is in this sense that the Danish proposals are particularly perceptive.