

The sanctions dilemma

into already painful wounds. South Africa enjoys a healthy balance of payments surplus with its neighbors in the order of \$1 billion a year — more than enough to cover its overall balance of payments deficit. As in the case of South African threats to send foreign mine workers home — which would severely disrupt production in one of the few buoyant economic sectors — the resultant cost to South Africa would be substantial and unpopular to an already shaken business community. There could be many South African companies closing their doors the morning after such action.

Making sanctions work

For sanctions to be effective, three general objectives must be met. First, they should be introduced in stages to maximize their political impact inside South Africa. Second, this staging should reserve particular measures to be implemented should South Africa take “retaliatory” steps against its neighbors. Third, they must be stronger than the largely symbolic measures which most Western nations have so far introduced.

As a relatively minor economic actor, Canadian influence in the sphere of economic sanctions is potentially more decisive within the international community, than with the South African government directly. A program of planned sanctions with wide international backing has a much greater chance of success than isolated actions by individual states. In particular, a Conservative government should continue to press its British counterpart to get Britain — South Africa's biggest economic partner — to join an international program of sanctions. A willingness to contribute Canadian sanctions in an international package, and to act whatever the response, is a good starting position.

Canada should be working through the six-nation Commonwealth Group set up at the Nassau Summit in October, but also with likeminded EEC and Nordic states to construct a new plan for southern Africa. The goals of this plan are not difficult to define. Most important is recognition by the South African government of authentic black leaders such as Tutu, Tambo and Mandela, with all this would imply for political liberalization, and round table discussions to end apartheid. In addition the military

and economic attacks on neighbors should cease, and internationally agreed rights of access to the sea for landlocked states should be respected.

Ways to help

Canada could also take a direct role in mobilizing greater assistance to the SADCC states, which will suffer from the economic downturn in the Republic regardless of the outcome of sanctions. It could also work with other major SADCC supporters to develop contingency plans for emergency economic assistance to keep supply lines open. Zimbabwean troops are playing a vital role in securing the Beira and Maputo rail lines through Mozambique, with other countries such as Britain providing military assistance. Canada could concentrate with the EEC and Nordics in upgrading transport facilities themselves — if need be through special road and rail services — and helping Mozambique and Zimbabwe to bear the foreign exchange costs that this special defence effort would require.

Canada should be looking at the next steps in its own imposition of sanctions. A ban on agricultural imports from South Africa would hit a sector for which Canada is a significant market and where substitutes are readily available. A ban on the procurement of South African goods by federal agencies and institutions would be easy to implement.

Finally, Canada could downgrade its diplomatic relations with South Africa without damage to its potential role in the region. Correspondingly, it should signal its support for those South Africans who believe that the ANC is essential to the future of the country by upgrading its contact with the ANC from junior official to ministerial level.

In one year the Conservative government has gone farther than anyone expected in forcefully opposing apartheid. It has gotten the words right and some of the actions too. It will require tenacity and statesmanship to maximize Canada's influence on a myopic South African government, with recalcitrant allies and vested economic interests at home. The coming year will tell whether the government hides behind these real difficulties, or takes them on. □