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An American Reaction to Apartheid

Melvin D. Sorg Jr.

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AN AMERICAN REACTION TO APARTHEID

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Bachelor of Arts, Bemidji State University, 1984

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This Thesis submitted by Melvin D. Sorg Jr. in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts from the University of North Dakota has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done, and is hereby approved.

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ABSTRACT

Just what is the American reaction to apartheid, and how does one make generalizations about those perceptions and the values they imply? In approaching these questions the method chosen was to look at the visible reactions of those opinion leaders in the administration, press, and Congress that the American public took their cues from in forming attitudes in this area of foreign relations. Written articles and public statements reported by the press and in professional magazines and journals were examined, first to see if the reaction of these opinion leaders to the issue of apartheid and related concerns could be assessed on the basis of a format which attempted to predict the concerns Americans would reflect upon when considering foreign policy issues and making policy recommendations.

The reactions of these opinion leaders were examined to see if they reflected a similar emphasis to three major sets of concerns: the perception of the moral wrong of apartheid, and the economic and strategic cost of ending apartheid; the need to avoid becoming embroiled in another Vietnam-type situation; and the perceived need to prevent the incursion of communist influence in South Africa and that region of the world. In addition, the public reactions of these opinion leaders were examined in order to assess whether or not liberal democratic values were

mentioned in the context of structuring the debate over the practice of apartheid and U.S. relations with the country of South Africa, or if they were mentioned in the justifications given for specific policy recommendations meant to bring about the end of apartheid.

What was found was that there was a distinct difference between conservative and liberal American opinion leaders on their perceptions on the urgency of ending apartheid practices in South Africa. Conservatives would justify non-intervention in South African affairs both by citing the perception that the South African government was committed to ending apartheid, and in their belief that marketplace forces would bring about reform even without government intervention. They also expressed concern over strategic and economic issues, playing up the need to prevent communist influence in Southern Africa and the surrounding region. Liberals would be quicker to stress moral concerns about the continuation of apartheid practices, rejecting the idea that the South African government was trying to end apartheid, and downplaying the need to follow a policy that was in effect a regional anti-communist strategy. In doing so they justified increased American intervention in South African affairs on the grounds that visible liberal democratic practices were absent under apartheid restrictions in South Africa.

I

INTRODUCTION

Is there an American interpretation of social justice to the current situation in South Africa? If so, to what extent does our heritage of liberalism or liberal democracy provide a coherent framework in which to deal with another country, such as South Africa, that practices both racial apartheid or segregation, and places restrictions on other human, civil and political rights for all its citizens?

The question is two-fold. Do Americans react to and define the situation in South Africa based on how its practices differ from American liberal conceptions of social justice, and does that reaction translate into practice, namely policy based on those same liberal conceptions, beliefs and historical traditions? Conversely, how are attitudes and policy directed at the South African situation shaped by specific forces not directly related to our ideological beliefs based in liberalism?

The reason the choice was made to deal with the situation in South Africa was because it presented a current circumstance where American liberal values, such as freedom of speech and the press, democratic representation and equality of opportunity, were apparently being violated. It was anticipated that Americans would react to these lack of civil and political rights by asserting their own liberal values.

Some of the available statistics seem to indicate that Americans do, to a great extent, look with disfavor on the

South African government, the restriction of rights under the continuing State of Emergency in that country, and the policies that keep black South Africans from gaining any real political, civil or economic power.

As early as June 1977, a survey conducted by Louis Harris and Associates found that Americans, by a margin of 57-15%, agreed that the South African policy of, "keeping blacks down by denying them political and economic power," could not be justified. By April 1985, a survey by Time/Yankelovich, Skelly and White found that Americans disapproved of "the system of apartheid, as applied by a government dominated by whites, and denying the majority of South African, who are black, most political and economic rights," this time by the margin of 73-12%.¹

In a similar fashion, a 1977 Harris poll showed that, by a margin of 46-26%, Americans favored, "the United States and other nations putting pressure on the South African government to give blacks more freedom and participation in government."²

By September 1985, another Harris poll found that, by a margin of 71-21%, Americans favored, "continuing putting pressure on the South African government in an attempt to persuade them to give blacks more political participation."

¹E.C.L., "Americans Evaluate the Situation in South Africa," Public Opinion, Aug./Sept. 1985, pp. 26-27.

²Deborah Durfee Barron & John Immerwahr, "The Public Views South Africa," Public Opinion, Jan./Feb. 1979, p. 54.

As with the previous set of surveys, the trend from 1977 to 1985 seems to indicate an increasing level of opposition to the methods used by the government of South Africa in perpetuating apartheid.³

Unfortunately, not all of the statistical evidence is so clear cut. Take for instance the survey results from three polls conducted in August-September 1985. A Gallup Poll from August 15, 1985, found that 59% of Americans polled, "sympathized with the black population," in South Africa, while 11%, "sympathized with the white-ruled South African government." In that same poll, 7% questioned showed no preference in sympathies, and 23% had no opinion.⁴

In a similar fashion, a Harris poll from September 6, 1985, found that 63% of those polled felt that it was, "immoral for the United States to support a government that oppresses blacks," but another 32% disagreed that it was immoral, with only 5% not having an opinion.⁵

The third poll conducted by CBS News on August 29, 1985, does bring up some questions on how adequate the previous two polls were in accurately reflecting public opinion. In that poll, only 3% of those Americans contacted approved of South Africa's, "system of racial separation called apartheid," while 39% of those polled disapproved. What is

³E.C.L., "Americans...", p. 27.

⁴"South African Situation," The Gallup Report, August 1985, p. 14.

⁵E.C.L., "Americans...", p. 27.

interesting is that in this CBS News poll, 58% of those surveyed responded that they didn't know enough about the topic to have an opinion.⁶ Similarly, a Roper Poll conducted in February 1985 found that only 35% of those polled had ever, "heard of the term divestiture, or any discussion of pulling business assets out of South Africa." Barron and Immerwahr suggest, in Public Opinion, that survey questions on the South African situation will evoke a response of "don't know," or "no opinion," 20-25% of the time. The authors stressed that even this figure was deceptively low, since many respondents are either reluctant not to show an opinion or feel pressured.⁷

One problem with trying to use survey data to assess something like the American response to South African apartheid is that none of the polling groups such as Gallup or Harris phrase questions in such a manner to be directly comparable with each others results. In addition, when follow up surveys were conducted at a later date, if they were conducted, they did not ask identical questions, nor did they always present statistics on the same demographic groups as the original surveys. For example, the 1977 Harris poll examined earlier asked if the United States, "should put pressure on South Africa to end apartheid." That is not the same question as when a 1985 Harris questionnaire asked if, "we should continue to put

⁶Ibid., p. 26.

⁷Barron & Immerwahr, "The Public Views...", p. 55.

pressure on the South African government."⁸

When trying to assess the strategy that Americans advocate for dealing with the situation in South Africa, the problems with using survey data are exacerbated by the way the surveyors pose the questions, either as a series of questions evoking separate responses, as a series of related questions, or even in rank ordering responses to a single question.

For example, a Gallup poll conducted August 15, 1985, asked the question, "what should the United States do next to deal with South Africa?" Those polled gave their responses, which were presented by Gallup in the following rank ordering:

- 44% Don't Get Involved
- 8% Impose Sanctions
- 5% Have a Trade Embargo
- 4% Show Support in General
- 3% Withdraw Investments
- 2% apply Diplomatic Pressure
- 10% Miscellaneous
- 29% No Idea⁹

In contrast, a Harris poll conducted in January 1985 did approach the same topic, but asked those polled a series of questions, each requiring an answer inquiring into the respondent's support of specific tactics proposed to put

⁸Ibid., p. 54.

⁹"South African Situation," The Gallup Report, p. 12.

pressure on the South African government. They responded as follows:

(support) (oppose)

70%	-	24%	U.S. Business Putting Pressure
41%	-	51%	Bar New Bank Loans
29%	-	66%	End All Trade
18%	-	76%	Force U.S. Businesses to Close Down
58%	-	37%	Apply Quiet Diplomacy
37%	-	34%	Apply Sanctions ¹⁰

There are several striking differences between the two preceding survey results. For example, 58% of those polled in the second survey indicated that they supported applying quiet diplomacy to pressure the South African government to reform apartheid, while in the first survey only 2% thought that diplomatic pressure should be a tactic used to deal with the situation. Similarly, the second poll indicated that 70% of those questioned supported business putting pressure on the South African government, but that tactic did not even come to the mind of 1% of those surveyed in the first poll who were asked to name options.

The wide disparity in these results seems to suggest that the American public's opposition to apartheid and their sympathy for the plight of black South Africans does not translate neatly into assuring American action to pressure South Africa to end apartheid. The two most visible statistics in the preceding surveys are that 44% of those

¹⁰E.C.L., "Americans...", p. 28.

questioned in the first survey advocated not getting involved, and 29% had no idea what the United States should do in dealing with South Africa. Similarly, while 70% of those asked in the second poll supported business putting pressure on the South African government, a Roper poll from earlier that year seems to indicate that this response is not based on expectations that businesses would be useful in pressuring the South African government. In that Roper poll, only 25% thought U.S. business interests do help promote reform in South Africa, 25% thought that they were of little or no help, and 39% indicated that they did not know one way or the other.¹¹

One final problem with using statistical data on public opinions in reaction to apartheid is that this issue is one of extremely low saliency with the American public, and with the pollsters. All of the data came either from a period from 1977-78 or from February to October 1985, with only two Gallup polls in 1985 breaking down the information according to demographic groups such as race, age, income, region or political preference. It was not until the mid-1970's, when unrest in white minority ruled Rhodesia and Angola brought the region of Southern Africa to the public's attention, that our State Department's policy dealing with South African apartheid was questioned to any great extent. Even then, when you consider that public attention is usually focused on domestic issues, a crisis

¹¹Ibid.

in Southern Africa and our relations with the white minority-ruled South African government would not be expected to generate much public comment or attention outside of our own black population.

How do you assess the American reaction to apartheid when statistical data is either lacking or misleading? One method is to look at those in this country that do have opinions or have taken actions that would indicate a reaction to apartheid. What this thesis looks at are the opinions and actions taken by what political scientist Herbert McCloskey would call the "influentials" or opinion leaders that the American public looks to when they form their own opinions. In this case we will look specifically at the opinions of, or actions taken by specific opinion leaders in the federal administration, press and congress, which indicate a reaction to apartheid, the current situation in South Africa, and our foreign policy towards that country. What will become more apparent as we go along is that these issue areas are closely interrelated, and can best be understood through examining those relationships.¹²

The following chapter will go into greater depth explaining why it is expected that examining the reaction of opinion leaders to apartheid will be an adequate though

¹²Herbert W. McCloskey, "Consensus and Ideology in American Politics," American Political Science Review 58 (June 1964): 361-363.

somewhat limited reflection of "American" opinion. The next chapter will also present a hypothesis concerning why Americans react to apartheid, the current situation in South Africa and our foreign policy with that country as they do, and what role liberalism, or a democratic liberal conception of social justice plays in the formation of those attitudes. Before doing that, however, the remainder of this chapter will present a capsule summary of some of the aspects of South Africa and apartheid that we are reacting to.

One would think that by now it would be common knowledge that black South Africans cannot vote in national elections, nor do they have any legislative representation as recently allowed the asian and mixed-race population in South Africa. Interestingly enough, the August 1985 Gallup poll found that 20% of all Americans, and 26% of black Americans thought black South Africans did have the vote.¹³ At this time, however, 73% of the South African population, the black majority, has no political representation at the national level, and any legislation passed by the asian and mixed-race parliamentary bodies can be vetoed by the white controlled parliamentary body or the national president.¹⁴

Perhaps it should be emphasized that the racial policy of apartheid or "separate development," as it is otherwise

¹³"South African Situation," The Gallup Report, p. 16.

¹⁴Roger Omond, The Apartheid Handbook, (New York:Penguin Books,) 1985, pp. 39-40.

known, does not just affect the black population of South Africa, nor are apartheid laws the extent of government repression of civil and political rights. The racial segregation mandated under apartheid laws sets limits on where all races can live in that country. Each urban area has its own white, coloured, asian and black districts, removing individuals from established homesteads when areas are redistricted to accomodate population changes.¹⁵

Similarly, restrictions on free speech, specifically, restrictions on political expression and the increasing amount of censorship on the press cuts across racial color lines. Not only is news censored before the fact and the media excluded from areas where there is unrest, be they restricted from covering riots or consumer boycotts, but all South Africans are restricted in their right to express dissent. Those who make or publish so called "subversive statements," can be imprisoned for up to ten years and/or fined \$8,000. Members of labor unions are forbidden from engaging in any form of political activity, and can be jailed for suggesting using strikes or walkouts as methods to help settle a labor-management dispute.¹⁶

In South Africa, "subversive statements" have been defined so broadly that virtually any expression of discontent with the government or the economy has been

¹⁵Ibid. pp. 32-33.

¹⁶"South African Censorship At A Glance," Grand Forks Herald, 14 December 1986, sec. C, p. 4.

declared illegal under the continuing State of Emergency, declared on July 20, 1985 and extended on June 12, 1986. As they were expanded in December of 1986, the laws regarding subversive statements said that, "no one may orally or in writing make any statement or cause such a statement to be made, and journalists may not report such statements. Subversive statements were defined at that time to include any remarks that encouraged or incited people to: participate in unrest; resist or oppose a member of the cabinet or any other government official in the exercise of their powers under the State of Emergency or in maintaining public order, including resisting the military or police; taking part in a consumer or school boycott, civil disobedience, rent strike, protest strike or attending a banned gathering; set up "alternative" government bodies such as block commissions, civic associations or people's courts; avoid compulsory military service.¹⁷

In addition, some individuals were served with restriction orders not to speak on any topic publicly if their speaking might lead to the endangerment of public safety. The press could not quote such individuals, nor could they report the circumstances or treatment of police detainees or advocate the release of detainees.

In South Africa, under the continuing State of Emergency, radio and television stations must submit on-air

¹⁷Ibid.

scripts and tapes of broadcasts for pre-censorship by the appropriate government agency, and the Bureau of Information must give prior approval for all press statements. In covering news, photographers and television crews cannot film acts of unrest, newspapers cannot leave blank spaces to indicate government censored material, and the government may seize without prior notice any publication it deems subversive.¹⁸

In effect, in South Africa circa late 1986, it is illegal to advocate, let alone engage in threats to the public order, be it boycotting your local supermarket or striking for lower rents. Not only has international media been banned from areas in which there is unrest, but many news services have been asked to leave the country, and local press has been attacked for "leaking" information to the international media.

Of course, one of the most visible aspects of South Africa is its policy of institutionalized racial separation and segregation known as apartheid or "separate development." Put simply, the original idea was to create separate black states within South Africa, each state having its own economy, political structure and African tribal constituency. Black South Africans would only come into "white" areas to sell their labor until such a time as they would be economically self-sufficient. Considering that the white controlled sectors of the economy still

¹⁸Ibid.

provides jobs to the majority of the black population, and is dependent on that labor, the original intention of apartheid laws to totally separate the races does seem to run counter to economic reality.¹⁹

What we see today is that the original tribal homelands or "reserves" created by the 1913 Native Lands Act have become the legal home of the ten ethnic tribes of black South Africans, assigning 73% of the population to 13% of the country's territory. All but approximately ten percent of South African blacks who have been long term residents of black urban districts in white cities no longer have national citizenship, only being citizens of their tribal "state." They live near major industrial and agricultural areas, where they go to work, but their individual homelands incorporate little industry or arable land. In fact, the "reserves" or homelands, were created when, in 1913, blacks were forced to leave farms and homesteads in the Orange Free State and Transvaal provinces when those areas encompassing three-fourths of the country's arable land was designated for white ownership only.²⁰

In 1948 the Verwoerd government in South Africa passed acts classifying all South Africans according to race, banned mixed marriages, and signed the Group Areas Act, which assigned each race to separate districts in urban areas in which they are allowed to live if they have

¹⁹Omond, The Apartheid Handbook, pp. 13-15.

²⁰Ibid. pp. 13-15, 97-99.

employment. Each black district comes under one of four provincial administrations, with governing councils elected by white representatives of the province. These councils can veto any decisions made by municipal councils elected by blacks, although blacks are given input into planning, providing housing, health care and services in their municipality or district.²¹

Over the years a system of pass laws were established to regulate movement in and out of the urban areas by black South Africans. Blacks could only reside in urban districts if they had been recruited for jobs in that urban area, and had to leave upon the termination of their job contract. Relatively few blacks could afford to rent housing and bring their families to live with them in the urban areas, and in 1986 there was an expected shortage of over five hundred thousand housing units for those wishing to rent such space. Although the pass laws have recently been abandoned, established in their place were harsh penalties for blacks without employment found living in urban areas, employers are penalized for hiring blacks who are illegal squatters, and several squatters camps like Crossroads in Capetown province have been demolished and their inhabitants forcibly relocated.²²

In 1959, the South African government passed the Bantu Self-Government Act, setting the legal foundation for

²¹Ibid. pp. 41-43.

²²Ibid.

giving the black tribal homelands political self-governance and reassigning black citizenship to their homelands. In 1963, Transkei became the first of four of the homeland areas to accept self-government or "independent" status. Supposedly, the homelands would, "provide for the full political development of black South Africans, including the option for Sovereignty based on their 'traditional' territories."²³

Homelands, however, are not always geographically single territorial entities. For example, KwaZulu, the Zulu hameland has ten separate districts, all designated for them by the Pretoria government, and selected from "reserve" areas formed in 1913. The "traditional" nature of these tribal territories was mandated by a national governing body in which they had no representation, and several homland areas serve more than one ethnic group. Similar to urban areas, the non-independent homelands elect their own local government, but provincial administration bodies appointed by the white controlled national government oversee local decisions and control appropriations and transfer payments from the central government. Although only 9% of the budget of the national government goes to the homelands in the form of transfer payments, those payments provide 75% of the income of those homelands, including the salaries of government employees. Perhaps this is an indicator also of how poor the homelands are in

²³Ibid. pp. 98-101.

contrast to the remaining areas in South Africa. Approximately half of the South African black population, somewhere over twelve million people, live basically off of transfer payments, money from wage-earners in urban areas, and about 900,000 jobs, less than 8% of the total employment in that country.²⁴

Residents of the now "independent" homelands, Ciskei, Venda, Trankei and Bophuthatswana, although allowed to run their own internal affairs face other problems under apartheid laws. Although independent, they still survive due to transfer payments, similar to those given the other non-independent homelands. Although they possess citizenship in their respective homeland, they have been stripped of their national citizenship. This is important since the United Nations signatories do not recognize the legal existence of these independent states within South Africa. That means that their citizens are unable to obtain travel visas to go abroad, and are being prevented from making diplomatic agreements with other countries for their homelands.²⁵

In 1986, the citizenship status of some black South Africans changed, when 1.8 million blacks officially members of a tribal homeland, but long term residents in white cities, were offered their national citizenship back. This offer was extended only to those black South Africans

²⁴Ibid. pp. 93-107.

