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STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

Statement in the
House of Commons by the
Right Honourable Joe Clark,
Secretary of State for
External Affairs, following the
First Meeting of the
Commonwealth Committee of
Foreign Ministers on South Africa

Canada

OTTAWA, ONTARIO

February 5, 1988

When the Prime Minister and other Commonwealth Heads of Government met in Vancouver and Lake Okanagan in October, they agreed on measures to fight apartheid in South Africa, and established a committee of Foreign Ministers to give impetus to their decisions. I have the honour to chair that committee, and rise to report to the House on its first meeting, earlier this week, in Lusaka, Zambia. In beginning, I want to express formally Canada's great appreciation of the excellent arrangements made by the Government of Zambia.

The Committee comprises the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Canada, Guyana, India, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. At Vancouver, the United Kingdom decided not to be a member of the Committee, although Britain is contributing to other parts of the Commonwealth program against apartheid. For example, Britain and Canada will be the major contributors to the restoration of the second phase of the Limpopo Rail Line in Mozambique. Britain, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Malawi are involved in the equally important work of providing security for transportation corridors against terrorist disruption.

The best prospect for an end to apartheid is the negotiating concept developed by the Eminent Persons Group, established by the Prime Minister and other Commonwealth Leaders in Nassau. Our Committee will work consciously to encourage conditions where that negotiating concept might be given effect.

Mr. Speaker let me refer to the campaign to defend apartheid. It is systematic, organized, prosecuted as a priority by the Government of South Africa, and supported, for various motives, by businesses and organizations with substantial interests in that country. Among some within South Africa, the resistance to change is intensified by fear, including the fear that they will be torn up from their own roots, and that the strong economy they have created will be destroyed. That combination of power and fear is formidable, both in itself, and in the reaction it inspires.

Whatever other lessons might be learned from Africa, the record is consistent that, when majority rule could not be negotiated, it came by violence, fueled by the frustrations of majorities who would not forever be denied citizenship in their own country. That is the lesson of, among others, Kenya, Algeria, Zimbabwe, Mozambique. If the white 14 percent of the population which governs South Africa maintains its racist system, the black majority will respond, inevitably, not with silence but with violence.

We have to take account of both the power and the fear that fuel apartheid. When I met President Chissano of Mozambique in August, he tried to address the understandable fear of white South Africans. "The Afrikaaner", he said, "is as African as I am. We both belong here. There is no other place to which we can return." The African National Congress acted in the same spirit in the meeting in Dakar, Senegal, where white and black South Africans came together to talk about their future together. Zimbabwe itself, with three white Ministers in the Government, and thousands of white citizens involved fully in industry, agriculture, and the public service, is proof that white and black Africans can work together in freedom. The Commonwealth - because of our special reach, across races and around the world - can help ease fears, among both blacks and whites. And Canada, in these circumstances, with our history and our nature, can play a leading role.

But fear is only one element of apartheid; power is another - power defended zealously, exercised ruthlessly.

Sanctions are applied for two purposes - the first economic; the second psychological. There is no doubt that the actions actually taken by Canada and other countries have sent clear messages of disapproval to defenders of apartheid, and of encouragement to its opponents. Nor is there doubt that the economic measures have inspired a vigorous campaign to bust sanctions, or evade them, or frustrate their purpose. Naturally, the South African Government does that; but so may other Governments, so do many businesses. Those actions deserve to be known and, at Lusaka, we authorized terms of reference for two major studies which will bring to light new patterns of trade, new practices of accounting, new routings of shipments.

The terms of reference of the larger study have been published, and I have tabled them today. In the same spirit we are concerned by what appear to be significant breaches of the mandatory embargo on arms export, which members of the United Nations are obliged to respect. As individual nations, and as a committee, we will be seeking hard evidence and considering specific actions to ensure that the mandatory arms embargo is enforced.

The most effective new weapon enlisted in defence of apartheid is the deliberate new emphasis on censorship within South Africa, and propaganda at home and internationally. A simple summary of major press legislation in South Africa - which sets out what journalists may not write about - that summary alone runs to over 300 pages. On top of that is the weight of other threats and regulations which limit freedoms we Canadians take for granted - the freedom to meet, to publish, to speak without fear, the right to protection against detention without trial. No one knows how many people are detained, without charge, in South Africa; no one who is detained knows when he or she might be freed, or detained again. Even little children are locked away.

And, as the curtain comes down within South Africa, the campaign intensifies outside, to portray as reform proposed institutions in which no black leader will participate; to caricature all opponents of apartheid as communists or killers; to exploit prejudice. I have no doubt that campaign of censorship and propaganda is carefully organized and targetted, and the Commonwealth will become much more involved in exposing and countering propaganda and censorship.

