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NOTES FOR A SPEECH

BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOE CLARK,

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,

AT THE

CENTRE DE RESSOURCES UNIVERSITAIRES

EN DÉVELOPPEMENT INTERNATIONAL

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Secretary of State  
for  
External Affairs

Secrétaire d'État  
aux  
Affaires extérieures

Canada

I welcome your invitation to speak to you about Canadian policy in South Africa. As you know, Prime Minister Mulroney and I pursue an activist foreign policy, trying to assert Canada's interests and our influence on issues ranging from trade, to the environment, to international debt. But we have given a particular priority to the fight against apartheid, and some Canadians wonder why. South Africa is, after all, half a world away. There are other systems which practise oppression. There are other countries which permit brutality. Why should Canada focus on South Africa? There are three main reasons.

First, apartheid is a singular abuse of human rights, in that it enshrines racial discrimination in its law and constitution. That is unique in the world and should be of particular concern to western democracies because the constitution that enshrines racism draws its legitimacy from its roots in western values. The Soviet Union does not pretend to be part of the West. Burundi does not claim to be part of the developed world. South Africa does, and should be judged by the standards to which it aspires.

Second, the violence which apartheid engenders could tear apart the whole of Southern Africa. The Eminent Persons Group of the Commonwealth warned that action is urgently required "to avert what could be the worst bloodbath since the Second World War". Each side has weapons. Each fears the other. Each is tempted by its own extremists. For each, apartheid is the central issue. If it is not ended peacefully, there will be, sooner or later, a catastrophe.

And finally, this is a catastrophe which Canada can help prevent, an injustice we can help correct. One of the frustrating realities of foreign policy is that many issues are beyond our influence. We can't stop hurricanes. We can't decree an end to disease. We can't order sovereign countries to respect their citizens. The challenge, for a practical foreign policy, is to identify the problems we can influence and then apply that influence constructively, creatively. More than a challenge, we believe that is the duty of a country like Canada, whose people enjoy a wealth and a freedom denied to most of humanity.

That is why this Government has acted, systematically and deliberately to increase the real pressure against apartheid. We have sharply cut our trade, often at cost to Canadians. We have increased aid and other support to the victims of apartheid. The Prime Minister made an unprecedented trip to Africa, to meet the leaders of the Front Line States, and to symbolize, by his presence, that apartheid is opposed by whites as well as blacks, by leaders of the Economic Summit as well as by the Front Line States. No other western leader, no previous Canadian Government, has been more active or effective in the fight against apartheid. That record makes Canada's leadership even more important now.

There is a genuine debate now about the most effective next step for Canada in the fight to end apartheid. The Prime Minister has made it clear, in the United Nations, that if other measures fail, Canada is prepared to end all economic and diplomatic relations with South Africa. Some Canadians argue that we should take that final step immediately because, coming from Canada, it would send a signal which could not be ignored, either by South Africa, or by other countries whose policy affects South Africa.

We take that argument seriously, and judge it in the context of the special role which Canada plays in the fight against apartheid. The purpose of Canadian policy, after all, is not simply to express a Canadian opinion; our purpose is to change a South African policy. We want to end apartheid, end it peacefully, see it replaced by a genuine democracy in South Africa.

It is easy to condemn apartheid. The real challenge is to find practical ways to end that racist system. Obviously, Canada's opinion and example are important. But opinion and example are not the end of our influence.

There are two other major elements of Canada's influence.

One is the help we give the victims of apartheid, and the opponents of apartheid, on the ground in Southern Africa. That is material help, in the form of aid and education and information. It is also the psychological support we provide through an active Canadian presence. For example, there is a growing view, among the opponents of apartheid in South Africa, that it is valuable to them to have a Canadian embassy in that country

The second element of our influence is in leading other countries to increase international pressure against apartheid. We know the reality that the most significant pressure would come from South Africa's largest trading partners - Britain, the United States, Germany, Japan, and others. Most of those countries are not going to change their policies dramatically. But they are changing them gradually, and part of the reason is that countries like Canada use our influence on our friends to urge more pressure against apartheid. The last two Economic Summits had apartheid on the agenda, because Brian Mulroney insisted. The package of measures adopted by the Commonwealth was designed carefully to encourage South Africa's major trading partners to increase their own pressure against apartheid. The Commonwealth now is embarked on a program to make sanctions more effective and more widespread, and Canada plays a leading role in that initiative.