²⁵Ibid. pp. 41-45, 93-107.

who owned land on leaseholds, and had permanent jobs in white areas. Other blacks who had short term job contracts in white areas, or those commuting to white areas to work were not offered back their national citizenship.²⁶

It is easy to sensationalize statistics coming out of South Africa, such as the estimated three to six thousand black South Africans who have been detained by the police during the summer of 1986 alone. Many are being held without notification of relatives, and the government can legally, under the State of Emergency regulations, hold and interrogate individuals for up to 18 months without a trial or without divulging their identities.²⁷

Less visible, but just as important is the manner in which the South African government has deprived its black citizens of economic parity and access to basic human services and education. Reports vary, but it is estimated that the 73% of the population of South Africa which is black earns about 23% of the total income generated by that country's economy, while the 18% of the population that is white earned 67%. In the different industrial sectors the income differential between white versus black employees ranged from 4.8:1 to 8.2:1 in favor of white workers. In manufacturing, the average monthly income of a black

²⁶"South Africa," The Washington Post, 26 June 1986, sec. A, p. 30.

²⁷"South African Crackdown Continues," The Washington Post, 14 June 1986, sec. A, p. 18.

employee was 175 rands (approximatly \$250), while the average income of a white employee was 917 rands (approximatly \$1,350) monthly. In most South African businesses, the lowest paid white employee still earns more than 90% of all black employees and blacks are almost excluded from technical positions and management opportunities.²⁸

One statistic left out of several reports, both by the South African government information agency and those reporting on U.S. business involvement in reform efforts is that almost 30% of the working black population, over two million people, are employed in subsistence farming or other forms of agricultural production. In such jobs the monthly income as of 1983 was 20-30 rands per month, as compared to the 175 rand a month figure in manufacturing, mining and construction jobs. As of 1984, U.S. business interests employed only 60,000 blacks in their South African operations, and that number has declined in the past two years as over fifty business have abandoned their South African operations. In the next year three of the largest American employers in South Africa, IBM, Coca-Cola and General Motors will also be turning their operations over to South African companies. At their peak, U.S. business interests employed about six-tenths of one percent

²⁸Bo Baskin, Jonathan Leape, Stephan Underhill, Business in the Shadow of Apartheid, (Lexington:D.C. Heath, 1985), pp. 158-159.

of the working black population.²⁹

Human services are woefully lacking in the black districts in South Africa, especially in the rural regions. Health care is such that there is one doctor for every 330 whites, 1,200 coloreds and asians, and 12,000 black South Africans. The mortality rate for infants is 10-20 per thousand live births for whites and 80-250 per thousand for blacks, with the highest infant mortality in the homeland areas.³⁰

As of 1983, South Africa's per capita expenditures for education of those children enrolled in public schools were 192 rands per year for blacks, as compared to 1,385 rands per year for children of white parents. The pupil-teacher ratios for black students was 43:1, with the ratio of white students to teachers standing at 18:1. In addition, the majority of black teachers do not have a comparable formal education as white teachers. As of 1983 there was still no mandatory schooling for black children, while it was mandatory for white and asian children between 7-15 years of age. This shows up in the literacy rates of South Africans, with 61% of rural blacks being functionally illiterate as compared to 31% of urban blacks and 0-1% of all white South Africans.³¹

²⁹Julian R. Freidman, Basic Facts on the Republic of South Africa, (New York:United Nations, 1978), p. 22.

³⁰Omond, The Apartheid Handbook, pp. 71-73.

³¹Baskin, Business in the Shadow..., p. 160.

While this is far from being a complete representation of the troubles facing those who reside in South Africa, it hints at the wide range of disparities facing the black population. At the same time, one cannot emphasize enough that many of the practices surrounding apartheid, especially since the declaration of a State of Emergency, serve to curtail the freedom of the entire South African population. In addition, the South African government is engaged in supporting rebel forces in several black ruled countries in that region that have Marxist governments. This activity is also perceived by the American public and opinion leaders, and also serves to help shape our attitude toward the situation in South Africa, and the continuation of apartheid.

II

RESEARCH DESIGN

As stated in the introduction, this thesis will concentrate on looking at the American reaction to apartheid through the eyes of those opinion leaders in the administration, press and congress. In taking this approach several goals are served. First, we are able to look at more informed opinions of those individuals that pay attention to public and foreign affairs, and who are conversant with the implications of applying opinions through policy applications. Second, we are able to look at not only opinions on apartheid, and courses of action advocated by these opinion leaders, but also at concrete policy actions taken by representatives of this country as part of a foreign policy towards the government of South Africa. In addition, these actions, be they by the State Department or other United States representatives serve to generate further comments and policy alternatives.

It is also possible that in using this approach one can develop an awareness of the values that are accepted by American society as a whole. Much of the work of Herbert McCloskey dealt with the belief that the American public took cues from the activities and values of an, "aristocratic strain, whose members are set off from the mass by their political influence, their attention to public affairs and their active role as societies policy makers." Reflecting on some of the work of Robert Dahl, McCloskey seemed to feel that our political system worked because the public accepted the values and beliefs of these

opinion leaders and, "if so, any assessment of the vitality of a democratic system should rest on an examination of the outlooks, the sense of purpose, and the beliefs of this sector of society."¹

Since the public takes cues from opinion leaders, it should also be expected that they will frequently abdicate thinking about those matters which they see as only being understood by their representatives. This is especially true in the area of foreign affairs, since day to day life precludes the time to think in depth about something far removed from their own experience. As such, political apathy among the public is perceived as a "natural state" by McCloskey and others such as V.O. Key.²

Finally, looking at the attitudes and actions of opinion leaders might serve to indicate where there are fundamental disagreements within the American public as to the values they stress. This is because in addition to being more sophisticated than the general public in their analysis of issues, according to McCloskey they are also more committed on specific issues or ideological stances, and disagree more with their peers. In addition they are able to visualize alternative solutions and spot where compromises are possible. In dealing with South Africa and apartheid, the

¹Herbert W. McCloskey, "Consensus and Ideology in American Politics," American Political Science Review 58, June 1964, pp.361-364.

²Ibid. p. 374.

fundamental differences of opinion that emerge say something about our own commitment to a liberal form of democracy.³

Although apartheid laws exclude the majority of South Africans from political participation at this time, the South African government practices a limited form of democracy. This fact will lead to a fundamental difference in approach between those political conservatives viewing apartheid, and liberals perceiving the same situation. What will be look at in depth later is that the conservatives, concerned with a possible communist incursion into the region of Southern Africa, will argue to continue support of the South African government, since its practices are quasi-democratic, and this democratic system must be preserved for change to occur in a democratic and orderly fashion in the future.

In contrast, the liberal perception of the situation in South Africa leads them to criticize the lack of political and civil rights, and advocate disengaging the U.S. from relations with South Africa until the government establishes a democracy that gives full democratic rights to each individual in that society. The liberal concern seems to be less a preserving of a democratic, or non-communist system, as is the concern of the conservatives, but in

³Herbert McCloskey, Paul Hoffman, Rosemary O'Hara, "Issue Conflict and Consensus Among Party Leaders and Followers," American Political Science Review 54 (June 1960): 410-418.

giving the majority of the South African population the means to participate politically, and decide for themselves whether or not South Africa will continue to be a democratic nation. While the conservatives will agree with the South African government that the majority of the population may not be ready for political participation, the liberals will argue that without that participation South Africa cannot claim to be a democratic nation. While neither conservative or liberal finds apartheid morally right, it will be the conservatives that will advocate allowing it to erode over time instead of banning it overnight.

One notices that conservatives and liberals react to apartheid both on its own merits, and how it fits into a larger scheme. Other concerns, such as an idealized vision of democracy, or the spectre of communist incursions shape how different individuals view the existence of apartheid and the role it plays in South Africa. In attempting to assess the American reaction to apartheid, one must deal also with this range of concerns that further shape our opinions and actions.

During the research stage of this thesis, one article that was discovered seemed to present a format that could help explain why we react to apartheid as we do. This article in Public Opinion, written by Deborah Durfee Baron and John Immerwahr on behalf of the Public Agenda Foundation, contained both an assessment of the American

reaction to the situation in South Africa, circa 1978, and a framework for interpreting public reaction to foreign policy issues.

In 1978, when this article was being written, as in 1985, when most of the recent survey material became available, there was an apparent consensus that a majority of Americans favored putting pressure on the South African government to give blacks more freedom and participation in government. Similar to the situation in 1985, in 1977-78 Americans rejected any drastic measures such as forcing U.S. businesses to close down their South African operations.⁴

Another similarity between the two different periods in question was that the statistical information available was plagued with the "don't know" phenomenon. By that, Barron and Immerwahr meant that much of the survey material available was of questionable value, since it was suspected that a large number of respondents either had no knowledge of the situation in South Africa, on which the survey questions were based, or it was hypothesized that many more than statistically apparent had no real opinion, but were afraid to respond in that fashion. In either case the survey statistics were interesting, but perhaps only a vague, partial indicator of how Americans really felt about

⁴Deborah Durfee Barron & John Immerwahr, "The Public Views South Africa," Public Opinion, January/February 1979, p. 54.

the situation in South Africa and our foreign policy designed to deal with that government and apartheid.⁵

The problem that Barron and Immerwahr pointed to, was that even though Americans were more questioning of our foreign policy than in the past, foreign policy issues, and the issue of South African apartheid in particular were of little concern to the majority of Americans, and had little saliency when compared to domestic economic issues and concerns. What that meant was that Americans had not really thought through how they felt about apartheid since it had less relevance to their personal lives. The awareness of the apartheid issue was higher for the black population in the United States than for the general public, which was to be expected because of the racial tie, but even that incentive couldn't override a relative apathy on this particular foreign policy issue area. This type of conclusion about the public's relative indifference to foreign or domestic policy issues concurs with similar conclusions reached by McCloskey and Key, lending credibility to this particular article's findings.⁶

What Barron and Immerwahr predicted would happen was that the American public would tend to react to the issue of apartheid, by unpredictable, rapid, wide swings of opinion as new facts appeared or new issues were brought to their attention. Since they are also a part of the

⁵Ibid. p. 55.

⁶Ibid.

American public, albeit the opinion leaders, it would be supposed that members of the administration, press and congress would also tend to react to the facts and issues in their own fashion, therefore the format used by Barron and Immerwahr might be useful for looking at how these Americans formed their own reaction to apartheid. This may also be true because especially in dealing with the issue of apartheid, even members of the administration, press and congress, are forced to look at an issue that is probably outside their realm of experience.⁷

How do people react to facts about an issue that they vaguely understand in the first place? In the case of South Africa and apartheid, apparently they fall back on general principles and try to apply those principles as well as they can to the factual situation as they understand it. What Barron and Immerwahr were asserting was that Americans form attitudes on foreign policy based on some vaguely understood principles that are a combination of moral beliefs, lessons learned from America's past experiences in coping with the rest of the world, and other economic and strategic concerns. What confuses our reactions to the situation in South Africa is that these principles and concerns frequently conflict with each other, and it is up to the individual to choose which principle or concern takes primary importance.

From the review of the survey data available to them,

⁷Ibid. p. 56.

Barron and Immerwahr hypothesized that there were three general principles that shaped public opinion towards South Africa and apartheid, and defined the constraints on the directions U.S. foreign policy towards South Africa could take. Those general principles were:

1. Qualified Moral Constraints
2. Avoiding Another Vietnam Type Intervention
3. Containing Communist Expansion⁸

The general principles themselves seem fairly straightforward, but are somewhat vague and bear some explaining.

By qualified moral constraints, the authors meant to say that Americans thought their foreign policy directed towards South Africa should be grounded in moral considerations. This included the perception that America should stand for moral principles when dealing with the world, and not cater to narrow economic or military interests. Taking a stance on the human rights of black South Africans was just as important in the long run as protecting strategic interests in the region of Southern Africa.

This was not to say that moral considerations should run roughshod over dealing with the realities of the world, ignoring the myriad of economic and strategic relationships that America had a stake in. Barron and Immerwahr used the example of a 1977 poll by Time/Yankelovich that indicated

⁸Ibid.

that, in dealing with South Africa, 47% of those polled were against pushing harder for majority black rule in that country if it meant a reduction in the supply of vital minerals to the United States. Clearly, the positive good of majority rule was in effect compromised by a worry over a strategic resource. The resulting tension between moral beliefs and strategic or economic interests means that the actions we might advocate would be less than clear moral statements, and more a product of compromise.⁹

A second general principle that would further constrain the expression of moral values would be the attempt to avoid getting involved in another situation like America experienced in Vietnam. According to Barron and Immerwahr, America learned several valuable lessons from that military engagement, and we would shy away from intervening again if a similar situation should arise. That fear of interventionism would also tend to make us wary of any international entanglements where we would be seen as taking an active role. From a previous report by the Public Agenda Foundation, "U.S. Foreign Policy: Principles for Defining National Interest," a list was compiled of the lessons that Americans had learned from the Vietnam experience, specifically, that:

1. The United States had involved itself in the internal affairs of another country.
2. The U.S. supported the weaker side.

⁹Ibid. pp. 68-69.

3. The U.S. was directly involved, while the Soviets fought indirectly through surrogates.
4. We involved ourselves with an obscure country that was not vital to our national interests.
5. Once committed, we were sucked in with little chance of extricating ourselves.¹⁰

The lessons learned from Vietnam carried over into our interpretation of the South African situation in that Americans were wary about getting involved, perhaps why an August 1985 Gallup poll showed that the most frequent response to the question, "what should we do to deal with South Africa," was, "don't get involved." Barron and Immerwahr also cited survey results that reached the conclusion that Americans were concerned that by backing the white minority government in South Africa, we would risk once again being on the losing side.¹¹

The third general principle that Barron and Immerwahr saw as shaping our attitude towards foreign policy issue areas, including South Africa and apartheid, was the need to contain communist expansion. They asserted that the cold war psychology was far from dead, and there was a continuing concern over the expansion of communist influence, especially when it was backed by the Soviets. Our policy towards South Africa was directed in part due to

¹⁰Ibid. p. 56.

¹¹"South African Situation," The Gallup Report, August 1985, p. 12.

the perception that the country was seen as a bulwark against communism in that part of the world, and that black South African may be tempted to turn that country into a communist state in order to redress some of their economic grievances. Americans were, however, more selective in how they would oppose communism, and could not be expected to support a repressive regime in South Africa. Instead, we could be seen as advocating putting enough pressure on the South African government to instigate such progressive changes that would be necessary to forestall black discontent and a possible communist incursion.¹²

The expected result of this combination of competing general principles and moral values would be an attitude on the part of the American people that would restrict our foreign policy makers to a range of moderate policies directed at South Africa. Moralism would restrain self-interests based on economic and strategic factors, but self-interest, a don't interfere attitude, and a fear of communism would forestall any drastic expression of moral outrage through U.S. foreign policy actions taken against the South African government.

It was possible, however, that circumstances would dictate a break from moderation in foreign policy. At that time it would be the opinion leaders in the administration and congress who would then decide how and when a change in policy might take place, basing that decision on their

¹²Barron & Immerwahr, "The Public...", p. 57.

perceptions of both the situation in South Africa, and how their different constituencies view that situation. Changing foreign policy directed at South Africa was further complicated by the fact that beyond strategic interests we also have extensive business investments and trade relations with that country, and much of our policy with South Africa was becoming intermestic, meaning a mix of diplomatic and economic decisions not all controlled by the government.¹³

Part of this thesis attempts to examine whether or not the format Barron and Immerwahr used in 1978 to explain the formation of attitudes regarding our dealings with South Africa and apartheid is still valid today, or if new concerns and issues would invalidate the previous explanation. The thesis also looks at how accurate their format, developed out of reviews of survey data, predicts the concerns of opinion leaders instead of the general public.

In evaluating how useful Barron and Immerwahr's format is in describing the principles that those in the administration, press and congress fall back on when assessing the situation in South Africa, sources aside of the statistical material that the authors relied upon heavily. One such source will be a collection of commentaries, speeches, journal articles and textual material dealing with both the Reagan Administration's use

¹³Ibid. p. 59.

of "constructive engagement" as a State Department policy to deal with South Africa and display our distaste with apartheid, and background material on the actions taken by the previous administrations, from the Truman through the Carter presidency.

Another chapter will deal with a second source of material, this time a collection of newspaper and magazine editorials and commentaries concerned with the issue of apartheid, the then current situation in South Africa, and with U.S. foreign policy actions and proposals meant to deal with South Africa and apartheid. As such, they comment both on our established policies directed towards the South African government and the alternatives suggested both in the congress and amongst the general public. The bulk of the newspaper articles were gathered during a two month period in the summer of 1986, when there was a heightened public awareness of apartheid issues due to a declaration of a State of Emergency in South Africa, and a subsequent news blackout about civil unrest in that country. The remainder of the articles cover a two year span of time during which the congress was engaged in examining the administration's policy of "constructive engagement," and suggesting alternatives of their own.

The last source of material reviewed will be some of the records surrounding the debates in congress about changing our foreign policy approach towards the South African situation. These debates spanned the years 1985-1986,

involved members of both the House and Senate. In addition to allowing a look at the opinions and actions taken by the individual legislators directly involved in shaping a new foreign policy meant to deal with apartheid, this material presents some of the conflicts of values and interests, and how those conflicts shaped the compromise that was eventually enacted into law.

In taking this approach, hopefully what will become clear are some of the differing American reactions to apartheid, and how those reactions were translated to concrete policy actions, which in turn led to more debate and alternative actions. The historical background material on past administrative actions provides a framework for understanding the Reagan Administration's actions, the commentaries and legislative debates interpret the actions taken by the Reagan Administration, and those opinions help shape a new set of policies shaped by the administration and congress.