That holds its own risk. When it comes to rights, no Commonwealth country is blameless, some less than others. During the meeting, and in other conversations, I warned that the accusation of a double standard would almost certainly be made against the Commonwealth, and that the best way to deal with it is by improvement in our own countries. But most in this House, and most in the world, would agree that inequity or abuse in other countries does not excuse an apartheid regime which writes racism into law.

There is one other dimension of this Committee which I want to convey to this House.

We are eight countries, from five continents. None of us is a superpower, and some, like Guyana, are states with profound economic problems of their own, while others, of the Front-Line States, are vulnerable every day to destabilization from South Africa.

That we came together gave evident hope to groups like the South African Council of Churches, whose representatives we met.

What we can do together will enlarge the information and initiative and will to fight apartheid in peaceful and practical ways.

That we are together is the best answer to the fear at the heart of apartheid - the fear that different races, different colours, can't work together. The Commonwealth is the antithesis of apartheid. We are different races, different colours, working together. I expect this Committee will help us continue our progress.

COMMONWEALTH COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN MINISTERS

ON SOUTHERN AFRICA

First Meeting: Lusaka, 1-2 February 1988

Members of the Committee

The Right Honourable Joe Clark (Canada) - Chairman;
The Honourable Bill Hayden (Australia);
The Honourable Rashleigh E. Jackson (Guyana);
The Honourable K. Natwar Singh (India);
The Honourable Major-General Ike Nwachukwu (Nigeria);
The Honourable Benjamin Mkapa (Tanzania);
The Honourable Luke J. Mwanashiku (Zambia); and
The Honourable Dr. Nathan Shamuyarira (Zimbabwe).

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

The Committee's first meeting was devoted to an initial consideration of the main areas of its mandate from Commonwealth Heads of Government under the Okanagan Statement and Programme of Action.

The Committee recognised at the outset that its task was of an ongoing nature and that some aspects of its work would be of a non-public character.

Its conclusions in Lusaka included the following:

(i) Sanctions

To widen, tighten and intensify economic and other sanctions against South Africa, the Committee has set in train an examination of the application of sanctions, involving their evaluation on a continuing basis, an assessment of their impact and an identification of efforts to frustrate them. It will take account of economic, political and other relevant considerations.

The Committee also agreed on the terms of reference of the expert study identified by Heads of Government in Vancouver on South Africa's relationship with the international financial system with a view to exploring the possibilities of effective action against South Africa in this area. Australia will continue to play a leading role in the preparation of this study. In this context, the Committee issued an urgent call on the international banks concerned not to participate in rescheduling exercises but to maintain maximum pressure on South Africa for early repayment of all due amounts.

The Committee took note of recent indications of significant changes in South Africa's terms of trade and trading patterns. It will undertake a thorough examination of these trade questions. It will also separately develop ways of promoting trade and investment in the Front-Line and neighbouring states as a means to increase their economic independence of South Africa.

While the programme of agreed studies is proceeding, the Committee will pursue all appropriate action for mobilising international support for sanctions with a view to securing a more concerted application of a global sanctions programme.

The Committee paid special attention to the existing mandatory arms embargo and recognised the need for specific action at both the national and international levels to secure their more effective enforcement of the embargo. The Committee will devote particular attention to this matter and pursue it as an issue of urgency.

(ii) South Africa and its neighbours

The Committee gave particular attention to the enlarging needs of the Front-Line States deriving from South Africa's policies of destabilization in the region. They paid particular attention to the effect of these policies on Mozambique and to current South African aggression in Angola. They welcomed the increased assistance to the region's development by the Africa Fund as agreed at the recent SADCC Ministerial Meeting in Arusha but recognised, as Heads of Government had done in Vancouver, that if the region's development is to be effective the international community must also address the security needs of the Front-Line States. They examined ways in which this might be achieved on an urgent and effective basis and set in hand a process of consultation with the governments concerned towards this end.

The Committee welcomed the progress that had been made for the establishment of the Commonwealth Special Fund for Technical Assistance to Mozambique.

(iii) Reaching into South Africa

The Committee held preliminary discussions with representatives of the South African Council of Churches, the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) and the Anti-Apartheid Movement.

In the context of the intensification of repression in South Africa under the State of Emergency, the Committee recognized the importance of maximum exposure of the realities in the country and the need for effective responses to the draconian censorship that has been imposed. It began the exploration of ways in which the truth of what is happening in South Africa can be conveyed to the international community. Within the next few months, Canada will propose to the Committee a detailed strategy to combat South Africa's censorship and propaganda.