The apartheid system will not end suddenly. There must be steady, increasing pressure. Canada is almost uniquely placed to lead the application of that steady pressure. We are the only country in the world to belong simultaneously to the Commonwealth, La Francophonie, and the Economic Summit, and we are leaders in each. We have earned the credibility with both Summit countries and the Front Line States, and we use that credibility to build pressures against apartheid. That is a very important role, which could be put at risk, if we took ourselves out of South Africa. The time may come when we must break relations as we served notice we are prepared to do. That would send a strong message but could also end our influence. It is a judgment call. For the time being, in our judgment, it is better to stay and apply our influence.

Obviously, it is not enough simply to have an influence on the world campaign against apartheid. We must exercise that influence, and provide leadership in a steady application of new pressures against apartheid.

The Commonwealth Committee of Foreign Ministers on Southern Africa, which I have the honour to chair, has the mandate to recommend ways to widen, tighten and intensify the economic sanctions.

At our recent meeting in Toronto, we considered an interim report from an expert group studying the impact of sanctions. It confirmed that sanctions do have an impact - that the South African Government is beginning to feel the pinch. To improve the effectiveness of sanctions, though, the Expert Group made a number of proposals.

Most important perhaps is to encourage other countries to adopt the Commonwealth package of measures, including particularly the ban on the import of coal which represents 8% of South Africa's exports.

South Africa will be increasing its efforts to evade sanctions. Thus, we agreed that countries should be examining the need for stricter customs scrutiny and higher priority for investigating sanctions violations. Heavier penalties may be needed as well as increased publicity to violations as a deterrent. There may also be technology transfers which help South Africa to circumvent the important arms, oil and computer sanctions. We have to take account of them, and close any loopholes.

These and several other proposals are being addressed by officials. For example. Customs Canada has successfully prosecuted several companies for customs violations.

The Commonwealth study on South Africa's relations with the international financial system demonstrates the financial squeeze South Africa is facing. It identified sources of financing which may be cushioning South Africa's balance of payments difficulties. Ministers agreed on steps to help remove that cushion and increase economic pressure on South Africa.

For Canada's part, the Government already applies to South Africa the same loan loss provisioning requirements which we apply to the most heavily indebted countries, although South Africa would not normally fall into this category. We no longer provide export credit insurance to South Africa and will be encouraging countries who still do to stop the practice.

The cooperation of the Canadian banking community has been essential to our efforts within the Commonwealth to have effective financial sanctions against South Africa. Their voluntary compliance with the ban on new lending imposed in 1986 has contributed greatly to South Africa's difficulty in obtaining new sources of foreign exchange. I believe that voluntary compliance sends a much stronger message than would a mandatory ban.

With this in mind, I met recently with representatives of Canadian banks to discuss their response to the decisions taken in Toronto. I can advise that there will be no increase in trade credits to South Africa by Canadian banks. Indeed, their trade credits with South Africa have already been decreasing and, in some cases, there are none.

Ministers also agreed to ask banks in their countries to press for rescheduling not exceeding one year at a time to maximize the pressure for early repayment. Canadian banks have less than 1% of total foreign bank exposure in South Africa and have pointed out that, because their exposure is so small, they are not directly involved in the rescheduling process including setting out the terms and conditions. They agreed, however, to raise with other foreign bankers directly involved the Canadian preference for rescheduling terms as short as possible.

As part of the Commonwealth efforts, we have also been conducting our own review of Canadian sanctions to ensure that they are being effectively implemented in accordance with the intent of the measure. That is an intensive process, precisely because we have introduced so many new measures to fight apartheid. There are almost thirty measures in place and we are systematically closing any loopholes that we discover. Where necessary, new directives are being issued so that all government officials are fully informed of our objectives. Our review, in fact, has demonstrated the real effectiveness of our procedures.