There is one more concern addressed in developing this thesis: the role that a moral constraint plays in the development of American attitudes on foreign policy issues. At the time that Barron and Immerwahr presented the Public Agenda Foundation's findings on attitude formation in reaction to South Africa and apartheid, they defined one of the three general principles that Americans referred to as a kind of qualified moral constraint. What they failed to do in any depth was examine just what Americans turned to

in order to define the morality, or immorality, of apartheid and the practices of the South African government. Vague references were made to the fact that the public did concur with the Carter Administration in 1978, that we should show a commitment to the protection of human rights, and a statistic from a 1977 Time/Yankelovich poll was cited indicating that 50% of Americans felt that, "standing up for human rights in undemocratic countries" was an important foreign policy goal.¹⁴

What was interesting to note when reviewing some of the opinion polls taken in 1977-78 and 1985, was that they appeared to ask Americans how they felt about the South African government violating the rights of black South Africans. In doing so, questions were phrased to refer to specific violations, not of human rights per se, but of the assumed right of blacks in South Africa to the same liberal democratic freedoms enjoyed in this country, such as freedom of speech and the press, the right of due process under the law, and the right to participate in governmental decisions that affect them.

For example, a question on a 1977 Harris poll was phrased to ask if it was justifiable for the South African government to, "close leading black newspapers...put many moderate black leaders in jail...restricting the rights of blacks even more than before." In a similar fashion, a

Ibid. p. 58.

September 1985 Harris poll question asked if Americans favored continuing putting pressure on the South African government to, "give blacks more freedom and participation in government."¹⁵

What seemed apparent was that these questions were not just phrased to appeal to some kind of generalized, vague, moral principle or consciousness on the part of the American people, but that they were also appealing to individuals that they assumed believed in a political system that stressed both civil rights and political participation in the democratic tradition. As such, they were also, at least implicitly, looking for a reaction based on the moral belief in a system based on the underlying political ideology of liberal democracy, that being liberalism.

If liberalism is still a viable part of the public consciousness, then we should find that the moral constraints referred to by the opinion leaders, whose statements and actions are being examined in this thesis, reflect a continuing support of liberal democratic principles. If in reacting to the situation in South Africa a columnist or congressman expresses moral outrage at the fact that black South Africans have no democratic representation, or are not free to criticize the government and are jailed without due process for their criticism, then those opinion leaders, and supposedly their followers,

¹⁵"South African Situation," The Gallop Report, p. 27.

are not being either pragmatic or ideologically indifferent. If America's foreign policy directed towards South Africa and apartheid reflects those same liberal values, then it is more than a purely selfish or pragmatic response to the world around us.

Of course, there is one problem in assessing whether or not liberalism does shape both our moral values, and if those values help dictate our foreign policy. That problem lies in identifying just what is liberalism. Some point to the role of the people and their civil rights, others point to the role of government in preserving both majority and minority rights, and others still define liberalism as some kind of prescription of a political economy with equal opportunity. Anti-apartheid activists could echo the sentiments of Social Gospel theorists of the 1880's in advocating a governmental role in helping remove the hindrances to finding individual fulfillment and be liberalist. At the same time, a business advocate of free enterprise could advocate letting the marketplace bring economic and social reform and still be a liberalist in the laissez-faire tradition.

Those in the Reagan Administration who had advocated using American business interests as a "progressive force" to promote reform in South Africa found themselves in a peculiarly favorable position in the debate over what tactic to use in dealing with that country. That is because their interpretation of liberal morality in the

laissez-faire tradition allowed foreign policy towards South Africa to revolve around the notion of letting the marketplace of that country run and correct itself. If left to itself, South Africa would come around to a system where all citizens would, regardless of race, have both economic and political opportunities. While other liberalists had to worry about compromising their beliefs to strategic or economic interests, the "progressive force" advocates could sit back and wait for the situation to correct itself, leading to the elimination of apartheid.

In searching for an all-encompassing description of liberalism or liberal democratic beliefs, perhaps the most succinct version that came to light was presented in an article by Herbert McCloskey. He saw a virtual "consensus as a state of agreement," concerning a list of American liberal values examined by his peers in the political science discipline. He saw those other political historians and philosophers in a favorable light, and was ill-disposed to duplicate their efforts to verify the existence of a set of liberal values, instead using their classification as his own.¹⁶

What McCloskey did was to, "recognize as an element of American democratic ideology such concepts as consent, accountability, limited or constitutional government, representation, majority rule, minority rights, the principle of political opposition freedom of thought,

¹⁶McCloskey, "Consensus and Ideology..," p. 363.

speech, the press and assembly, equality of opportunity, religious toleration, equality before the law, jury defense, and individual self-determination." Those concepts reflected the consensus of opinion of the opinion leaders that McCloskey looked up to, and will in turn serve to delineate the range of liberal concerns that this thesis will look for when evaluating the commitment of American opinion leaders to a set of moral values based in liberalism and our liberal democratic history and traditions.¹⁷

Perhaps one other problem in assessing whether or not the reaction of American opinion leaders to apartheid means that they are showing a commitment to a liberal form of democracy is defining just what constitutes making a commitment. Clearly an opinion leader such as President Reagan is well versed in using the kind of rhetoric which consistently plays on the reoccurring themes of democracy and freedom, but no matter how well intentioned, rhetoric is nothing without actions to support the words. Part of what this thesis attempts to do is go beyond looking at the expression of public opinions concerning apartheid, and look deeper at the policy actions taken which may or may not have an effect on the continuation of institutionalized racial separation in South Africa. Therefore, we are not just looking at the visibility of the moral opposition to apartheid, but at how this hopefully liberal moral

¹⁷ Ibid.

opposition does or does not translate into clear foreign policy actions that have the effect of demonstrating our moral outrage at apartheid.

What should become clear after examining the commentaries coming from the press and congress is that in part what they were reacting to was a perception on their part that the Reagan Administration's policy of "constructive engagement" did not make a clear moral statement opposing apartheid. Those who were concerned with the immediate abolishment of apartheid would play up the ambiguities of our established policy that, in part, was meant to give a signal the South African government that the United States would not tolerate the continuation of South Africa's racial policies. It was in part through their active opposition to established foreign policy, and the passing of a new, legislatively mandated foreign policy dealing with South Africa, that their own commitment to moral values based in liberal democratic beliefs are displayed, and the United States commitment to those beliefs is demonstrated to the world.

III

ANTI-APARTHEID POLICY, 1948 TO THE PRESENT

If one could point to one common refrain that connects all of the presidential administration's reactions to apartheid, from Truman to Reagan, it would be one of public condemnation of that system of racial segregation and separation as "morally wrong." None of the administrations ever came out in support of apartheid, even though the actions that they took in dealing with the South African government sometimes did little to reflect that particular bias.¹

Prior to 1975, administration policy directed at South Africa shared another similarity, in that this was essentially a non-crisis policy period. With the exception of the Congo crisis in 1960, U.S. relations with Africa in general, and South Africa in particular, were based on stable, business as usual relations directed by the State Department. Africa was not much on the public conscience, nor on the agenda of the State Department, which did not even have an African bureau until 1958. Without public input, the State Department had wide latitude in creating policy directed at any region of Africa, and with specific countries such as South Africa. All this would change in the mid-1970's when there was widespread instability in the

¹Kevin Danaher, The Political Economy of U.S. Policy Toward South Africa, (Boulder:Westview Press, 1985), p. 59.

region of Southern Africa, with Marxist takeovers of white controlled regimes in both Rhodesia and Angola.²

Although the Truman administration had declared its own opposition to apartheid, U.S. policy directed at the country of South Africa during that administration could be summarized as non-interventionistic, as well as being pro-business and pro-regional security. In 1951 the president signed a Mutual Defense Assistance Pact with South Africa, with the intention of enhancing South African national security. The only other action of any importance during the Truman Administration was when the U.S. Export-Import Bank, Atomic Energy Commission, Pentagon and corporate interests decided to invest one billion dollars in the South African uranium industry.³

The Truman administration as well as any of the pre-1975 administrations demonstrate the traits that would characterize our official response to apartheid. Although each administration would disapprove of apartheid and might make symbolic diplomatic gestures, they would combine that with differing levels of economic, technical or military assistance. In the case of the Truman administration, their approach combined little in the way of symbolic gestures, being decidedly non-interventionistic in the internal affairs of South Africa. This would be combined with actions meant both to aid the economy of South Africa

²Ibid.

³Ibid. p. 66.

and enhance its regional security.

Just how applicable is the format developed by Barron and Immerwahr to interpreting the concerns showed by past administrative actions, in this case the actions of the Truman administration? The qualified moral concern is there, with the economic and strategic elements serving to temper our moral stance against apartheid, the signing of a defense pact and loans to the South African uranium industry being more visible than anything else. The Truman administration's position is also decidedly non-interventionistic, although that is less a reflection of some kind of post-Vietnam influence as probably a post-World War II fear of involvement in another conflict. While our policy with South Africa was not overtly anti-communist in nature, it did seem to reflect a need to protect that country from some kind of outside force. It does seem that the Truman administration did take into consideration some of the same concerns that Barron and Immerwahr thought would influence the public's recommendations on how to shape a foreign policy concerned with South Africa and apartheid.

Does the Truman administration's position on dealing with South Africa reflect social justice concerns based in liberalism? As with the other pre-1975 administrations their actions are hard to assess if only because they were limited to diplomatic gesturing rather than open, public statements backed by policies. In the case of the Truman

administration, even diplomatic gestures against apartheid were absent. While officially the Truman administration did not favor apartheid, their policy was one of not trying to influence the internal policies of the South African government, therefore their opposition was somewhat of a weak statement and says little about the commitment of that administration to liberal values.

The Eisenhower administration exhibited a similar lack of activity in regards to its South African policy. The State Department did form an Africa Bureau in 1958, but made no specific policy recommendations that concerned our relations with South Africa. The administration did, however, join with the United Nations in signing a resolution "castigating" the South African government for its racial policies on April 1, 1960.⁴

Two factors seemed to influence this diplomatic "distancing" from the South African government on the part of the Eisenhower administration. One factor was the unsettled condition of domestic race relations during the latter part of Eisenhower's tenure in office. The other factor was a reaction to a pass system protest March 21, 1960 in Sharpsville South Africa, during which 67 blacks were killed by South African security forces. Following the riots that resulted from those killings, the South African government declared a State of Emergency and banned the two key key black political organizations, the African

⁴Ibid. p. 73.

National Congress and the Pan-African Congress. Also jailed at that time was the head of the ANC, Nelson Mandela, a black leader who is still held in detention today, in 1987.⁵

Although the Eisenhower administration's representative to the United Nations pressured the committee writing the UN resolution against apartheid into downgrading the language, from "condemning" the South African government, to "castigating" that government's racial policy, the Eisenhower administration did make a diplomatic move of its own. The official reaction of the U.S. State Department to the UN resolution was to release a press statement saying, "the United States, as a matter of practice, does not ordinarily comment on the internal affairs of governments with which it enjoys normal relations," but in this case it was necessary to express official regret over, "the tragic loss of life resulting from the measures taken against the demonstrators in South Africa."⁶

Aside from this press release on April 1, 1960, there were no further actions taken by the Eisenhower administration to try and influence South Africa's internal policy of apartheid. Trade and investment policies were left to run on their own impetus, with private interests developing business operations in South Africa. In contrast to the Truman administration, there was at least a

⁵Ibid. pp. 70-75.

⁶Ibid. p. 73.

diplomatic effort made to "distance" the Eisenhower administration from the internal policies of the South African government. This could be seen both as a statement of moral concern, such as Baron and Immerwahr would look for, and it also is a reaction to South Africa's repression of peaceful protest effort in Sharpesville, perhaps a concern with the lack of democratic civil rights in that country.

The Eisenhower administration did, however, temper or "qualify" its moral concern over the actions of the South African government, using its leverage to persuade the United Nations to pass a resolution against apartheid symbolically weaker than originally intended. Although it was concerned both with the repression of protest and the following detentions of political leaders and banning of political opposition, the administration did not publicly make those points, instead voicing vague disapprovals while recognizing that it did enjoy normal relations with the South African government. As with the case of the Truman administration, official State Department policy left economic relations alone, while reacting to the events in South Africa with diplomatic gestures instead of open intervention.

Moving into the Kennedy administration, one finds that there is an increase in "symbolic" diplomatic gestures directed at the South African government. In 1961, anti-apartheid activist and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize

for that year, Albert Luthuli, then president general of the African National Congress, was praised by both President Kennedy and the U.S. ambassador to South Africa. On July 4, 1963, several black guests were subsequently invited to independence day celebrations at the American Embassy in South Africa, prompting the government into refusing to send its own emissaries.⁷

More substantively, the Kennedy administration supported a voluntary United Nations arms embargo on shipments to South Africa in 1963. In another diplomatic move, the administration declared a unilateral arms embargo of its own on August 2, 1963, three days prior to the announcement of the United Nations embargo. The U.S. measure, however, was voluntary, with no penalties for non-compliance by American arms exporters.⁸

In contrast to the diplomatic gestures of the Kennedy administration and the arms embargo, the U.S. Department of Commerce came out actively advocating aiding American investment in South Africa. Economic and commercial officers at the U.S. Mission in South Africa were directed to provide both contacts and information on governmental economic assistance to potential investors. This results in the Kennedy administration presenting a somewhat confusing reaction to the situation in South Africa.⁹

⁷Ibid. pp. 78-79.

⁸Ibid. p. 81.

⁹Ibid.

Although the Kennedy administration was taking public steps to distance itself from the South African government and its apartheid policies, that moral concern was "qualified" not as much by the tempering of its public gestures as in its South African economic assistance plan, which the Department of Commerce never once made public. Aside from limiting arms shipments to the South African government, the Kennedy administration did not otherwise intervene in South African affairs, therefore reflecting two of the concerns that Barron and Immerwahr saw as shaping policy, "qualified" moralism and non-interventionism.

Perhaps through its diplomatic gestures, the Kennedy administration was displaying their commitment to opposing racism. In publicly recognizing the head of the African National Congress they also gave some credibility to the political opposition to the South African government, while displaying concern over the lack of political dissent in that country. At least in that way, the Kennedy administration did show a concern over one of the basic values of liberalism as set down in the article by Herbert McCloskey.

Considering that the Johnson administration was heavily involved with trying to sort out the situation in Vietnam, it should come as no surprise that little or no attention was being paid to what was happening in South Africa. The State Department did come out in 1964 advocating having the

security forces of the United Nations supervise the South African occupation of the country of Namibia, and in that same year South African coastal cities were taken off the list of "ports of call" for the U.S. Navy fleet. This latter action was taken after the South African government refused to let black carrier pilots from U.S. ships land and use the facilities at South African airfields, and mixed-race shore parties were not allowed to leave U.S. ships.¹⁰

As an interesting aside, a U.S. News and World Report survey conducted in South Africa in 1964 found that two-thirds of American businessmen working with operations in that country, "viewed apartheid as a legitimate attempt to solve that country's problems, and would vote for one of the political parties supporting apartheid (if they had the vote)." Going into the early 1970's one of the most prosperous periods for South Africa's economy, there was little or no pressure for labor reform taken by American business interests in that country. Such reform efforts would only come with public pressure in the mid-1970's.¹¹

The Johnson administration took what was the last diplomatic gesture exhibiting disapproval of apartheid until the time of the Carter presidency. This gesture, the removal of South African ports of call from U.S. Navy lists, would be prompted by "petty", or social apartheid

¹⁰Ibid. p. 86.

¹¹Ibid. p. 89.

measures, which dictated that blacks could not use the same recreation and public facilities as white crewmen from American ships. At the same time, South Africa had no provisions for black pilots, since there were none in the South African military or commercial airlines. In light of the domestic civil rights situation in America, such policies by the South African government were found offensive to our general sense of social justice if not to any specific violation of liberal values.

Following the relative inactivity of the Johnson administration, the Nixon administration took an active interest in the developing situation in the region of southern Africa, and with the country of South Africa. In response to a perception that various, supposedly Soviet-backed Marxist groups were attempting to gain power in states such as Angola and Rhodesia, the Nixon administration expressed concern over both regional stability and the outcome of Soviet incursions into a previously pro-Western area of influence. A National Security Decision Memorandum of Feb. 1970, based on a study of regional security needs advocated the, "selective relaxation of our stance towards white minority regimes, in the hope that this would encourage some modification of their current racial and political policies." The United States would use economic assistance to both influence peaceful change and help keep these countries aligned with the United States and the rest of the Western economic

community.¹²

Within that National Security Decision Memorandum, specific recommendations that pertained to our relations with South Africa included: relaxing the embargo on arms sales to South Africa; not making Namibia an issue in bilateral relations between the United States and South Africa; altering policies on U.S. investments to provide full Export-Import Bank financing, while avoiding conspicuous trade promotion; and opposing the use of U.S. force or sanctions to coerce reform in South Africa.¹³

Perhaps as a lesson learned from the Vietnam experience, the Nixon administration advocated using a strong South Africa to help police the region of Southern Africa and assist in protecting Western interests against encroachment by the Soviets. In this fashion the U.S. avoided the need for a commitment of military strength, instead relying on financial, technical, and military equipment assistance in a non-direct show of support. As with previous administrations, policy was implemented at the State Department level, with little or no chance for public observation. This concern with avoiding any direct intervention mirrors the concerns Barron and Immerwahr saw as helping shape public recommendations for approaching foreign policy problems in the post-Vietnam era. The Nixon administration also sought to relax the single concrete

¹²Ibid. pp. 92, 94, 99.

¹³Ibid. p. 96.

step the U.S. had taken in opposition to the South African governments use of apartheid, through relaxing the unilateral arms embargo we had declared against that country.

Perhaps in recognizing the fact tht open measures supporting the South African government might stir moral resentment against the administration by the American public, especially our black population, the Nixon administration favored using covert measures to aid that country. Economic assistance and military shipments were State Department or Department of Commerce policies that were not in the view of the general public, allowing the Nixon administration to, at least on the surface, still voice moral disapproval of apartheid, but show little or no support of that moral stance at the policy level.

