



Statements and Speeches

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THE FUTURE OF NAMIBIA

Statement by Stephen Lewis, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations, to the Security Council at the Fortieth Session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, November 15, 1985.

Mr. President. Thank you for the opportunity to address the Council. Canada, as a non-member, does not often speak before this body. We do so today because of the issue before the Council. This is not *pro forma* intervention: Namibia is of deep and abiding concern to us.

Since the Council last considered this question in June, the government of South Africa — alas, predictably — has continued to defy the international community. Events inside Namibia however, can give South Africa no cause for satisfaction. The illegal regime, installed without free and fair elections, has failed to gain legitimacy and has fulfilled our collective original prophecies by proving utterly ineffectual.

It could not of course be otherwise given the regime's patently unrepresentative nature. We are compelled to ask: how many times must the experience be repeated before South Africa learns the lessons of history; lessons starkly illuminated by the experience of decolonization in Africa?

Coincident with this debate, the Council has been presented with a note from the so-called "Transitional Government of National Unity", under covering letters from South African authorities, indicating a preference for an electoral system of proportional representation. Since this must be considered as the position of the South African government — begrudging though the language in which it is couched may be — it is welcome. But as always, as my colleagues from Denmark and the United Kingdom have so swiftly pointed out, South Africa encumbers every marginal step forward with the shackles of regression. In this case, we have a not-so-veiled attack on the impartiality of the Contact Group, and a re-assertion of linkage. Neither tactic is acceptable, and South Africa knows it.

In any event, there is a more immediate consideration. Now that South Africa has found an electoral system to its liking, where are the elections themselves? Why should they not now take place? What further reason could possibly justify delay? We don't ask these rhetorical questions to lend credence to an illegal regime; we ask them in order to suggest, as all countries around this table know, that every supposed advance must be measured against the duplicity which it may conceal.

When the Council considered Namibia earlier this year, it recommended a number of measures to governments to which Canada reacted with concrete steps. Our response is aimed at demonstrating the depth of Canada's opposition to South Africa's continued illegal occupation of Namibia, and at maintaining the pressure on South Africa to set a date to implement Resolution 435.