A year ago, leaders of the Commonwealth met in Vancouver, under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Mulroney. They agreed to widen, tighten and intensify sanctions against South Africa, and to use other instruments to encourage an end to apartheid. Canada believes that the Commonwealth approach is having results, and in that spirit, I want tonight to announce further actions by Canada to widen, tighten and intensify the application of sanctions.

- The Government will tighten the ban on Government contracts with majority South African owned companies to apply to:

- (1) grants, contributions and sales, including for example, government assistance under regional development programs;
- (2) sales to all clients in South Africa, except on humanitarian grounds, or to serve our objective of reaching into South Africa;
- (3) Crown corporations, thus, for example, effectively terminating Petro Canada sulphur sales.

- There will be no increase in trade credits to South Africa.

- The ban on sales of high technology items on the Export Control List will be extended to private sector end-users in South Africa.

I want also to announce four initiatives to add further practical support to peaceful efforts to work against apartheid:

- In the period before the next Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting, the Government of Canada will spend \$2.4 million to promote dialogue among South Africans through grants to involved organizations and, as announced in Toronto, to counter censorship and propaganda.

- Canada will help combat censorship in South Africa through a grant of \$30,000 to the Anti-Censorship Action Group in South Africa.

- We will provide \$50,000 to the Media Defence Trust Fund to help the South African media in their fight against censorship regulations.

- Canada will provide assistance to help rebuild the headquarters of the South African Council of Churches and other human rights groups, destroyed by a bomb blast one month ago.

Sanctions are one important part of our policy. It is equally important to provide moral and practical support to the people who are the victims and opponents of apartheid. Our assistance has risen dramatically to over \$7.5 million per year.

For example, Canada through non-governmental organizations, is a major contributor to the legal defence of South Africa's political prisoners and to humanitarian support to their families. Through our Embassy, we are involved in literally hundreds of small education and community initiative projects which are critical to the development of the future leaders of black South Africans. We are assisting the South African trade unions, which have been increasingly thrust into a political role, with the banning of explicitly political organizations.

Our Ambassador and his staff are present in South Africa to see, and ensure the Government sees, the realities of South Africa, despite Pretoria's efforts to pretend that apartheid has been dismantled. They are there too to be present as witnesses for the international community at the trials, at the Church services and at the rallies. They are a symbol to those who are struggling against apartheid that they have not been abandoned, and that the world cares.

Canada has become a major source of support, both substantive and psychological, to the Front Line States, which so often face destabilization, and even direct military intervention, by South Africa. Canada is committed to contribute \$30 million annually to projects run by the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC). In addition, Canadian bilateral aid to these countries is over \$100 million per year.



That assistance is a major counter-weight to the economic hardship that the Front Line States endure as a consequence of living next door to South Africa. \$20 million will be directed to the rehabilitation of the Limpopo Railway Line in Mozambique as part of the effort to provide alternatives to transportation through South Africa.

Mr. Chairman, I have yet to see signs that the Government of South Africa has accepted that apartheid must be dismantled. There have been some reforms. However, for most of the population, race continues to determine where one can live, go to school, swim, even die and be buried. Race continues to be the determining factor in economic opportunity. Most importantly, black South Africans are denied any opportunity to do anything about this situation through a normal democratic political process.

The Government of South Africa has presented a proposal for a multi-racial National Council as the solution. But it continues to claim, although it represents only 15% of the population, the exclusive right to determine who can and cannot represent the majority, and what and how this Council can decide. It is not surprising that it has, to date, been universally rejected by all black South Africans with any realistic claim to represent their people.

What is the option? Some black South Africans have chosen violence to try to force change. I understand their frustrations in the face of an unjust system which is maintained by violence. But racial violence in South Africa is not a short-cut to the creation of a non-racial democratic South Africa. Not only is it wrong in itself, and not only does it bring closer the prospect of indiscriminate violence, but also it sets back the prospects for real change by intensifying fears and racial hatred.

The only acceptable choice for South Africa, the only way to avoid a massive conflagration, is real negotiations among the real leaders of all South Africa's communities. That is Canada's goal for South Africa. That is what we will continue to work towards.