If one looks for a reason that our official policy regarding South Africa changed to one giving increased levels of military and economic support, the answer seems to lie in the perception that the Soviets were encroaching into the region of southern Africa. It was during the Nixon administration that the tactic of using South Africa's military and economic strength to repel communist incursion in that region really took hold. Though that approach would be repudiated early in the Carter administration, it would once again become our approach going into the Reagan administration and persist until 1986, when it went through legislative revisions.

The period of the Nixon administration also serves to demonstrate how our belief in liberal democratic principles can at times work to the detriment of opposition to apartheid. That administration's worry with communist expansion led it to take steps to protect the stability of the region, and keep those countries within the alliance of Western democratic countries. In doing so, however, that administration also advocated, "selective relaxation" of our opposition to several white minority controlled regimes in that region, in the hope that those countries would modify their racial and political policies that excluded blacks from running their own affairs. In addition, economic assistance was offered as a reward for those countries, making it profitable for them to remain in the Western alliance.

Later in this chapter, when looking at the actions of the Reagan administration, we will once again find them using similar tactics to the Nixon presidency when dealing with South Africa. Much emphasis was given to providing economic support as an incentive for the South African government to reform the structures of apartheid, while playing up that country's role as a stabilizing agent in the region. At the same time, however, our opposition to the apartheid policies of that government would be limited to diplomatic gesturing, steps that the South African government seems to have ignored. One does wonder why the Reagan administration persisted in following this approach,

known in the 1980's as "constructive engagement," since the white minority regimes that the Nixon administration attempted to assist in Rhodesia and Angola did not sufficiently reform their political and racial policies, and eventually were overthrown or supplanted by black majority controlled Marxist governments later in the 1970's.

What is interesting, however, is that the concern of the Nixon administration with regional democracy in southern Africa meant that we turned a somewhat deaf ear to protest against the practices of apartheid or other forms of racial and political discrimination within the countries of that region. One might say that we valued the protection of a system of democratic countries so much that we lost sight of preserving the liberal democratic "practices" that validated our system of governance. Again in the Reagan administration, the vague "hope" of internal reform of apartheid was sufficient for the U.S. to continue to use South African government as a tool to promote regional stability and oppose communist encroachment.

The Ford administration serves, if little else as a springboard for the problems that would plague the Carter administration's efforts to deal with the situation in South Africa and the surrounding region. No new approaches were tried in that two years of transition government, but the domestic racial scene and regional picture in Southern Africa were changing. While there was increased concern at

the domestic level about the civil rights issue of apartheid in South Africa, there was also political upheaval going on in Angola and Rhodesia, with Cuban advisors being sent to aid the Marxist insurgents in Angola.¹⁴

The South African situation came out of the non-crisis policy period closet during the Carter administration, only to find that administration embroiled in disputes between several competing concerns. A public policy towards South Africa based on a concern over human rights violations, would collide with the perceived need for the South African government to assist in finding a peaceful settlement of the regional disputes in Rhodesia, Angola and elsewhere.

Even before the actual beginning of Carter's tenure in office, the Foreign Affairs Task Force of the Democratic Party Platform Drafting Committee, came out with a statement criticizing the past two Republican administrations for, "eight years of indifference accompanied by increasing cooperation with racist regimes." It also accused the previous administration of leaving our influence and prestige in Africa at a historic low. The party platform emphasized that a Democratic administration would:

-follow an "Africa-centered" policy, based on that region's needs, and not an anti-Soviet strategy that attempted to find a solution to problems such as those

¹⁴Ibid. pp. 112-115.

faced in Angola, while rigidly rejecting recognition of popular political movements that had Marxist advisors. In other words, the U.S. should stop supporting repressive regimes as an alternative to allowing Marxist influence in that region;

-show support for majority rule in African nations, and refuse to recognize the white minority government mandated "independence" of homeland areas in South Africa, and the resulting loss of South African citizenship for black South Africans;

-strengthen the voluntary U.S. arms embargo on the country of South Africa;

-deny tax credits to U.S. companies with operations in South Africa that support or participate in apartheid policies or practices.¹⁵

Although most of those party platforms would not be implemented, they would serve as a recognition of the domestic interest of black Americans in the situation in South Africa. It would also assert a de-emphasis on U.S.-Soviet competition in the region of Southern Africa, and focus more on the national aspirations of black Africans. This approach would be decidedly less concerned with assisting existing white regimes than the previous two administrations, instead focusing on checking Soviet influence by, "siding and giving assistance to the oppressed, rather than letting the Soviets do the same,"

¹⁵Ibid. p. 137.

therefore we were aligning ourselves with the political, social and economic interests of the majorities in those countries.¹⁶

The human rights emphasis of the Carter administration would be voiced most strongly during 1977, with the administration coming out saying that we need to, "take visible steps" to distance the U.S. from the South African government, unless there is noticeable movement towards power sharing. The Carter administration emphasized speaking out strongly against apartheid in order to gain credibility with other nations in Southern Africa.¹⁷

This reaction by the Carter administration did not occur in a vacuum. On June 16, 1976, there was an outbreak of violence at a protest meeting in the South African Soweto township resulting in several deaths and the detention of black political leaders. One such leader, Stephen Biko, died later in police custody, admittedly from beatings at the hands of security officers. As a result of this violence, the United Nations, with the concurrence of the United States, voted for a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa, one which replaced the previous voluntary embargo.¹⁸

The Carter administration's hardline stance on human

¹⁶Ibid. p. 142.

¹⁷Ibid. p. 150.

¹⁸Julian R. Freidman, Basic Facts on the Republic of South Africa, (New York:United Nations, 1978), p. 72.

rights violations in South Africa was unfortunately one of the determining factors that led to South African President Vorster's attempt to bring a settlement between the white minority controlled government in Rhodesia and black majority opposition in that country. Concerns over trying to reach an acceptable settlement in Rhodesia, and similar concerns over the continued South African occupation of Namibia dictated that the rhetoric the Carter administration directed against South Africa was toned down to a less strident level.¹⁹

During this same period of time later in the Carter administration outside events in Iran and Soviet intervention in the war in Afghanistan led to a reassertion of worries over communist expansion, possibly into the region of southern Africa. The Marxist forces in that region were being painted more and more as tools of a pro-Soviet force, and the perception that the region might be lost to the Soviets was something that even the Carter administration found strategically unacceptable. By the end of Carter's term in office, concerns over the hostage situation in Iran would further serve to direct public attention away from the situation in South Africa and the issue of apartheid.²⁰

At least in the first two years, the Carter administration downplayed interventionism, an emphasis on

¹⁹Danaher, The Political Economy..., pp. 156- 170.

²⁰Ibid.

economic interest and regional strategy, and concerns over communist encroachment in favor of a human rights stance that recognized the effects of apartheid on the black South African population. This was also the first period in which there was widespread public perception of a crisis in that region of the world, and an awareness of the unrest and detentions within South Africa. The statistics quoted in the introductory chapter of this thesis, dealing with public opinion during the early years of the Carter administration seem to point to the public concurring with the administration that it was proper to pressure South Africa into ending apartheid. Carter did reimpose the voluntary arms embargo that Nixon had relaxed, and discussed denying tax credits to U.S. companies doing business in South Africa which supported apartheid.

It was also during this period of time that public pressure was being felt by those U.S. businesses with operations in South Africa. Talk of actions by stockholders to force businesses to divest their holdings in South Africa, led to the adoption by many companies of a set of principles dictating the management of their South African operations. This set of guidelines, called the Sullivan Principles, were written by the Reverend Leon Sullivan, a black civil-rights activist and member of the Board of Directors of General Motors.²¹

²¹Elizabeth Schmidt, Decoding Corporate Camouflage, (Washington D.C.:Institute for Policy Studies, 1980), p.14.

Briefly, the Sullivan Principles were intended to promote the ending of racial discrimination within U.S. businesses with operations in South Africa, and serve as an example for the restructuring of the workforce throughout that country. U.S. businesses which were signatories to the Sullivan Principle agreed to voluntarily: have equal and fair employment practices for all employees; have non-segregated eating, comfort and work facilities; give equal pay for equal work; initiate and develop training programs that would prepare a substantial number of blacks for supervisory, administrative, clerical and technical jobs; increase the number of blacks in management and supervisory jobs; and improve the quality of life outside the work environment in such areas as housing, schooling and health facilities.²²

As of 1979, approximately half of those companies that did sign the Sullivan Principles rated themselves as "doing a good job" in attaining the first three goals of desegregation, equal pay and equal hiring practices. In comparison, about one fourth of the signatories, approximately forty of the over three hundred companies doing business in South Africa rated themselves as "making progress" in training and promoting black workers or providing assistance for them off the job. One of those companies rating itself as "making progress" on these goals had four black workers in their management training

²²Ibid. pp. 14-16.

program. That company was General Motors, which at that time employed over four thousand workers, more than half of them black. During that period in time it was estimated that less than one percent of the management, supervisory and technical positions were held by black workers, and if every black in training programs in 1979 were hired into these positions that figure would rise, to something under two percent. As a final note, three of the largest U.S employers in South Africa, General Motors, IBM and Coca-Cola announced in 1986 that they were pulling out of their South African operations. Several factors were cited, lowering profits and shareholder opposition being two, but the most interesting reason given was that they could no longer claim to be making any progress in reforming labor practices in South Africa.²³

Towards the end of the Carter presidency, concerns over regional stability and the possible encroachment of communism did lead to the softening of that administration's rhetoric directed at South Africa and the movement of U.S. foreign policy back into diplomatic rather than public scrutiny. Carter's strict human rights stance deteriorated in light of those other concerns, a good illustration of how the conflict of principles and their relative weight shapes opinions under the Barron and Immerwahr format.

Beyond its basic human rights stance, the Carter

²³Ibid. pp. 21-28, 36-39.

administration also exhibited concern over the lack of specific, democratic principles of governance in South Africa. The administration was a signatory of a mandatory United Nation arms embargo and advocated toughening the voluntary measure in the U.S. unless the South African government took noticeable steps toward sharing political power with the black majority. This remained official policy throughout Carter's tenure, although public rhetoric was visibly absent towards the end of that administration.

In contrast to the Nixon administration, early in the Carter administration the emphasis of our policy towards the region of southern Africa switched to a recognition of the need for democratic practice by those countries, rather than the need for a democratic or pro-Western system of states, as stressed by Nixon. Carter's emphasis on majority rule for the states in southern Africa probably frightened some, since it seemed to leave the field open for pro-Marxist governments to take control of much of that region. To counter those Marxist tendencies, the Carter administration would advocate giving economic assistance and forging diplomatic ties with the black majority interests in those countries, in effect giving the black majority an economic incentive to side with the U.S. rather than with the Soviets. This approach would change once again with the onset of the Reagan administration.

The Reagan Administration

One problem with assessing America's reaction to apartheid by looking at examples of its official foreign policy stance is that those approaches, as in the Reagan administration's policy of "constructive engagement" is not solely concerned with apartheid, or the situation in South Africa. As demonstrated by several of the previous administrations, our policy can be vocally anti-apartheid, diplomatically neutral, and pro-investment, all at the same time. In addition there are regional concerns over both the internal stability of each country, how its population is represented and the strategic importance of the region as a whole.

One aid in examining the policy stance of the Reagan administration, and its approach to apartheid, is that it had changed little from its inception in 1981 until a 1986 legislative mandate changed our approach in September of that year. While stability and consistency is favorable from a foreign policy standpoint, enhancing our regional credibility, another question is whether or not that policy takes into consideration the changes, or lack of change in that regions political climate, and in the actions of each individual state.

There have been several significant changes within the country of South Africa, changes that perhaps were misinterpreted or ignored by the Reagan administration. In 1983 South Africa ratified a new constitution, one which

places more power in the executive, who can now veto legislation without appeal. The executive can also dissolve parliament, pass orders approved by a plebiscite of the white population and decide which parliamentary body will hear and vote on legislative proposals. There is no bill of rights as such, nor allowance for black participation in national government. In both 1985 and 1986 President P.W. Botha reacted to political protest by declaring a State of Emergency, restricting the civil and political rights of all South Africans.²⁴

As stated in the beginning of this chapter, each succeeding administration since Truman has always asserted that apartheid is morally wrong. The Reagan administration's policy on apartheid also accepts two other assumptions: that influential reform elements in South African now philosophically reject apartheid or "separate development," and are only looking for an excuse to abandon that outmoded policy; and, that a free-market economy will act as a "progressive force" to promote liberal and equitable economic, political and social change.²⁵

Whether or not those second two assumptions are valid is

²⁴Roger Omond, The Apartheid Handbook, (New York:Penguin Books, 1985), pp. 39-40; Chester Crocker, "An Update of Constructive Engagement in South Africa," Department of State Bulletin, January 1985, pp. 5-7.

²⁵Kenneth Dam, "South Africa: The Case Against Sanctions," Dept. of State Bulletin, June 1985, pp. 36-37.

open to discussion. Perhaps in spite of events in the intervening years, the Reagan administration continued to go along with the first assessment of the situation in South Africa made by Chester Crocker, now Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, and then, in 1980, Director of African Studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies at the Georgetown School of Foreign Service. Crocker provided an outline for our policy of "constructive engagement," along with an explanation of the underlying justifications for that policy in a Foreign Affairs article late in 1980.

Crocker begins by asserting that "America needs to be less gullible in responding to the dissonant babble of voices coming from South Africa." In part, he is asking Americans to see South Africa as that country views itself, avoiding our own "parochialism" in suggesting solutions for their problems. We should recognize that black South Africans are themselves experimenting with strategies for reform, while white minority governmental politics are, "demonstrating a degree of fluidity and pragmatism that is without precedent."²⁶ One should note, however, that this assessment of Crocker's was his own, provided with little supporting documentation.

Pointing to the fluidity and pragmatism of the South African government, Crocker asserts that although it does

²⁶Chester Crocker, "South Africa: Strategy for Change," Foreign Affairs 59 (Winter 1980/81): 324.

not make meaningful and evolutionary change in apartheid laws certain, change is possible for the first time in decades. This is important since one fundamental goal of U.S. policy is the emergence of a society in South Africa with which the U.S. can pursue its varied interest in a full and friendly relationship, "without constraint, embarrassment or political damage." This necessitates a purposeful evolutionary change to a non-racial democracy, the U.S. could not condone a system that was racist either purposefully or in effect.²⁷

Crocker emphasizes that change in South Africa will necessarily be slow and evolutionary in nature, and only if it involves all South Africans regardless of race will it lead to the nurturing of "institutions we value, democracy, pluralism, stable and decent government, non-racialism and a strong market economy." To support that change the United States should both keep pressure on South Africa to change, but also be quick to recognize positive movement by the South African government. The problem with the Carter administration's approach was that it took a public hardline stance, while working under the table to get South African cooperation over Rhodesia and Namibia.²⁸

It was also asserted by Crocker that the American public focuses too much on the final goal of a non-racial state in South Africa, one with full black political

²⁷Ibid. p. 325.

²⁸Ibid.

participation. Instead we should realize that change will be extremely slow and evolutionary, and look instead for the small, intermediate steps leading to the final goal. Since we have limited power to influence the South African government, we should stick to addressing those major issues we can influence through channels such as our business involvement. Of necessity, events will shape our eventual policy, but we should be satisfied at times with "open-ended" amelioration by the South African government, as long as the final goal is a non-racial political order. As such, Crocker is asking the American people not to be impatient with change on a diplomatic timetable that could stretch for decades before attaining a non-racial state.²⁹

As stated earlier, Crocker based his assesment on the situation in South Africa by accepting two assumptions: that the Afrikaaner majority in the white controlled government were becoming more pragmatic, agreeing that apartheid or "separate development" is unworkable as set down by the Malan administration in the 1940's, also, South Africa recognizes that petty, or "social" apartheid restrictions on interracial marriages and segregation of public facilities are offenseve and hurtful to the black majority, and "territorial" apartheid, setting up the homelands is an economic failure and dragging down the whole economy, and is searching for reform.³⁰

²⁹Ibid. p. 327.

³⁰Ibid. p. 328.

The second assumption that Crocker and others in the Reagan administration accepted was colloquially termed the, "victory of rational economics." According to Crocker, the South African government had rejected state run capitalism and welfare statism for private sector job creation and non-racial socioeconomic advancement. Potential barriers to black economic opportunity and the mobility of labor and capital were being removed, leading inevitably to the questioning of the practice of confining black citizenship rights to tribal homelands and a pragmatic adjustment to both regional change and the need to find workers for a growing economy.³¹

This assumption comes almost directly from the "progressive force" hypothesis proposed by an English born South African business magnate, Henry Oppenheimer. First considered in the 1950"s "progressive force" economics literally mandated liberal social, civil and political change in order to facilitate a healthy free-market environment. It also hypothesized that economic progress would inevitably lead to liberalization of both society and government, breaking down all barriers such as racial segregation, which would restrict a free-market economy.³²

In accepting these assumptions, Crocker considered and rejected another interpretation of the facts coming out of

³¹Ibid.

³²Janice Love, The U.S. Anti-Apartheid Movement, (New York:Praeger, 1985), pp. 70-71.

South Africa. Instead of "progressive force" dictating political and social change, economic development could be used to distract attention from the need for substantial change in race relations, and a strong economy could strengthen white control instead of backing evolutionary change. Tangible change such as the establishment of black urban councils, labor law reforms, expansion of trade union rights and dwindling "petty" apartheid was only being implemented in the urban areas, not across the country.³³

In this alternative view of the situation in South Africa, governmental policy was viewed as a response to pressure and disruption, and not much more than cosmetic measures to allay international criticism of its practices. It ignored major faults such as the lack of black housing in urban areas, inequitable access to education and restrictions on black free enterprise. What is more significant is that the emphasis of both the South African government and American business interests has been on reform geared at accommodating comparatively prosperous urban blacks, while nothing significant has been done about poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and hunger among the rapidly expanding homeland population.³⁴

Those citing this alternative view also stress that the South African policy of giving homelands "independence" and letting them seek their own political and economic

³³Crocker, "South Africa: Strategy...", p. 329.

