

- The SABC's partiality in covering the transition process has resulted in the broadcast of propaganda rather than much needed information and education. At this vital juncture the SABC must adhere to the commitment to impartiality.

- The draft electoral and Constituent Assembly proclamations contain several elements which, if unchanged, threaten the holding of free and fair elections, the work of the Constituent Assembly and the transition to independence.

With regard to your Government's general approach to neighbouring states, South Africa continues to stand accused of acts of destabilization against its neighbours. On the basis of our own assessments, studies we have received and observations of my Foreign Ministers colleagues from the Front-Line States, it is clear that destabilization poses a continuing threat to the region.

Reconstruction of countries in the region ravaged by military conflict, fueled by South Africa, will be a difficult task. It will require peace and stability. Apartheid, and its external face, destabilization, perpetuate violence and conflict. While Canada and others provide substantial economic support to the region, bilaterally and through SADCC, we recognize that those countries will never achieve their true potential while the apartheid system remains in place. Once apartheid is truly dismantled we would be pleased to join with South Africa in mutual cooperation and development efforts.

That central issue, apartheid, was not addressed in your letter. In my previous correspondence, I urged you to take actions along the lines of the Nassau Accord which would allow us to draw more positive conclusions about developments in the region, particularly in South Africa, at our Canberra meeting. My colleagues and I did note the National Party's talk of bringing about reform and negotiating a new constitution with representatives of all racial groups. We were compelled, however, to register our profound disappointment that there has been no concrete action towards the fundamental change that is required.

The National Party's reform manifesto remains rooted in group rather than individual rights. Severe restriction orders have been placed on most of those who were recently released from detention without trial. Other political prisoners remain incarcerated, including Nelson Mandela. Press censorship continues. The majority of your fellow citizens are excluded from voting in the September elections by virtue of their skin colour. The forced incorporation of black communities into the "homelands" continues. Your government has announced it will appoint seventy officials to enforce Group Areas Act violations. The State of Emergency is now in its fourth consecutive year. These demonstrate that the basic elements of apartheid, which political repression is designed to protect, remain fundamentally unaltered.

We have responded to this situation with a package of measures, including sanctions, to put pressure on your government to enter negotiations with genuine leaders of the majority towards non-racial, representative government.

You suggest that it is disingenuous to conclude that sanctions are effective. One only need refer to statements made by your fellow cabinet ministers to see this is not the case. For example, Law and Order Minister Adriaan Vlok conceded during a speech last month that sanctions were hurting the South African economy and that the government could not isolate itself from the international community: "Our ability to make decisions is limited - if sanctions are introduced against us we can do nothing...we do not live alone in this world." Also in July, your former Junior Foreign Minister, Kobus Meiring, was quoted as saying "we have to break out of international isolation to get the money we need for development and to get knowledge and technology....How do we get it? We have to make ourselves acceptable."

You suggest that recent surveys show that the majority of black South Africans reject sanctions. We had already been aware of the Chamber of Mines survey, although we hardly consider those who commissioned it and determined the wording of questions to be a disinterested "independent" party. Apart from the criticisms that have been made about the survey's methodology, a basic point must be made. Blacks in South Africa are denied the basic right to express themselves freely through the political process. Until blacks are given the opportunity to do so, we will continue to pay heed to blacks in church groups, trade unions, extra-parliamentary political, community and other organizations who have the respect of their communities. Notwithstanding your comments, we note that leaders of the South African Council of Churches, COSATU, NACTU and the United Democratic Front - organizations which represent millions of black South Africans - support the implementation of sanctions as part of the international community's pressure for change.

We intend to maintain that pressure until we see concrete evidence of the dismantling of apartheid and negotiations with genuine black leaders towards the establishment of non-racial, representative government.

I intend to share this response with my Commonwealth colleagues on the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Joe Clark  
Secretary of State for  
External Affairs "