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THE WHITE HOUSE

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NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION
DIRECTIVE NUMBER 273

May 7, 1987

UNITED STATES POLICY TOWARD SOUTH AFRICA ~~(X)~~

National Security Decision Directive 187 dated September 7, 1985 determined that widespread violence and increased tension in South Africa, as well as Soviet challenges in southern Africa, posed a threat to important political, economic, and strategic interests of the U.S. and its allies in the region. NSDD 187 identified broad U.S. objectives in South and southern Africa and established a strategy of active U.S. engagement to attain those objectives. ~~(X)~~

Since the approval of NSDD 187, significant developments have affected our posture in South Africa and the region. Under a state of emergency declared in June 1986, the South African Government (SAG) has resorted to increasingly stringent repression to control black unrest. International efforts to assist South African parties to begin negotiations, especially the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group effort, collapsed in the period May-July 1986. Regional tensions have increased as the SAG has resorted to military operations and other actions against alleged African National Congress (ANC) facilities and personnel on the territories of neighboring states. ~~(X)~~

Under the pressure of the state of emergency, blacks inside South Africa have been forced increasingly to turn from near-term revolutionary scenarios to a search for viable long-term strategies for challenging the SAG. The ANC, faced with the reality of the state of emergency and overwhelming South African Defense Force military power, has concentrated on political and diplomatic action to bolster its position within South Africa and internationally, while still conducting, abetting, and endorsing acts of revolutionary violence within South Africa. ~~(X)~~

Imposition of sanctions by the United States and other members of the international community has strengthened SAG determination to resist international pressure and has resulted in a sharp deterioration of U.S.-SAG relations. These sanctions have, however, been perceived in Africa as an affirmation of American commitment to South Africa's disenfranchised citizens. The Front Line States (FLS) have thus far stepped back from the brink of a self-defeating sanctions confrontation with the SAG. ~~(X)~~

In light of these developments, the U.S. policy objectives and strategy set forth in NSDD 187 have been reviewed. The U.S. will seek:

--The earliest possible end of apartheid in South Africa and its replacement through negotiations by a democratic, non-racial constitution which provides for equal political and economic opportunity for all South Africans.

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--The strengthening of southern African parties committed to achievement of political goals through negotiations, not repression or revolutionary violence that can only provide opportunities for expanded Soviet influence.

--Peace and coexistence between South Africa and its neighbors, regional political stability and economic development. ~~X~~

In pursuit of these objectives, the U.S. will seek the closest possible cooperation with our allies and friendly African states, as well as the broadest possible support in Congress and among the American public. The U.S. will implement a strategy of active involvement in South Africa and the region consisting of the following elements:

--Clear articulation of what we are for, as well as what we are against in South Africa, to include a clear statement of our vision of a non-racial democratic future for that country. Insofar as this is possible, coordination of such a statement (or statements) with our allies to increase its impact in South Africa and internationally.

--Efforts to reinvigorate diplomatic communication with the South African Government, with the purpose of pressing it to return to an agenda of meaningful reform and to open negotiations with representative elements of the South African opposition. To the extent that the SAG takes meaningful positive actions in these key policy areas, the U.S. will respond positively, as an inducement for further constructive change by Pretoria. In its dialogue with the SAG, the USG will stress the growing impatience of the American people for an end to apartheid.

--Use of bilateral diplomacy with the SAG to advance U.S. regional initiatives in which South Africa is a major party.

--Energetic expansion of contacts with representative elements--black and white--of the South African opposition, including the ANC. The primary purposes of these contacts shall be:

- o To encourage all such groups and individuals to help create a framework in which negotiations can begin;
- o To discourage revolutionary violence and encourage non-violent change and dialogue; and

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- o to expose, contain, and, to the extent possible, minimize the influence with these groups of the Soviet Union, Soviet surrogates, and other states or elements hostile to the U.S.

--Good-faith but non-vindictive implementation of the provisions of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986, while opposing new legislative and mandatory UN sanctions against South Africa; cooperation with Congress to shape a consensus on goals and strategies for achieving a democratic solution in South Africa.

--Sustained funding (if possible at increased levels) of U.S. assistance programs for education, labor, business, self-help, and human rights programs benefiting black South Africans, and increased efforts at making blacks aware of U.S. initiatives and policies.

--Encouragement of U.S. businesses to remain in South Africa and to continue their efforts to: improve the welfare of black South African employees; assist black-owned companies; and use their influence for change away from apartheid. In this connection, the executive branch should actively pursue enforcement of the federal pre-emption provisions of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986.

--Close consultations and policy coordination with our key allies.

--Continued non-proliferation efforts aimed at persuading South Africa to adhere to the NPT or otherwise renounce nuclear explosive acquisition and accept IAEA safeguards on all its nuclear activities. Such efforts should also seek to maintain South African membership in the IAEA, stress effective implementation of IAEA safeguards in South Africa, and encourage good-faith IAEA/SAG negotiations on safeguarding additional nuclear facilities in South Africa. ✕

NSDD 187 determined that more effective public diplomacy to broaden domestic and international support for our policies in southern Africa was required. With the passage of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act and other developments since 1985, the need for effective outreach to Congress and the public continues. The elements of the public relations and public affairs strategy established by NSDD 187 remain valid. The Department of State will work with other interested agencies to develop and implement a new action plan to implement the public diplomacy aspects of the policy defined herein. ✕

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