³⁴Ibid.

development has not been refuted in word or practice. The homelands are seen as a rural dumping ground for those who fail to find a niche in the white controlled economy. People are still being removed from the urban areas, since the economy cannot generate the necessary three hundred thousand new jobs each year to keep black unemployment from rising, and blacks can live in urban areas only if they can find work. Most of the new business opportunities in South African are also capital instead of labor intensive, including American business operations, exacerbating the unemployment problem. In South Africa, government and business still question each other's role in promoting development of support services such as housing, and who should provide the necessary training for black, colored and asian workers, workers necessary to fill an increasing number of technical jobs.³⁵

In this alternative view to the position presented by Crocker, South African President Botha's and the government's commitment to moderate reform is not as much questioned as is the intent of that reform. As Crocker himself admits, South African governmental reform efforts were, "perhaps only a minimal change in the distribution of political power and economic rewards," in order to stabilize the government and economy. It could point to a, "continued defiance and repression of demands for basic democracy and meaningful change."³⁶ South Africa's

³⁵Ibid.

investment in arms production, a military buildup and synthetic fuels development could be seen as a move to be self-reliant, able to minimize the effects of any possible international embargoes as it asserts a hardline stance against apartheid reform. Such development would allow South Africa to retreat into the "laager" or stronghold of its own community.³⁷

In rejecting this alternative assessment, Crocker insists that South African President P.W. Botha leads a group of "new nationalists" who will compromise and reform that country's policies, and "although there has been no substantial mandate for major change yet, lesser reforms are widely accepted."³⁸ What has yet to be proven, even seven years later, is if those lesser reforms are geared to the final goal of ending apartheid, or if they serve some less obvious goal, one seeking the preservation of the main

³⁶Ibid. p. 330.

³⁷note: see Roger Omond, The Apartheid Handbook, (New York:Penguin, 1985); and Elizabeth Schmidt, Decoding Corporate Camouflage, (Washington D.C.:Institute for Policy Studies, 1980), for background statistics that verify this "alternative" view of apartheid reform; and, Bo Baskin, Business in the Shadow of Apartheid, (Lexington:D.C. Heath, 1985), for several essays, unfortunately without supporting statistics, favoring the reformist and "progressive force" view on South Africa.

³⁸Crocker, "South Africa: Strategy...", p. 337.

structural features of apartheid, while using their security forces to maintain order in the face of black unrest. Considering that South Africa has spent the last year and a half under a national State of Emergency, resulting in severe restrictions of civil rights and almost total press censorship, one wonders both about Crocker's optimism about the chances for reform expressed in 1980, and why it continued to be reflected in American foreign policy directed toward the South African government until August 1986?

Perhaps one answer to that question lies in recognizing that normalizing relations with the South African government is critical to our policy of "constructive engagement," and those relations could not justifiably be normalized until there is the semblance of reform in apartheid, or at least the perception of reform. That is because "constructive engagement" is more than a policy aimed at ending apartheid. It is also a framework for a regional strategy that emphasizes the strategic importance of a strong and stable South Africa that is firmly aligned with and enjoys normal relations with the U.S. and the western alliance. At least the appearance of reform in apartheid was necessary to normalize relations, and until then, symbolic efforts such as the arms embargo would signal our displeasure, as much for the benefit of other states in South Africa, as for the American public.³⁹

³⁹Ibid. p. 347.

As asserted by Crocker in 1980, when the "constructive engagement" was developed, and reasserted throughout the Reagan administration, the real choice in the 1980's concerned our readiness to compete with our global adversary, the Soviet Union, for influence in southern Africa. Through the delivery of increased tangible support for the security and development of all states in that region, "the American stance must be firmly supportive of a regional climate conducive to compromise and accommodation, in the face of concerted effort (by the Soviets) to discredit evolutionary change."⁴⁰ In a worse case scenario, the U.S. must consider the risks of standing by South Africa, in spite of its politics, since it is both geographically strategic and a major supplier of necessary mineral resources.⁴¹

As seen by the Reagan administration, the dilemma of our relationship with South Africa is not that our democratic principles and interests in the region compete with each other, but that we need to develop a policy that adequately reflects our moral principles, our interests as an international power, and deals with the "realities" in South Africa. At the same time the Reagan administration stressed that, "U.S. values and interests can only be served by a strengthened framework of regional security," enhanced by systematic progress for peaceful change in

⁴⁰Ibid. p. 345.

⁴¹Ibid.

South Africa. We must still oppose laws and practices in South Africa that offend basic concepts of due process and constitutional government, since any system, such as South Africa's, that denies political rights on the basis of race is repugnant. South Africa must evolve "peacefully but decisively to a system compatible with basic norms of justice, liberty and human dignity."⁴²

Those same themes, stressing the strategic importance of South Africa, but at the same time signifying our distaste of its racial policies are found in an address given on July 22, 1986 to the World Affairs Council and Foreign Policy Association by President Reagan. He said on that occasion that, "apartheid is morally wrong and politically unacceptable, the U.S. cannot maintain cordial relations with a government whose power rests on the denial of rights for a majority of people based on race."⁴³

Reagan also asserted that we could not impose sanctions on, or walk away from South Africa, since it was both "the key to regional economic interdependence and strategically one of the most vital regions in the world," both because of its position on the Cape of Good Hope and because of its repository of many of the vital minerals for which the west has no other secure supply. The Soviets must realize that,

⁴²Chester Crocker, "An Update of Constructive Engagement," Dept. of State Bulletin, January 1985, p. 5.

⁴³"South Africa," Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, 26 July 1986, pp. 1698-1700.

and would be the main beneficiary of cross-border violence between the African national Congress and the South African government. Only the Soviets would gain if evolutionary change failed and the region was destabilized.⁴⁴

Although the Reagan administration describes the situation in South Africa as "Practices that offend our basic norms of justice," that is not to say that they advocated "American" solutions to the situation in South Africa. Reagan also insisted that it was, "arrogance to insist that uniquely American ideas and institutions... could be transplanted to South African soil." One-man, one-vote democracy was still somewhere far in the future.⁴⁵

By 1986, even the Reagan administration was exhibiting some impatience with the pace of reform in South Africa. In order to demonstrate that progress was truly being made in South Africa they called on the Pretoria government to:

- set a timetable for elimination of apartheid laws.
- free all political prisoners including Nelson Mandela.
- allow previously banned political movements, with the exception of those advocating terrorism.
- begin dialogue for a system where the rights of the majority, the minority, and individuals are protected by law.⁴⁶

⁴⁴Ibid. p. 1699.

⁴⁵Ibid. p. 1700.

⁴⁶Ibid. p. 1701

Interestingly enough, in this 1986 speech, Reagan dropped the demand that South Africa accept an internationally recognized settlement over that country's occupation of Namibia. From 1980-1985 the administration had insisted that this step was one of the pre-conditions that would lead to enhancement of regional stability and better relations between South Africa and her neighbors. Perhaps such an insistence was seen as counterproductive, since U.S. administrations had been urging South Africa to settle its occupation of Namibia since 1964 with no result.⁴⁷

Perhaps one final example will serve to demonstrate both how different groups view actions taken by the South African government, and how resistant that country has been to U.S. influence or persuasion.

In August 1985, the Reagan administration made an attempt to convey to the South African government its displeasure over the State of Emergency declared in that country on July 20, 1985. A delegation including National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane and Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, Chester Crocker, went to Vienna to meet with South African Foreign Affairs Minister, Pik Botha. The message they bore was that it was time for South Africa to reassess its apartheid policies, and make "bold decisions" in pressing for reform.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Chester Crocker, "The U.S. and South Africa: A Framework For Progress," Dept. of State Bulletin, October 1985, p. 6.

Chester Crocker came away from that meeting feeling that "we have seen some tentative signs of a reappraisal of policy in South Africa." He thought that the recent events had triggered a period of review in the South African leadership. According to Crocker, the South Africans "appeared to recognize that the underlying issue of political change had to be addressed and negotiations launched" with black leaders.⁴⁹ Robert McFarlane came away from the same meeting feeling that President Botha would make a major address advocating reform sometime soon.⁵⁰

South African President Botha did make a speech one week later on August 12, 1985. Chester Crocker reacted to that speech by pointing out the following highlights:

- Botha recognized that key features of apartheid, such as influx control and pass laws were "on the agenda" for change. (just where and when was not specified).
- Botha showed a renewed commitment to reform, including certain ideas on black citizenship.
- the Botha government accepted the "principle" of participation by all South Africans in an "undefined" constitution. (Plans were discussed, but later tabled, for a commission to consider a new constitution, with black members on the commission).
- the Botha government had stated its willingness to call for negotiations on these issues. (One year after

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid.

that speech there had still been no substantive negotiation with black leaders of the political opposition, with the exception of leaders in homeland areas appointed by the South African government).⁵¹

According to Crocker, Botha's speech was an "important statement," that discussed the issues and was an element of ongoing progress. He advocated that the U.S. keep in contact with all parties in South Africa, continue to support economic development, and continue to voice clearly our principles against both racism and violence by the government and black South Africans and the continued existence of apartheid, or "separate development" policies.⁵²

Unlike Crocker's assertion that South Africa was trying to address the issue of reform, the writers of the Congressional Quarterly and members of Congress were less impressed. According to the Congressional Quarterly and its assessments, "Botha took a hardline stance" in rejecting immediate reform, a step "that virtually guaranteed Congressional anti-apartheid sanctions legislation passing over a presidential veto." Botha was seen as rejecting Reagan's insistence that the time had come to make bold decisions for reform.⁵³

The congressional reaction was similar, with even extreme conservatives voicing their disappointment over

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid, p. 7.

⁵³Congressional Quarterly, August 17, 1986, p. 1652.

President Botha's speech. Representative Siljander, R-Mich., one of the House leaders of those Republicans seeking to block sanctions legislation said that, "South Africa's refusal to pledge immediate change means that Reagan has no ammunition to continue to oppose anti-apartheid legislation."⁵⁴

President Reagan, in reacting to the outcome of his attempt at influencing South Africa's reform efforts, took a "wait and see" attitude. Ostensibly, he was watching to find out if black South African leaders found Botha's proposals credible, and if negotiations with black leaders had actually started. Apparently, the administration's position was that their attempt at influencing South Africa may have produced a renewed climate for change in that country. Unfortunately, this optimism was not shared by others, including members of Congress.⁵⁵

Throughout the first five and a half years of the Reagan administration, U.S. policy directed apartheid and the situation in South Africa showed a tendency to stress the same set of assumptions, irregardless of the internal changes in that country. Apartheid was still viewed as "morally wrong," but official U.S. policy was directed at not alienating the government of South Africa by pressing too hard for reform. In spite of appearances, Botha and National Party leaders were still perceived by the Reagan

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Ibid.

administration as rejecting apartheid since it was unworkable, but they were slow to initiate reforms that might find little favor among the white Afrikaaner population. Economic "progressive force" would slowly change South Africa out of necessity, and hopefully the whole region would align itself with the U.S. when they saw the progress we had brought about in South Africa through peaceful, evolutionary change.⁵⁶

Although the material on the Reagan administration's policy with South Africa spans a number of years, the continuity of the viewpoint it expresses, favoring "constructive engagement," makes it easy to assess as to the application of the format used by Barron and Immerwahr. In this case, our moral disapproval of apartheid came in conflict with both our strategic and economic interests in South Africa, and with the administration's worry over the expansion of communism in that region of the world. Interventionism was out of the question, both because South Africa was perceived as reforming itself, and because military options were considered foolhardy when dealing with a nation that had not only over four hundred thousand trained militia and was a major arms supplier.

It does seem that the major emphasis of Reagan's South Africa policy lies somewhere other than an emphasis in opposing apartheid. The main thrust of our policy of "constructive engagement" was concerned with promoting

⁵⁶Crocker, "The U.S. and South Africa...", pp. 5-7.

regional stability and growth, in an effort to prevent the expansion of communist influence. Therefore, the protection of South Africa as a strong political power, and a key to regional strategy, was both geographically and economically important. Concern with the internal racial policies of South Africa sometimes appears as almost an afterthought. As such, the Reagan administration's policy of "constructive engagement" clearly presents itself as an example where moral considerations, although given rhetorical support, were perceived as less important than other qualifying considerations such as regional stability and the need to prevent an incursion of communism.

Perhaps one reason that the Reagan administration could underemphasize the importance of a moral response to apartheid was because it had convinced itself that there was both a commitment to reform by the South African leadership, and that "progressive force," a kind of free-market economic determinism, would by itself lead to the eventual removal of racial barriers to both economic and political equality.

In dealing with the information on the Reagan administration's position one finds, as stated earlier, a clear rhetorical support for opposing apartheid. This rhetoric is phrased in such a fashion that apartheid's practices are presented in juxtaposition to liberal values. Reagan has, on occasion described apartheid's practices as the lack of due process, the lack of a constitutional

government, a denial of political rights based on race, lacking liberty and denying economic opportunity to all South Africans. All these are liberal values expressed in the McCloskey article, and part of our tradition of liberal democracy.

There is a question, however, as to Reagan's ability as a rhetorical stylist, and the actual actions that have followed his speechmaking. In spite of the rhetorical concern for liberal values, and the moral opposition to apartheid they publicly signified, our policy actions during the Reagan administration did little to press for the reform of apartheid. Others, in looking for reform in South Africa, and not finding it to their satisfaction would eventually question the approach of the Reagan administration, bringing the debate to the floor of the Congress.

Critics would be quick to point out one other fault of "constructive engagement," that it relies on an interpretation of the economic forces shaping South Africa's future, an interpretation not shared by others outside of the administration. This "progressive force" argument for allowing market forces to open up economic and political opportunity is little more than an extension of laissez-faire liberalist economics found in the American 19th century.

One might argue that economic "progressive force" places too much trust in marketplace capitalist self-interest, but

that criticism does not attack the basic assumption that laissez-faire freedom of economic opportunity is a form of liberalism being used to justify a policy stance. It also served as a justification for non-interventionism in South Africa's internal affairs, since a democratic capitalist, or laissez-faire capitalist free-market environment was perceived as working best without governmental interference. In this case Reagan's own moral constraint, a trust in free-market liberalism, fit neatly into a schema of security and strategic interests that could best be served by promoting regional economic development in Southern Africa.

There is a certain similarity of approaches between both the Reagan and Nixon administrations, although the justifications they used for their policies would differ. Each would stress the need for a regional system of democratic governments in Southern Africa. While Reagan would justify that approach with the belief that democratic countries with free-market economics would always reform away any inequities in economic or political opportunity, Nixon would justify a similar policy by playing up the need to exclude communist influence. Of course the Nixon administration did not have to worry as much about justifying its policy stance, since he was operating in a period when South African foreign policy was non-crisis policy, directed by the State Department, with little public oversight.

A problem did arise eventually with using this type of approach to deal with apartheid, South Africa, and the region of Southern Africa as parts of a single "constructive engagement" policy. After almost six years of insistence that South Africa was indeed reforming, the lack of visible progress would prompt elements within the press and the Congress to question whether or not our policy was capable of, or even meant to pressure the South African government into abandoning apartheid. As with the Carter administration, and its emphasis of human rights and questioning of our regional strategy in Southern Africa, concern would once again be shown over whether or not South Africa, or other countries in the region, were following the "practices" of liberal democracies. This switch from looking for democratic systems, under the Reagan administration, to judging the South African situation and apartheid based on how they failed to reflect democratic "practices" such as majority rule, would set the stage for debates in the press and in Congress.

IV

THE PRESS AND APARTHEID

This chapter looks at a selection of editorial and opinion commentaries gleaned during a three month period following the declaration of a new State of Emergency in South Africa on June 12, 1986, and preceding the vote in Congress on overriding a presidential veto of anti-apartheid legislation. The primary sources consisted of eight large distribution, nationwide daily newspapers, three local newspapers, and five news and political commentary magazines. In the case of the magazine articles, a search was made back to January 1985, the intention being to examine if there was a continuity of opinions leading up to the period when the other articles were written.¹

There appear to be several dominant themes running through these opinion articles. In each, the topic of apartheid was interrelated with concerns about both the current situation in South Africa, and U.S. policy towards that country. Opinion articles dealing with apartheid invariably mentioned one or both of those other concerns.

¹The national papers were the: Chicago Tribune; Los Angeles Times; Christin Science Monitor; New York Times; Minneapolis Star and Tribune; San Francisco Chronicle; St. Paul Dispatch; and The Washington Post. Local papers: Bismark Tribune; Fargo Forum; and Grand Forks Herald. New and political magazines: National Review; New Republic; The Nation; The Progressive; and U.S. News and World Report.

Another observation was that all of the articles from the period in question were written by what Herbert McCloskey would call, "opinion leaders," people ranging from newspaper editors and columnists to university professors. It was to be expected that the issue of apartheid might be of such low salience among the general public that there would be few letters to the editor commenting on that topic, but it was surprising that during the period following June 12, 1986 there were no letters in any of the newspapers examined.²

The relative apathy about this area of foreign relations contrasts with the outspokenness of the American public on other issues. For example, the administration's support of the Contras in Nicaragua generated several letters to the editors both pro and con each week in both the local and national newspapers. This perhaps reflects the supposition of Barron and Immerwahr that the American public, although more involved in foreign affairs than in the past, is selective as to which topics they will show interest in. The high amount of visibility given to the Contra issue by President Reagan and their supposedly anti-communist activities in a region quite close to the United States seems to have given this issue an importance not shared by the issue of apartheid in South Africa.

²Herbert McCloskey, "Consensus and Ideology in American Beliefs," American Political Science Review, June 1964, pp. 361-384.

One similarity shared by all of the newspaper editorials and commentaries is that they appeared to be generated in response to a specific event, such as the declaration of a State of Emergency in South Africa. The common pattern was that editorial opinions would appear within a week of the event, with commentaries by columnists appearing at the same time, but continuing for several weeks after the triggering event. The interrelation of the topics of apartheid, current events and U.S. policy is apparent, since an event situated in South Africa generated comments not only on that event, but its relationship to the overall policy of apartheid, and a review of U.S. foreign policy dealing with South Africa.

In a similar fashion, a July 22, 1986 speech by President Reagan on U.S. policy toward South Africa brought about a second set of commentaries, once again dealing with the whole range of concerns, from apartheid, to strategic interests, to current events and U.S. foreign policy. What was interesting to note was that the values stressed by individual authors in their commentaries remained relatively stable over time though their work was phrased in reference to specific events. While public opinion in general may have been polarized by events, these specific opinion leaders did not appear to change their stances taken in earlier articles. This perhaps reflects an assertion made by Herbert McCloskey, that opinion leaders are more committed to the values that they choose to stress

than the public in general.

