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Statements and Speeches

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CANADIAN POLICY TOWARDS SOUTH AFRICA

Statement by the Honourable Donald C. Jamieson, Secretary of State for External Affairs, House of Commons, December 19, 1977.

... As the Prime Minister indicated in the House some two weeks ago on December 5, Canada, along with a great many other countries, has been re-examining the attitude it ought to take beyond what has already been done by the world community in response to those actions that in recent times have been undertaken in South Africa, to which we in Canada take the strongest possible objection, and with which we — and I am sure this extends well beyond the Government of Canada — are in major disagreement.

It is true, of course, that in other countries of the world there are clear violations of, and disregard for, human rights. There, too, Canada is expressing its concern, as are all members of this House. South Africa, however, stands alone. It is the only country that, as a basic part of its government structure — whether it is constitutional in the legal sense is beside the point —, has a declared and unequivocal policy. It stands apart as a country that makes decisions affecting human beings on the basis of race and colour. Therefore, over time, it is not surprising that the attitude of the vast majority of the countries of the world has become harder, particularly during these past months, when we have seen an increase in the amount of repression, rioting, and especially in the disturbances that followed the still-unexplained death of a respectable and respected black leader of South Africa, Steve Biko.

Along with others, Canada has been asking what further steps we ought to take in order to display and to demonstrate our disapproval of the present regime and our disapproval of *apartheid*. We strongly believe that what must come in South Africa is the destruction of that kind of system, the introduction of the principle of one man, one vote, and of the normal democratic process which all of us in this part of the world take for granted.

I am, therefore, announcing today that Canada is phasing out all its Government-sponsored, commercial-support activities in South Africa.

For example, we shall as quickly as possible withdraw our commercial counsellors from Johannesburg and close the office of the Consulate General in that city. We shall also withdraw our commercial officers from Cape Town. We shall, of course, maintain our diplomatic officers in Pretoria for normal business, because we do not feel that the breaking-off of diplomatic relations at this time is advisable. We wish to still have an opportunity to do what we can in order to impress upon the Government of South Africa the necessity for change. We also want to have an opportunity to talk to respected leaders who are opposed to *apartheid* in South Africa.

In addition to this phasing-out of our commercial activities, we shall also withdraw all Export Development Corporation government-account support from any transactions relating to South Africa. This involves, for example, export-credit insurance and loan insurance, as well as foreign-investment insurance. This is a step that is not as complete as what may very well come in time. We are examining the implications and the possibilities for other such actions. After consultation with the Canadian companies concerned, we shall be publishing a code of conduct and ethics for Canadian companies operating in South Africa, designed to govern their employment and similar practices. This will be done as quickly as possible.

The fourth measure is related to South Africa's former membership in the Commonwealth, which we now propose to change. From a date to be announced, we shall require non-immigrant visas from all residents of South Africa coming to Canada. We have asked the appropriate officials to examine the impact and the capacity that is open to us to renounce the British preferential tariff. It is still in effect even though the Commonwealth membership of South Africa has long since ceased to exist.

In addition to all of these measures, we are very much concerned about two other aspects of South Africa and South African operations — namely, the activities of Canadian companies in Namibia. Once again, we have asked the officials of the Department of Finance and others to look as quickly as possible into all the implications of possible tax concessions and the like that these companies may be obtaining, and that are being provided by what is essentially an illegal regime in Namibia, by our standards and by our demonstrated conduct at the United Nations.

We are also establishing possible codes of conduct for further investment by Canadians in Namibia. It may be asked — I am sure it will be — why these measures are not introduced immediately. There are two reasons: first, we want to be very sure that we do not penalize Canadian companies that may have been active in that country under legitimate and perfectly acceptable processes. Nevertheless, there is unquestionably an incongruity in a situation that permits an illegal regime, by world definition, to be benefiting with Canadian companies in the manner I have outlined.

There is a second reason why we are withholding, for the time being, any further action. We continue to hope that a means will be found of ensuring that there is a peaceful and satisfactory solution for Namibia, one that will bring about equality — one man, one vote. We hope this can be done through negotiations and the process in which Canada is participating, which relates to the five Western members of the Security Council talking with the Government of South Africa and the other parties concerned.

In the process of making this statement and of expressing my hope for a peaceful outcome in Namibia, it is also Canada's hope and wish that the black leadership there, as elsewhere in South Africa, will show its own high level of responsibility. We hope it will do everything reasonable and possible to bring about transition by peaceful means, rather than plunge another region on that tragic continent into the kind of bloodshed we have seen repeated over and over again in recent years.

There is one final point. We shall keep the whole South African situation under review. We are moving now to make sure that our own embargo against sales of arms to South Africa is on all fours with the recent declaration of the Security Council that placed an international embargo on arms shipments. This is the first time in the history of the United Nations that such an embargo has been imposed on a member state. I believe this is a step in the direction it is inevitable and appropriate for us to take. I re-emphasize that we shall keep the whole South African situation under review.

S/C