As part of the world-wide efforts to promote actions against apartheid, the Committee welcomed the decision to convene a Conference of World Parliamentarians later this year, as conveyed by the Chairman of the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid.

On 1 February the Committee conveyed to the South African Foreign Minister its deep concern at the recent confirmation of death sentences on the 'Sharpeville Six'. The Committee expressed the hope that even at this late hour the Government of South Africa would heed their humanitarian appeal.

(iv) Namibia

The Committee reaffirmed its strong support for Namibian independence as called for in Security Council Resolution 435. It rejected once again linkage between Namibia and the developments in Angola. The Committee agreed to increase its efforts to bring the plight of the Namibian people and South African aggression to the attention of the international community.

(v) Further Action

The Committee considered a possible programme of meetings up to the next Meetings of Heads of Government in Kuala Lumpur in 1989. It recognised however that its work may be pursued in a variety of ways including contacts with other governments and facilitating opportunities for focusing world attention on apartheid.

In between meetings, continuity in the work of the Committee will be maintained through liaison in London by a Committee of eight High Commissioners under the chairmanship of Canada's High Commissioner, Mr. Roy McMurtry, in close consultation with the Secretariat.

The Committee agreed that its next formal meeting will be held in Canada in July 1988.

COMMONWEALTH COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN MINISTERS

ON SOUTHERN AFRICA, LUSAKA, ZAMBIA

1-2 February 1988

EVALUATION OF THE APPLICATION AND IMPACT

OF SANCTIONS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A STUDY ARISING

FROM THE OKANAGAN STATEMENT (paragraphs 7-11)

Introduction

With the exception of Britain, Commonwealth Heads of Governments at their Vancouver meeting agreed that economic and other sanctions have had a significant impact on South Africa and that their wider, tighter and more intensified application must remain a part of the international community's response to apartheid. In this context, they agreed to evaluate on a continuous basis the application of sanctions in order to assess their impact; and also committed themselves to continuing efforts to secure a more concerted application of a global sanctions programme.

In order to assist in the fulfilment of the above decisions of the Heads of Government, the study will review the scope of the existing sanctions by the Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth governments, voluntary bodies and private sector, examine their implementation and evaluate their impact not only in economic terms but also in terms of the moral of the Pretoria regime and the political processes in South Africa.

The study will also identify efforts to frustrate sanctions and the manner and the extent to which the impact of sanctions is weakened as a result. In examining what action can be taken to strengthen the impact of sanctions, it will consider the scope for further concerted efforts by the Commonwealth and the wider world.

Possible Outline of Study

The areas of enquiry for the study may be set out as follows:

a) Review of Current Sanctions

Scope and legal status of sanctions adopted by country or group of countries, by major category of sanctions; the status of various United Nations measures (mandatory or

non-mandatory) and their implementation; measures by voluntary groups and the private sector; dates of adoption and implementation; monitoring mechanisms and provisions of penalties against offenders.

b) Efforts to Frustrate Sanctions

Efforts by South Africa to frustrate sanctions by category of measures; the role of governments, organizations and groups outside South Africa in frustrating sanctions; South Africa's policies towards its neighbours in frustrating sanctions.

c) Strengthening Existing Measures

Scope for making existing measures more effective through a wider, tighter and more intensified application:

(i) Economic Impact of Sanctions

Impact on credit and investment flows to South Africa; on the cost and supply of oil; on exports and imports in terms of volume and unit values. Economy wide impact in terms of capital formation; access to technology; employment and growth of GDP; and on the confidence of the business community.

(ii) Impact on Military Capability

Impact on access to security/military related technology and on the availability of armaments; on the military capability of South Africa.

(iii) Political Impact

Impact on the Pretoria regime and its willingness to negotiate, on the political perceptions of the business community and on the white electorate in general. Impact in terms of South Africa's isolation in the international community and its ability to conduct external relations.

d) Areas of Vulnerability

Areas, economic or otherwise, in which South Africa is particularly vulnerable to sanctions. Measures that will have a significant impact when applied (a) concertedly or (b) bilaterally. A prioritization of possible measures.

Possible Further Action

Possible further action given South Africa's vulnerability in particular areas.

Time-Frame and Modalities

An initial study concluded within a period of, say, not more than six months could be followed up by updating and extending the enquiry to further areas, as the situation evolves, at periodic intervals. The Secretary-General in consultation with the Chairman will arrange for the study to be undertaken in a manner that would inter alia permit the issue of interim reports or segments of the study to members of the Committee from time to time.