After reading and analyzing the editorials and commentaries, six general themes appear to have been stressed by the various authors. They were:

1. General information on the situation in South Africa and the policy of apartheid.
2. Articles supportive of the South African government and advocating non-intervention in that country's internal affairs.
3. Articles supportive of increasing U.S. involvement through the use of sanctions or other actions.
4. The worry over communism in Southern Africa.
5. America's strategic interests in South Africa and the surrounding region.
6. The moral question, of what is wrong with apartheid and what the United States should do about it.

Of course none of these commentaries concentrates solely on a single, extremely well defined issue or theme, but the general concerns expressed by the authors can be grouped into these six classifications.

Most of the above categories fit into the Barron and Immerwahr format which stresses three primary concerns: moral constraints "qualified" by strategic or economic considerations; avoiding interventionism or military involvement; and, containing communist expansion in a state or region. This is in spite of the fact that the format developed by Barron and Immerwahr was intended to predict

how the general public would develop opinions on foreign policy issues. (see table IV.1)

Barron and Immerwahr Format

<u>Themes</u>	Moral Constraints	Avoiding Intervention	Containing Communism	Other Concerns
Information				(7)
Non-Intervention		(4)		
Intervention		(see text)		(9)
Communism			(5)	
Strategic Interests	(8)			
Moral Constraints	(20)			

(numbers in parentheses indicates number of articles)

Table IV.1

There are several reasons why not all the themes stressed in the articles fit into the format set forth in the Barron and Immerwahr article. One reason was that seven articles were concerned with presenting information on apartheid and the situation in South Africa, and not with expressing opinions as such. Although the comments within these articles were shaped by the author's outlook, the information presented does not fit neatly into any category.

Another reason why the articles do not all fit into the Barron and Immerwahr format is that there are a number of commentaries, nine to be exact, that advocate increasing our level of intervention in the South African government's handling of apartheid reform, not avoiding intervention, as Barron and Immerwahr would have predicted. This was in part a reflection of the perception that the Botha government was not taking active steps in reforming apartheid.

One should note, however, that there were several restrictions on what types of intervention would be allowed. Direct military intervention, once considered feasible in the early 1960's, was no longer seen as a valid response to inaction on the part of the South African government. This does appear, however, less a reflection of a fear of military involvement as an acceptance of the reality that the South African government has a large security force, and that it might use that force in reprisals against its own citizens or other neighboring nations if anyone tried to directly intervene in their affairs.

In the Public Opinion article, Barron and Immerwahr defined the concern with non-intervention as, "avoiding another Vietnam-type situation."³ What they thought the public would wish to avoid was the chance that we would become involved with the losing side of a battle in an obscure country, with the Soviets involved indirectly in supporting the other side. In addition, the American

public was seen as advocating the avoidance of any situation where the U.S. would be engaged in an unwarranted intervention in the internal affairs of a country not important to our continued existence.

Only, in considering the South African situation, the concerns cited in support of not intervening in South African affairs differs from those stressed by Barron and Immerwahr. As will be seen later in this chapter, those advocating non-intervention would do so either because they thought the South African government was capable of taking care of its own affairs, and protecting U.S. strategic interests in the area, while protecting the region from additional communist encroachment, or because they were opposed to South African blacks either participating in or controlling that government. Opposition to black participation would be based both on the fear of communist influence in black political movements and barely concealed racial slurs on the capabilities of blacks to govern themselves.

The remaining themes stressed in the editorials and commentaries do fit into the other two categories of concerns that Barron and Immerwahr identified. There is a distinct worry among some authors about the presence of communism in the region of Southern Africa. Another selection of articles delve into the relationship between

³Deborah Durfee Barron & John Immerwahr, "The Public Views South Africa," Public Opinion, Jan./Feb. 1979, p. 56.

the United States and South Africa, concentrating on considering what strategic and economic interests must be considered when attempting to address the moral wrong of apartheid. Finally, a large selection of articles concentrated on addressing the moral considerations involved when dealing with apartheid and U.S. support of a government that practices institutionalized racial segregation.

Referring back to Table IV.1, one notes a certain skewing in the distribution of articles across the range of six general themes. Although the articles were gathered from a less than complete random sampling of newspapers and magazines, an attempt was made to include in this sample every editorial or commentary primarily concerned with apartheid, the situation in South Africa and U.S. foreign policy with that country, excluding only those articles that were duplicates of ones found in other newspapers. This duplication did happen quite frequently on political commentaries, perhaps due to the fact that many newspapers subscribe to the same syndication services. The time span used in gathering these articles reflects what seems to be a limited attention span even among the press to an issue such as apartheid. There were few if any editorials or commentaries focusing on the issue of apartheid either before the declaration of a State of Emergency in South Africa on June 12, 1986, and commentaries turned to other issues after a limited resolution of our official stance on

apartheid through the passing of a legislative package of sanctions in September 1986.

The themes stressed in the articles examined seem to point to a concentration of concerns in one area, that being the moral concerns about apartheid, and the economic and strategic restrictions to expressing a moral stance. Out of a total of fifty three editorials and commentaries, twenty stressed a moral concern, while another eight emphasized the economic and strategic interests that were taken into consideration when deciding whether or not to take policy actions against the South African government.

In contrast, only four articles openly advocated non-intervention in the situation in South Africa. All of those articles would be found in either one editorial by a conservative columnist working for the St. Paul Dispatch, or in the National Review, a political commentary magazine that seems to exhibit a somewhat conservative bias in its presentation of material. Similarly, there were only five articles concerned with the question of communism in Southern Africa, and three of those were all written by an editor of the Christian Science Monitor. This perhaps reflects a bias towards the concerns of that paper's readership, or the bias of that particular editor.

As noted earlier, there were a number of articles advocating some kind of increased intervention in the internal affairs of the South African government. Compared to the four articles advocating non-intervention, three of

which came from a single source, there were nine advocating intervention in South African affairs. Those opinions would come from nine different political columnists ranging from conservatives such as William Safire, to liberals such as Flora Lewis. This appears to be a reflection of the increased perception both that there was not adequate reform of apartheid practices in South Africa, and that our policy of "constructive engagement" did not adequately put pressure on the South African government to increase their reform efforts. Most of the twenty articles concerned with our moral reaction to apartheid seem to address a similar concern, that not enough is being done to end apartheid.

How does one reach those conclusions? The remainder of this chapter looks in depth at a number of articles within the six general themes identified earlier, concentrating on pointing out the individual concerns that those authors stressed and how they did or did not fit into any generalized pattern of concerns. In addition, those articles will be analyzed in an effort to present whether or not liberal values were stressed in their writing.

What seems clear is that liberal values, such as those presented in the McCloskey article, do play a role in shaping these authors' moral concern over the practice of racial apartheid. What differs is the extent to which that moral concern shapes opinions of each author and the specific actions that he or she advocates, and how other concerns, such as the fear of communist encroachment or the

perception of strategic or economic interests interrelates with their value preferences. Through examining these individual concerns, one will hopefully gain additional understanding of what exactly shapes their reactions to the issues surrounding apartheid, what role liberal values play in this reaction, and how they provided both an interpretation of past U.S. actions in dealing with apartheid, and recommendations for future actions, recommendations considered by various members of the administration and congress during the debates over applying congressional sanctions against the South African government.

Apartheid and the Situation in South Africa

Is there a common theme that ties together the seven articles which concentrated on presenting information on the then current situation in South Africa? There appears to be, and it is in part a rejection of the notion put forth by the Reagan administration that the South African government had accepted that apartheid, or "separate development" would not work in the long run, and was serious about continued reforms geared to ending apartheid.

Although five of the seven articles appeared within a week after the declaration of a new State of Emergency in South Africa, on June 12, 1986, not all expressed concerns solely about the effect of the new governmental restrictions on individual freedom. For example, an article in the June 15, 1986 Chicago Tribune dealt with the

continuing efforts of the South African government to promote key features of the policy of "separate development."

As the author notes, "South Africa is spending millions of dollars to promote a cause it has officially abandoned." He is referring to an effort by the South African government to finance the building of a new capitol in the homeland areas known as KwaNdebele, and the effort to subsidize industries to promote their relocating there. All this effort was being put forth in preparation for declaring that homeland "independent" on Dec 11, 1986. Supposedly, the official homeland government, led by a tribal chief, who also happened to be a truckdriver with a third grade education and government appointed minister, had requested that his homeland be declared an independent state.⁴

This article concentrated on presenting two issues. one was that the South Arican government was still attempting to develop a separate economic and political community in KwaNdebele. The other issue was that opposition to declaring the homeland "independent," was both being ignored by the national government in South Africa, and was being repressed within the homeland by a vigilante force working with the appointed official head of the homeland.⁵

⁴"Independence Spells Exile for Black Homelands of South Africa," Chicago Tribune, 15 June 1986, sec. 5, p. 3.

⁵Ibid.

A second article in the Christian Science Monitor questioned the extent to which the South African government was actually committed to reforming apartheid. It called recent reforms in pass laws "too little and too late" to be meaningful to the black South African population. The government was seen as becoming more militant instead of reform minded, in part because of the declaration of a new State of Emergency. The author pointed to the recent air and commando strikes by South African security forces against suspected African National Congress guerilla bases as another indicator that the government was moving from reform to confrontation with its black political opposition. In response, the author suggested that the U.S. should use what limited leverage it had through increased economic sanctions to press for reform, even if we were making more of a moral declaration than applying an effective tool to force reform efforts.⁶

Several of the articles reporting on the situation in South Africa concentrated on reviewing that government's reaction to the recommendations of a seven member Commonwealth mission, a group from the British Commonwealth countries that was assessing the situation in that country and region of Southern Africa. Their recommendation to the South African government was that it should attempt to negotiate change with all black leaders in that country,

⁶"South Africa Draws Up The Wagons," Christian Science Monitor, 18 June 1986, p. 14.

including the banned African National Congress. In contrast to the position taken by both the Botha government in South Africa and the Reagan administration, that the ANC was a front for communist revolutionaries, the Commonwealth mission identified the ANC as a "group of moderate pragmatists, and not committed ideologues."⁷

In his commentary, Anthony Lewis, another political columnist, agreed with the Commonwealth mission's assessment concluding that the head of the African National Congress, Nelson Mandela, was a nationalist, committed to political and human rights and equality of opportunity for all South Africans. He also saw the ANC as being committed to securing the rights of those minorities in that country, including the now dominant white minority.⁸

In contrast, Lewis saw the South African government as not ready to negotiate change, in spite of rhetoric to the contrary. According to Lewis, the South African government, "is not ready to negotiate fundamental change, nor to countenance the creation of genuine democratic structures, nor the end of white domination. Its process of reform doesn't end apartheid, it just seeks to give it a less inhuman face."⁹ He also accused the government of trying to hide the recent violence and repression behind a

⁷"Use of Force in South Africa," San Francisco Chronicle, 18 June 1986, p. 51.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

screen of press censorship. Lewis supported the Commonwealth mission's recommendation, that if the South African government was unwilling to negotiate, international sanctions should be implemented carefully and deliberately to try and salvage peaceful change.¹⁰

In a concurring opinion, an editorial in the Los Angeles Times stressed the theme that the South African government was unwilling to reform. It noted that the Botha government had promised to engage in power sharing negotiations with all black leaders, but had resorted to bombing African National Congress strongholds in neighboring states just as the Commonwealth mission seemed to be making progress in convincing the ANC to repudiate its violent tactics.¹¹

That article cited several other actions of the Botha government that virtually made reforms impossible. Beyond the declaration of a State of Emergency and the incarceration of black leaders engaged in peaceful protest, the lack of control over right-wing elements was undermining both reform and stability in that country. Botha's security forces were even seen to escort a group of vigilante Witdoeke blacks into the Crosstown squatters camp in Capetown province, then stand by and watch as they attacked and burned the camp, leaving 35,000 homeless. This was viewed by the author as a denial of equal

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Los Angeles Times, 16 June 1986, sec. II, p. 4.

protection, if not a deliberate attempt to use one black group to destroy another. The question yet to be answered was if Botha was deliberately undermining his own reform efforts, or if he was losing control of the situation to the right-wing elements that were opposed to any reform.¹²

A similar sentiment, questioning the Botha government's commitment to reform, was expressed in the political magazine, The New Republic. The editor's commentary stated that the events at that Crossroads squatters camp, "destroy the remaining delusions about South Africa...that the Botha government is at all earnest about a genuine break from apartheid." Botha's regime was seen as being insensitive to external political and moral pressure, especially in times of domestic strife, such as it was currently facing. In reacting to that unrest it fell back on using repression, since repression worked when you had four hundred thousand police and military keeping order, and you could hide those scenes through censorship restrictions.¹³

The last two articles commenting on the general situation in South Africa dealt with a few of the specifics of the June 12, 1986 State of Emergency and recent constitutional changes in that country. In a July 23, 1986 article, Anthony Lewis noted that South Africa still had no

¹²Ibid.

¹³"Targeting South Africa," The New Republic, July 4, 1986, p. 3.

written constitution with a bill of rights, and that there is no "higher law" with which to interpret government statutes and emergency powers. The lack of accountability of the South African government to the courts and the people excluded, "the heart of U.S. constitutionalism."¹⁴

An additional article by Glen Frankel of the Washington Post presented some of the anomalies of the new press restrictions. International reporters were restricted to gathering information for their stories from a series of daily news briefings by the government information service. In those daily briefings, the reporters were given several somewhat implausible explanations for recent events in South Africa. For example, the government attributed the sudden failure of all telephone service to all black townships during the June 16, 1986 general strike to a massive technical failure, and not any police action. Left unexplained was why phone service to neighboring white communities was unaffected by those technical problems.¹⁵

Though primarily concerned on reporting on the situation in South Africa, the biases of the authors of these articles seems to favor presenting such material that casts both a shadow on the actuality of reform efforts by the Botha government, and how well that country's government is

¹⁴"South African Judges Stand Against the State," Grand Forks Herald, 23 July 1986, p. 4.

¹⁵"Press Curbs No One Understands," San Francisco Chronicle, 1986, sec. 1, p. 12.

protecting the rights of its citizens. Several columnists such as Anthony Lewis would also comment on how the structure of the South African government lacked both a bill of rights and proper court procedures such as judicial review and due process, perhaps expressing through these inclusions their own concern about the value of these democratic liberal structures. This concern is perhaps only secondary to the one they also expressed, that there was little or no visible reform of apartheid in South Africa.

Non-Interventionism and South Africa

In the introduction of this paper it was noted that a large number of those people surveyed felt that the best course to take in dealing with South Africa was to do nothing. An August 1985 Gallup Report found that 44% of those polled expressed this sentiment, with another 29% having no suggestion at all about what to do about apartheid.¹⁶

Beyond this simple sentiment, of avoiding involvement, there were other who advocated keeping out of the situation in South Africa because they either sided with the South African white minority government, or harboured no antipathy to the concept of racial segregation. A demographic breakdown of the same Gallup Report found that although 11% of the general population of those polled

¹⁶"South African Situation," The Gallup Report, August 1985, p. 14.

either approved of apartheid or had no strong feelings about it, almost 30% of whites from the southeastern region of the United States did not disapprove of apartheid.¹⁷

Although other articles examined in this chapter express doubt about whether or not the U.S. should become more involved in bringing about reform in South Africa, this section deals with those articles taking the stance that there is no question about whether or not to intervene in South African affairs, asserting that non-intervention is the only correct path. They would justify that position both because they supported the efforts of the South African government to assert control over regional affairs, and in some cases because they opposed black majority rule for one reason or another.

There were only four articles supporting the opinion that the white minority should continue running South African affairs instead of sharing power with the black majority. One such commentary by Mitchell Pearlstein based that opinion on two judgments. First, he asserted that because of tribal cleavages within the black majority attaining black freedom would be a complicated process, and it should be left up to the white controlled government to decide how best to approach "eventually" sharing some political power.¹⁸

The other assertion Pearlstein made was that South

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ "Liberal's Poor Sight On How The World Works," St. Paul Dispatch, 12 August 1986, sec. 4a. p. 4.

Africa's market economy and its "relatively independent but race contorted judiciary and press...were clearly superior to anything scorched earth black radicals might replace them with." The assumption Pearlstein made was that blacks would automatically replace democratic structures with communist substitutes. Although other authors expressed worry about the involvement of communists in black political groups, they would advocate trying to woo them over to siding with the United States and the West, and not totally excluding blacks from political participation, as Pearlstein seems to advocate.¹⁹

The other three articles in this section seem to qualify as parts of a single expression of opinion, since they were all written by the editorial staff of the National Review, a somewhat conservative political magazine. According to this source the threat of black radicalism and violence more than justifies both the current repressive measures taken by the white minority government and the extremely slow change to power sharing as implemented by the Botha government.²⁰

These articles centered on expressing the fear that South African blacks would be unable properly to run that country, unless they were slowly educated to accept the

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ "Feelgood Politics," National Review, August 23, 1985, p. 5; "South African Junk," National Review, July 18, 1986, p. 3; National Review, September 12, 1986, p. 15.

established political and economic order. The authors accused American liberals of pressing for quick reform and "ignoring the tribal socialist agenda of the African National Congress." They feared that there would be a "post apartheid regime that would remind us of Idi Amin's."²¹

Part of the approach proposed for the U.S. in these articles sounds much like a version of "constructive engagement," only carried to great extremes. For political power to be shared, first South Africa should be helped to increase industrialization, with the concurrent development of a black middle class. Then the government could think about giving those developed blacks some political representation, "even if only in a separate parliament with limited powers to begin with," such as those now assigned to the colored and asian minorities. The editorial staff of the National Review also suggested that South Africa give political franchises only to blacks with college degrees from an approved college, and who paid taxes in excess of two thousand dollars, slowly extending the franchise over time. Considering that the average income of urban blacks is less than two thousand dollars a year, only a small fraction of one percent of the black population who are professional managers and government appointees would qualify for this scheme.²²

²¹National Review, September 12, 1986, p. 15.

²²"Feelgood Politics," National Review, August 23, 1985, p. 5.

One might say that this is one of those instances where a concern about the continued presence of South Africa in the western economic community and worries about the abilities of blacks to support democratic rule both served to shape the author's opinions. In this instance, repression of liberal or democratic freedoms for the majority of South Africa's population was seen as justifiable, if it could preserve stability until such time as economic progress and educational standards increased to the point that blacks would be sufficiently qualified to both accept and be able to participate in democratic self-government.

This also reflects an attitude that was demonstrated in both the Nixon and Reagan administrations, that our primary concern with South Africa is the protection of the presence of an at least marginally democratic state that helps to control and protect western interests in that region. Although they insisted that apartheid would have to be reformed eventually, more concern was shown over protecting that individual state than in promoting the individual democratic principles and practices that validated a democratic form of government.

Increasing U.S. Involvement in South Africa

Why should the United States support an increasing level of involvement in the internal affairs of South Africa, and consider the possibility of increasing economic sanctions against the government of that country? While the authors

of this selection of commentaries might not agree on how to increase our involvement in attempting to end apartheid, they do think that some kind of intervention is necessary.

Put simply, the U.S. and other western nations should get involved in promoting change in South Africa because the process of reforming away from apartheid is happening so slowly, if at all, that the South African government's efforts for reform have lost credibility with both the South African black population and that country's western allies. Without that credibility, chances are that repression will only work just so long in keeping both black and white extremists under control.

According to one article, the perception among the Washington insiders is that time has run out in South Africa for peaceful change. President Reagan was seen as standing alone when talking about a "New South Africa" that was intent on reforms. Even Secretary of State Schultz spoke on July 23, 1986 of the "narrowing odds" for peaceful change, and the "impending tragedy" that may result if government repression and black violence continued.²³

Even though there was no proof that sanctions would be effective in persuading the white minority government in South Africa to push for reform, sanctions would "send a clear political signal of support to the black majority." Even if the Pretoria government continued rejecting

²³"Patience With Pretoria Gone," Chicago Tribune, 25 July 1986, sec. 4, p. 3.

diplomatic efforts and suggestions by President Reagan, we could still work to align ourselves more clearly with the majority of people in that country, and stall the coming of any violent revolution.²⁴

In another view, sanctions were seen as a punitive measure of intervention that would help split the moderate elements in South Africa away from their support of the hardline stance against reform by the Botha government, and give businesses incentive to press for reform before they became the target for other sanctions or divestment efforts. In contrast to the Reagan administration, this author saw the Botha government as one of the hardline pro-apartheid elements, and not the moderates and pragmatists that the administration were counting on to press for apartheid reform.²⁵

In this view, black South Africans are seen as fighting over the basic issues of human rights and dignity, and it was up to the U.S. and other western nations to show those individuals where we stood on apartheid reform. Considering our business interests and economic ties to that region, we had both a strategic and a moral interest in promoting a solution "by agreement instead of bloodshed." Sanctions were necessary to counter a government that hopes to use repression to maintain control and use "censorship

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵"Tougher Sanctions Could Work In South Africa," Grand Forks Herald, 7 July 1986, sec. A, P. 4.

to hide the truth and hope to bring about indifference abroad" about the true situation in that country.²⁶

In contrast to the previous two articles , which appear to accuse the Botha government of deliberately blocking reform, several others were less apt to make that claim, but the authors still failed to see significant reform. In one such article the Botha government was seen as being in a state of confusion, eliminating a key feature of apartheid, the pass laws, promising to step up reform and almost releasing Nelson Mandela, the leader of the African National Congress from jail. Then it took the repressive step of declaring a State of Emergency before the effects of reform efforts could be felt.²⁷

Columnist Anthony Sampson, saw hope for sanctions as a method leading to a peaceful solution to the situation in South Africa, if such sanctions were "rapid and deciseful." He attributed the confusion in the Botha government to a reaction to the debt crisis precipitated by foreign banks when they barred investment in South Africa during the previous year. This type of economic sanction could be used to further demoralize the Botha government and encourage it to reform.²⁸

In a somewhat concurring opinion, columnist Andrew Young

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Anthony Sampson, "A Scenario For Change," Newsweek, July 28, 1986, p. 32.

²⁸Ibid.

thought that sanctions could help both business interests and the Botha government promote change in South Africa. He drew a parallel between the situation in that country to the one existing in the United States during the 1950s-1960s. In our own case the threat of action by the federal government help southern states to do something about racial segregation it knew it ought to do, but lacked the "courage, moral authority and political security to do." In this case, U.S. involvement was needed to facilitate the involvement of the "passive majority" in South Africa to pressure the Botha government into taking positive steps towards reforming apartheid.²⁹

Perhaps the most detailed analysis of the usefulness of sanctions was put forth by conservative columnist, William Safire. It was interesting to note the multitude of cross-pressures that Safire attempted to deal with in making his assessment of the usefulness of sanctions. One might say that he was reluctantly in favor of increasing U.S. pressure on South Africa. One reason for that was because he saw people working toward the wrong goal in their reform efforts. That goal was one-person, one-vote democracy or majority rule for South Africa.³⁰

The problem with stressing majority rule was that, "no

²⁹"Air Travel Embargo Worth A Try," Grand Forks Herald, 13 August 1986, sec. A, p. 4.

³⁰"Right Motive, Right Moves on Apartheid," St. Paul Dispatch, 12 August 1986, sec. C, p. 18.

democrat could oppose the idea" in principle, but "no realist"(meaning himself) "thinks it will be now or soon." He saw the Afrikaaner population as taking any steps necessary to prevent losing control over their own affairs. What Safire supported was using a growing economy as a route for blacks to gain economic advancement and social standing now, and political participation soon, essentially the same tactic of "progressive force" as advocated by the Reagan administration. ³¹

Safire also had a problem with Reagan's policy of "constructive engagement" as it had currently been applied. That was because the Reagan administration had not given a satisfactory response to critics who asked what was being done about apartheid aside from a recognition that it was morally repugnant. "Constructive engagement" was not seen as supplying a method to curb apartheid, since change had been too slow coming in South Africa, and the recent repression and censorship could not hide the need for increasing reform. Safire argued that it was not enough to "morally condemn apartheid and applaud diplomatic pressure," but to also "use fine tuned economic pressure, sanctions and incentives" to induce change. ³²

One final article in this section was determined to set the record straight about the effects of possible economic sanctions. This effort, to find out the truth about the

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

utility of sanctions, was necessary since the Reagan administration had been playing up sanctions as "hurting the people we were trying to help."³³

According to the author, Stephen Davis, it was only a myth that sanctions would cause any great harm to the South African economy or put many blacks out of work. South Africa was seen as notorious about evading the effects of earlier sanctions. For example, they avoided the effects of an earlier arms embargo by developing an arms industry of its own and buying through countries not honoring the United Nations embargo. In addition, if U.S. business were forced to divest their interests in South Africa, local companies would inevitably take over those companies. In any case, U.S. business interests only employed one half of one percent of the working black population in their capital intensive operations.³⁴

One final point was made in this article, that the U.S. would not be withdrawing its only significant source of leverage by divesting business interests in that country. In contrast to the administration's argument to the contrary, that country would still be dependent on U.S. technology to upgrade its business operations and service American made equipment, therefore our control over technology and materials would serve to maintain a source

³³"Sanctions Against Pretoria: Some Myths," Christian Science Monitor, 21 August 1986, p. 15.

³⁴Ibid.

for diplomatic and business leverage. Considering that our efforts to influence the South African government had met with limited success in the past, the whole question of diplomatic leverage was probably of little importance.³⁵

If one supports increased pressure on South Africa to reform apartheid, is that indicative of an expression of liberal values on the part of the individual authors? One commentator, Flora Lewis, would see apartheid as both a moral and strategic concern, but without specific references to any value preference beyond supporting the end to South African repression. In contrast, William Safire identifies the goal that most advocates of reform supported as establishing one-person, one-vote democracy and majority rule in South Africa. Only, Safire advocates something less than majority rule for the near future, arguing, in part, that it was better not to actively oppose white minority rule for the time being, since it could actively repress the black majority. As with the Reagan administration, Safire would feel secure in not advocating immediate liberal reforms since he believed that laissez-faire "progressive force" economics would eventually bring about change.

Communism and South Africa

Do worries about possible communist encroachment in South Africa and the surrounding region influence how we respond to the situation in South Africa, and shapes our

³⁵Ibid.

recommendations for ending apartheid? Public opinion polls taken in 1977 and 1978 would suggest this is so. In a 1977 poll taken by Yankelovich, Skelly and White, two thirds of those responding disapproved when asked, "do you approve or disapprove of arms sales to South Africa?" But, when a Harris poll rephrased the question to ask, "should we help South Africa, the most developed country in Africa, defend itself against potential communist attacks, irregardless of the country's racial policies," opinion was divided evenly, 33% favoring arms sales, and 32% opposing.³⁶

One of the concerns that was expressed in several news stories and found its way into two of the commentaries was the possibility of communist influence in the African National Congress, a black political organization. On occasion the Reagan administration had supported the South African government's view of the ANC as a "Soviet backed terrorist organization, intent on turning South Africa into a communist state."³⁷

One of the commentaries, written by Stephen Rosenfeld, concentrated on probing into the extent to which communists influenced the African National Congress. He found that approximately half of the leadership in that organization were members of the South African communist party. What he did not do was attribute this to intervention and/or support from the Soviets. Rosenfeld seems to suggest that

³⁶Barron & Immerwahr, "The Public Views...", p. 57.

³⁷"Use of Force in South Africa," p. 51.

the ANC's communist membership is due to a reaction to the economic and political problems within South Africa, a problems which led to the ANC's radicalism and violence.³⁸

What Rosenfeld was unsure of, and what he saw the administration and the Congress reacting to was the extent that the Soviets may possibly have on the African National Congress and its members in the future. The question was whether the Soviets would subvert the stances of the democrats and nationalists in the ANC. The more that the ANC could be painted as a monolithic communist movement, the less able the U.S. would be to accept and negotiate with it. If we were "reflexively anti-communist" without reason, the U.S. may be passing up a chance to learn about how the ANC operates, and lose our chance to draw it away from indiscriminate terrorism and violent revolution.³⁹

The other three articles in this section expand this concern about communism from its specific influence on a black political movement in South Africa, to communist influence in the region of South Africa. Interestingly enough, all three commentaries were written by the same author, Joseph C. Harsch of the Christian Science Monitor. Although he deals with various other concerns in his articles, the main theme remains the same. Harsch felt that since we have strategic interest in that region of the

³⁸"The Communists and the ANC," Washington Post, 14 June 1986 sec. A, p. 15.

³⁹Ibid.

world, our greatest concern is to protect those interests from communist encroachment.⁴⁰

In one article Harsch called the Reagan administration's policy of "constructive engagement" a "diplomatic masterpiece of ambiguity." His concern was that our diplomatic pressure on Pretoria to end apartheid was not perceived by the black population of South Africa, and had come too late to aid a peaceful transition of power in that country. What was needed now was a policy that would align the U.S. with black aspirations in an unambiguous fashion.⁴¹

Why support black South Africans? According to Harsch's estimation, it would "neutralize Moscow's present role as a friend and sponsor of black nationalism," both in that country and in the Region of Southern Africa.⁴² The concern was that we would wait too long to show our support for black South Africans, out of the fear that they would not eventually gain political power. If we waited too long to determine if they would gain political power, by then the Soviets could align themselves with black aspirations, a step that we could not tolerate. Harsch also questioned the assertion by the Reagan administration that the South African government was committed to using reform instead of

⁴⁰ "Reagan Reaches Threshold," Christian Science Monitor, 20 June 1986, p. 11.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

using repression to control the black population, and if it was proper to support that government.⁴³

In another commentary, Harsch goes even further in questioning the Botha government's commitment to reform. He points to the massive repression during the past two years and a continued State of Emergency following almost ten years of civil unrest as signs that reform was not happening. As a result there had been no substantial dialogue between the government and black leaders, with a subsequent hardening of positions on both sides. Such hardening of positions could indicate that, "the time when blacks could have been pacified by limited power-sharing is long past."⁴⁴

What Harsch wanted the U.S. to do was learn a lesson from the Vietnam years and the communist takeover of China. In both cases the U.S. failed to keep channels of communication open with popular movements that were turning to the Soviets for support. In doing so, we lost the chance to continue a dialogue and influence their future actions. It would be hard for the U.S. to deal with suspected communists in South African black political movements if we cut off channels of communications to them and came out overtly aligned with the white minority controlled government. Because of South Africa's strategic

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ "The United States and the South African Civil War: Part One and Two," Christian Science Monitor, 17 19 June 1986, p. 19.

location, its mineral resources and the interest of our own black population, we must resist the urge to not deal with black political movements in that country because they are labeled communist, since one day they might control that country. Only through keeping in touch with the majority in South Africa, and keeping that country firmly within the western alliance could we preserve democracy and western influence in the entire region of Southern Africa.⁴⁵

One aspect of this emphasis on preventing a communist influence in South Africa is that it detracts from considering the other reasons why we should support black political participation in that country. Instead of black majority rule being a system of government to be valued for its liberal democracy, instead it is only a tool for preventing communist influence. Instead of supporting the right of the majority of South Africans to fulfill their political and social aspirations, we support the need to attract them over to our side in a worldwide geopolitical struggle.

America's Strategic Interest In South Africa

In contrast to the previous section, which emphasized why South Africa was strategic to the U.S. and the West, a majority of the articles assessing America's strategic interests in South Africa took issue with the Reagan administration's assertion that strategic concerns should be

⁴⁵"The Right Moment For Sanctions," Christian Science Monitor, 24 June 1986, p. 15.

considered of primary importance.

An editorial in the Washington Post made an issue of the Reagan administration's South Africa policy of "constructive engagement." Written on the eve of a presidential speech on U.S. policy towards South Africa, the article hoped that Reagan would make clear his dedication to the cause of equal rights in that country. Past presidential statements, and our emphasis on a policy that stressed the strategic interests we had in that region of the world were seen as lacking in commitment for positive reform that would aid the black majority in South Africa. According to the article, since majority rule would come someday, the U.S. needed to show more sympathy with the plight of black South Africans in order to influence the coming of a, "healthy, democratic society, friendly to the West."⁴⁶

One article did question if South Africa was of strategic importance to the United States. Even though the administration played up the fact that we depended on minerals found in few areas outside of South Africa, the article pointed out that we had survived disruptions in our mineral supplies in the past, and had always been able to survive, either by depending on government stockpiles, recycling, or finding alternative substitutes. In any case, even a leftist black government would probably trade with the U.S., as had black ruled Marxist Angola and

⁴⁶The Washington Post, 22 July 1986, sec. 3, p. 4.

Zimbabwe. The primary point was, however, that less attention should be played to South Africa's strategic importance, since it was not that important to the U.S.⁴⁷

That same article even pointed out several flaws to the argument by the Reagan administration that the location of South Africa was of strategic importance. The authors thought it would be hard for the U.S. and the west to "lose" control of the region of Southern Africa, if we lost control of the state that worked for our interests in the area, South Africa. That was because the region was already dominated by Marxist countries such as Angola, and as the only white minority controlled state to remain in the region, South Africa was not in the position to influence regional change, even through its economic power. The U.S. was asking South Africa to serve a role that it was ill-suited to play in a black majority ruled region.⁴⁸

One final article examined for this section gives a different twist to the notion of strategic interest, in this case the strategic influence of American business interests in South Africa. This commentary cited the example of the Pace Commercial College as an example of how U.S. business interests helped train black South Africans for a role in that country's economy. In this business supported college six hundred students annually learn basic

⁴⁷Mark Whitaker, Kim Willeson, "Do We Need South Africa?" Newsweek, September 16, 1985, p. 20.

⁴⁸Ibid.

math, secretarial skills and on the job training coordinated with local businesses. The article plays up the fact that U.S. businesses give teacher training and educational aid to 150 black schools in urban areas, therefore, the U.S. is strategic to change in South Africa, as much as they are strategic to us.⁴⁹

Although this article points to the positive side of U.S. business involvement, it also serves as an outline of some of the inequalities involved in that assistance. For example, the Pace College is priced out of the range affordable by most urban South African blacks it was meant to serve. Each family sending a child to the school must pay a minimum of \$350 of the \$1,400 yearly tuition. Considering that each black South African worker supports an average of six individuals on an income of less than \$2,000 a year, this expense for a single child's education was quite unaffordable. In addition, this type of educational aid only reached a section of the black population that was receiving assistance from the South African government, while aid to rural black education fell outside the realm of efforts of both the government and U.S. business interests.⁵⁰

Perhaps biased against accepting the Reagan administration's position that South Africa is of strategic

⁴⁹"Investments Beyond The Factory Gates," U.S. News and World Report, February 11, 1985, p. 37.

⁵⁰Ibid.

importance, what some of the articles in this section point out is the opinion that working for wholly strategic goals, or being perceived as doing so, detracts from recognizing the moral and political implications of apartheid. What one article clearly pointed out was that our strategy of "constructive engagement" was perceived as unconcerned with the issue of apartheid, and another played on how that policy emphasized South Africa's strategic and economic importance out of proportion to what it could reasonably be expected to accomplish as a regional power.

In the eyes of black South Africa, regional leaders and segments of the American population, our established policy with the South African government left doubts as to how much we were actually involved in pressuring that government to reform apartheid. Although the material reviewed for this section provides little or no information as to the specific liberal commitment of the authors, it does provide a look at how a segment of our concerns in forming a policy dealing with apartheid and South Africa was shifting. As Barron and Immerwahr would point out, our moral concern with apartheid would be tempered by the level with which we saw any type of policy affecting our strategic and economic interests. Since those strategic interests seemed to be downplayed by these authors, one would expect that more emphasis would be placed on moral considerations. This expectation is supported by the fact

that over one-third of the editorials and commentaries found in Table IV.1 dealt with moral concerns over apartheid and our policy with South Africa, over twice the number of articles concerned with any other consideration.

A Moral Reaction to Apartheid and U.S. Foreign Policy

Can opposition to apartheid and established U.S. foreign policy with South Africa be painted as purely a political or strategic issue. During the congressional debates over levying economic sanctions against the South African government until such a time as they reform away from apartheid, several conservative republicans would try to paint it as a political issue, calling anti-apartheid legislation an attempt to embarrass the administration during an election year.⁵¹

Others within the Reagan administration would chastize both liberals in the Congress and in the public as making an emotional clamour for apartheid reform without considering the strategic interests involved. In echoing the administration's viewpoint, columnist Edwin Yoder of the Washington Post would call efforts to signify our moral disapproval of apartheid, "gestures that give us moral self-satisfaction," but were a poor substitute for the diplomatic statecraft of established policies.⁵²

⁵¹Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, 16 August 1986, p. 1683.

⁵²"Sanctions and South Africa," Grand Forks Herald, 29 July 1986, sec. A, p. 4.

In contrast to these viewpoints, asserting that our policy dealing with South Africa and apartheid have to reach beyond a show of moral indignation or emotionalism, the remainder of the articles in this section assert that opposition to apartheid should be based in moral and liberal democratic principles. In reply to those who would paint our policy with South Africa as a political issue, geared to embarrass the administration one opinion would reply, "the tyranny of three million whites over thirty million blacks is morally and politically more primary than a search for publicity" against the administration. According to that author, oppression in South Africa could not be explained away as the frustration of liberals and the American black population, asserting that strategic issues cannot take precedence over accepting the truth about the "basest political system on the planet."⁵³

Perhaps that was the greatest failure of our established policy of "constructive engagement," that it was so concerned with regional strategic issues and achieving reform through economic change, that it could not communicate a sense of concern about apartheid to either Americans or black South Africans. For those who opposed apartheid, the uprooting of families and lack of political participation by blacks was, "of far greater consequence than the increase of black living standards," that the

⁵³"Apartheid's Apologists," The New Republic, January 7, 1985, pp. 5-6.

Reagan administration emphasised.⁵⁴

That seems to be a theme that keeps repeating itself throughout the commentaries in this section. Somehow we had lost sight of the goal of ending apartheid, and found ourselves perceived as being aligned with a constitutionally racist state. One commentator wondered why a president, who supported freedom fighters in Nicaragua and Afghanistan could not come out forthrightly in support for black political movements that had been banned for opposing the white minority government in South Africa. Even the reality of strategic interests could not quell a public that had begun to think of apartheid in terms of a moral issue, especially when it was perceived as a situation where the majority of the population is denied the same political and civil rights that we are guaranteed. "If the U.S. is to stand for freedom abroad, it cannot stand for business as usual with a country that dispenses liberty based on skin color and ancestry. The U.S. should help and not hinder the quest of freedom and civil rights by the majority of the South African population."⁵⁵

Another theme that keeps reappearing is the assertion that, effective or not, sanctions will give South Africa and the world a moral statement about our opposition to

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Grand Forks Herald, 14 June 1986, sec. A, p. 4; "Wrong Side Reagan," Chicago Tribune, 18 June 1986, sec. A, p. 19.

apartheid. The risk of alienating the white minority government in South Africa was worth the price, if our other option was to respond to the situation in that country by issuing "hollow condemnations" that never reached their intended audience. When black South Africans turn to the Soviets for help instead of the U.S., "what we are as a people has been forgotten."⁵⁶

Other articles are even more specific about outlining what is wrong about the situation in South Africa in terms that appeal to an American audience. One questions why South Africa is not a target for the president's freedom fighter rhetoric when it, "disenfranchises the overwhelming majority of its people, strangles the press and launches raids on its neighbors."⁵⁷

Calling South Africa's attitude toward reform a "history of repression," another commentary goes even further into detailing what is seen as the real situation in that country. Martial law, suspension of rights and media censorship, all imposed in the name of security and control during South Africa's period of unrest in the 1950's is seen again used by the Botha government to protect the "stability of the state" in the 1980's. In trying to control internal dissension, the government took excesses that led to the "abrogation of basic democratic rights for

⁵⁶"Our Pal Pretoria," Washington Post, 10 June 1986, sec. A, p. 22.

⁵⁷"Wrong Side Reagan,".... p. 19.

everyone, police searches without warrant...and justice without due process."⁵⁸

One article even blamed the press for part of our apathy about the situation in South Africa. It cited the fact that if it was a slow news day, violence in South Africa would become a lead story, but if something happens in either the U.S. or Europe, the same story is relegated to the inside pages. People failed to even read about the South African government greeting the British Commonwealth mission with scorn and reimposing a police state that would lead to, "the end of freedoms we assume to be basic in a free nation."⁵⁹

Again there is the notion that, "sanctions are a miserable remedy, but there are times when words have failed and action is required just to demonstrate that we care." Such political and economic pressure will only end, "when South African blacks have been given a genuine approach, with a timetable to power sharing and when all political prisoners have been freed." No longer could we respond with "a whimper," insisting as the Reagan administration has done that we must "remain engaged," continuing a policy of "constructive engagement" for which Pretoria has shown its contempt, and which has failed over

⁵⁸"Understanding South Africa," Washington Post, 18 June 1986, sec. A, p. 2.

⁵⁹"We Still Don't Know What To Do About South Africa," Fargo Forum, 18 June 1986, sec. A, p. 4.

and over again to produce reform.⁶⁰

Especially after Reagan's speech on U.S. foreign policy and involvement with South Africa on July 22, 1986, many of the commentaries focused on the administration's relationship with the government in South Africa, and its rejection of major changes in our South African policy. One called Reagan's speech a "lost chance at leadership....at a moment when United States influence could have advanced Western values, American values, and Reagan pushed in the wrong direction."⁶¹

This is a reflection on the perception that, by not coming out strongly in favor of some sort of immediate, visible reform in South Africa, Reagan appears as on the side of P.W. Botha and the white controlled government. Even in the presentation of the speech, Reagan was seen as mirroring Botha's justifications for governing by force and refusing to negotiate with the most prominent black leadership element, labelling it communist, terrorist and subversive. All this was happening in a time when, "the hope for a transition to democracy (in South Africa) is at a vanishing point."⁶²

Other critics would not be so kind in their dealing with

⁶⁰"The Wrong Side In South Africa," Minneapolis Star and Tribune, 21 June 1986, sec. A, p. 10.

⁶¹"Mr. Botha's Poodle," New York Times, 24 July 1986, sec. A, p. 25.

⁶²Ibid.

the position the government in South Africa was perceived as taking. One wondered why Reagan and his administration was being soft on, "a country operating under the fatal delusion that Nazi Germany did things right," imprisoning people without due process and enforcing stricter press censorship than the Soviets. That article saw the Reagan administration as almost trying to invent some plausible excuse for remaining engaged with the South African government.⁶³

Another critic in examining Reagan's speech on South Africa come to the conclusion that, "Reagan shows a glimmer of understanding the issues, but endorses a fuzzy repetition of old policy." Reagan recognized that the U.S. could not maintain cordial relations with a country that makes race a determinant of rights since all Americans "have ideas of universal equality before the law and protection of rights," but what Reagan failed to do was state forthrightly when our relations would become less cordial. What Reagan had failed to notice was that most Americans felt the time was long past to hope that the Botha government was serious about reforming apartheid.⁶⁴

Even the fairly conservative Christian Science Monitor reacted to Reagan's July 22, 1986 speech by pointing out

⁶³"A Leader Without the Facts," Grand Forks Herald, 26 July 1986, sec. A, p. 4.

⁶⁴"Reagan's Dereliction in South Africa," Minneapolis Star and Tribune, 25 July 1986, sec. A, p. 8.

that, "Reagan has failed to distance his administration from the Pretoria regime, which is responsible for the abhorrent system of apartheid." Although they see Reagan as condemning apartheid, he also fails to find the government responsible for it, "as if jailings, press curbs, beatings...were products of forces separate from the white government with which Reagan wishes to maintain ties," leaving his administration as an apologist for South Africa rather than an advocate for reform.⁶⁵

Instead, Reagan was seen as arguing for patience with the Pretoria government and, "gave a merchantilist argument for what others perceive as a moral issue. He focuses on lost jobs and not repression of human rights and emphasizes strategic interests and not citizenship." Such actions left little option but for the House and Senate to align themselves with the black population in South Africa.⁶⁶

Are these reactions clearly an indication of our moral commitment to ending apartheid? The preponderance of commentaries, only a few of which we have looked at here, stressed a moral interpretation of the situation in South Africa. Of the fifty three articles in the original sample, twenty concentrated on this moral interpretation of the situation in South Africa, while another nine concentrated on downplaying our strategic or economic interests in that

⁶⁵"Social Justice First," Christian Science Monitor, 24 July 1986, p. 15.

⁶⁶Ibid.

region of the world in light of the moral wrong of apartheid (see table IV.1). This contrasts with only five articles advocating another concern that Barron and Immerwahr saw as shaping our recommendations for American foreign policy, that being the need to contain communism.

Even the concern about avoiding intervention in other country's internal affairs, which Barron and Immerwahr saw as shaping our policy recommendations, was overridden by the perceived need to make some kind of statement about our opposition to apartheid. Although four of the commentaries advocated avoiding intervention in South African affairs, nine advocated becoming increasingly interventionistic, to the point of taking actions such as imposing economic sanctions against the government of South Africa.

Just where liberal values appear in these articles is something that is harder to evaluate, since rhetoric about our opposition to a government that infringes on the rights of its citizens, violates due process, curbs the press and limits political participation is natural in today's political environment in the United States. Still, those and other liberal values are a part of the justifications some of these authors use to advocate increasing pressure on the South African government to reform, especially in those articles which were concerned with a moral reaction to apartheid and U.S. policies toward South Africa.

Perhaps what this selection of commentaries does best is to point out where the press thought that the Reagan

administration fell short in displaying concern about the racial practices of a government with which it wished to pursue extensive diplomatic and economic relations. They looked at just where the South African government failed to practice the liberal democratic form of government that our own administration took so much pride in, and questioned why we were not perceived as displaying as much concern about that country's practices as we did with their strategic and economic importance.

During the same period of time as many of these articles were being written the Congress was considering making changes in our foreign policy concerned with South Africa and apartheid. The next and final chapter will look at how Congress resolved the question of what our reaction would be to apartheid, in part by deciding if we should continue with an established policy that was perceived as supporting a system of governance in South Africa, or if we should write a new policy that would emphasize our moral reaction to apartheid by taking actions that would signify our displeasure to the South African government.

CONGRESS AND APARTHEID

Just how does one assess America's reaction to apartheid and the situation in South Africa without relying explicitly on public opinion polls? In this case, the approach chosen was to look at the issues surrounding apartheid through the eyes of those opinion leaders in this country that were concerned with apartheid and our relationship with the government of South Africa. In previous chapters material has been presented both on the historical and current administrative stance outlining our official reaction to apartheid, and how specific voices in the press evaluated the appropriateness of our relationship with the South African government and the continuing practice of apartheid.

In this final chapter a third source is examined, that being the congressional reaction to both the Reagan administration's established South African and regional policy of "constructive engagement," and to those who advocated a more active role for the U.S. in ending apartheid. As a result of the debate in Congress on September 26, 1986, the Senate followed the House in overturning a presidential veto of legislation imposing economic sanctions against the South African government until such a time as they reformed apartheid practices. This established for the first time in four decades a foreign policy concerned with apartheid and our relationship with South Africa that was legislatively

mandated instead of being a product of the State Department and administrative direction.

While we are not looking at "public" opinion per se, what is being examined is how the perceptions of American opinion leaders, this time in the Congress, help shape a public policy concerned in part with ending apartheid in South Africa. In doing so, we are examining the assumptions that these individuals have about both the morality of apartheid, their perceptions on how well the South African government is actually doing in reform efforts, and what role the United States should play in persuading that government to reform that system of institutionalized racial separation and segregation.

On the one hand, the Congress had to consider the long tradition of State Department policy, and its recent emphasis on "constructive engagement." The basic assumptions behind this policy included the views that the South African government had accepted that apartheid, or "separate development," would not work, that they were looking for methods to reform apartheid, and that U.S. and international business interests would serve as a "progressive force" to assist reform efforts. In addition, the South African government was to be supported both because of its strategic location in Africa, and also because it was our key to promoting regional stability and preventing any further incursion of communism.

On the other hand, there were numerous individuals both in the Congress and in the general public that did not share the administration's and State Department's assumptions about the situation in South Africa. Some questioned the contention that the South African government was convinced that apartheid would not work. Others questioned the motives for recent reform efforts, including the creation of colored and asian parliamentary bodies in the light of the continuing State of Emergency in South Africa, with its widespread repression of civil rights.

At the same time, concern was shown over the emphasis the administration placed on South Africa's strategic importance. Not only was this emphasis perceived by some as detracting from moral considerations, but administrative foreign policy relied on the South African government to fulfill a role of economic leadership and regional stabilizer, a role it may have been ill suited to carry out. Detractors pointed out not only that South Africa was the only remaining white minority ruled country in a black majority ruled region, but South African bombing and commando raids in neighboring countries and their backing of rebel forces in both Angola and Mozambique threatened instead of increased regional stability.

Both in 1985 and 1986 the Congress would introduce legislation calling for economic sanctions against South Africa to help persuade that country's government to move away from apartheid. On each occasion, members in the

House would first introduce sanctions proposals in response to specific events in South Africa. In 1985 the triggering event would be the death of several black South Africans, killed by government security forces during a protest demonstration. In 1986, Democrats in the House would reintroduce the sanctions legislation initially proposed in 1985 several days after the South African government had sent commando forces and bombing raids into neighboring countries, attacking suspected African National Congress bases and offices.¹

From there, the outcome of sanctions legislation would hinge on several factors. As with the public debates, House and Senate action would show a reaction to other events occurring in South Africa. In 1985, a State of Emergency declared on July 20th and a speech by South African President P.W. Botha on August 15th would provoke more support for those advocating economic sanctions. In 1986, a bill supporting total divestment of U.S. business interests in South Africa was passed on the floor of the House several days after another State of Emergency was declared in South Africa on June 12th.²

The outcome of sanctions legislation also depended on the Reagan administration's ability to work out a

¹Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, 6 April 1985, p. 637; Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, 24 May 1986, p. 1211.

²Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, 21 June 1986, p. 1384.

compromise with Congress. In 1985, a last minute executive order signed by President Reagan on the eve of a vote on congressional sanctions, led to the swaying of enough moderate Republican votes so that a conservative filibuster could not be cut off by a cloture vote. That filibuster, led by Senator Jesse Helms, effectively blocked consideration of sanctions legislation worked out in a conference committee and already approved by the House. Cooperating with the president's effort, mandating a package of weak sanctions directed solely at the South African government through executive order, Senator Richard Lugar and Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole took the conference bill from the Senate floor and locked it away in the Foreign Relations Committee safe for several weeks, blocking further consideration of congressional legislation.³

In 1986, President Reagan took the initiative on July 22nd, speaking out publicly in support for continued relations with the South African government. Reagan played up recent South African reform efforts and castigated the African National Congress and other black political organizations for their communist ties and terrorist activities. This speech was taken by some members of Congress as a hardline refutation of their efforts to punish the South African government for its continuing to stall reform of key elements of apartheid regulations.

³Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, 14 September 1985, p. 1800.

Although Reagan would later re-endorse the executive order he signed in 1985, mandating limited sanctions, that minimal measure and the perception that the administration was still supporting their established policy of "constructive engagement," would not be enough to block efforts in the Congress to pass legislation of its own mandating our policy with South Africa.⁴

Was the passage of sanctions legislation in 1986 a clear signal sent by the Congress on its opposition to apartheid, or was that message as clouded as when, in 1985, President Reagan would sign an executive order mandating sanctions, but also vowed to pursue his established policy of "constructive engagement?" The next section of this chapter will deal with some of the key actors involved in the the dispute over what role the legislature would play in directing U.S. foreign policy toward South Africa, what interests they saw as important, and how their views would become part of the package of sanctions legislation approved in September 1986. At the same time those viewpoints will be examined to see how well they fit into the Barron and Immerwahr format, and the extent to which they did or did not express concern over liberal values.

Congressional Factions and Anti-Apartheid Policy

Even though the Barron and Immerwahr format was designed to explain the cross-pressures of concerns that shaped

⁴"Ending Apartheid in South Africa," Department of State Bulletin, September 1986, pp. 1-5.

public opinion on foreign policy issues circa 1978, it also serves to outline the issues that concerned the three main congressional groups that were instrumental in designing sanctions legislation in 1986. Although the membership of these groups spanned both the House and Senate, their members shared common interests and concerns, if not relatively equal influence over the shape of final legislation.

What will be considered in turn are the viewpoints of: the conservative coalition, headed by Senators Helms, Symms and Wallop, and House Representatives Siljander and Walker, with their emphasis on anti-communism and strategic interests in South Africa; the liberals, headed by Senator Kennedy and House Representatives Gray and Wolpe, with their emphasis on moral considerations and the lack of liberal political practices in South Africa; and finally, the moderate Republicans and Democrats of the House and Senate, whose votes were needed to pass any legislation, and their range of concerns, from strategic, to economic, from the effects of interventionism to moral considerations, and even the perceptions whether or not the executive branch should be the one setting foreign policy in regards to apartheid and South Africa.

One of the concerns that Barron and Immerwahr saw as shaping our perception of foreign policy issues was the extent of anti-communist sentiment in the general public. In the Congress there were also those individuals who

shared similar anti-communist sentiments and concerns. Both in 1985 and 1986 a small number of House and Senate members were part of a conservative coalition that attempted to block the passage of sanctions legislation and openly supported the white minority South African government, primarily because it was a regional anti-communist force.

As mentioned earlier, this coalition was headed by Senators Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), Stephen Symms, (R-Ga.), and Malcolm Wallop, (R-Wyo.), and House Representatives Mark Siljander, (R-Mich.), and Robert Walker, (R-Pa.). Although few in numbers, they could influence the consideration of anti-apartheid legislation, primarily through tactics such as boycotting committee meetings when bills were due to be voted out to the floor, or, as successfully used by Jesse Helms, filibustering to prevent consideration of bills on the floor of the Senate. Besides preventing final consideration of sanctions legislation in the Senate in September 1985, the threat of a Helms led filibuster was one of the factors that forced House members to accept a sanctions bill written in the Senate in 1986, instead of taking a House measure advocating total divestment to a Conference Committee.⁵

In pushing this anti-communist sentiment, one common theme that would carry on throughout the consideration of

⁵Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, 4 October 1986, p. 2338.

anti-apartheid legislation, both in 1985 and 1986, would be the insistence by the Helm's coalition that South Africa should not be pressured to reform unless far stricter efforts were made to punish the Soviets and Marxist states in both Southern Africa and the rest of the world. In the words of Senator Symms, "Why expect South Africa to conform (to human and civil rights standards), when Angola is far worse?"⁶ Or, as Malcolm Wallop would say eighteen months later in August 1986, that we are ignoring, "the far greater evil of Soviet communism."⁷

The alternative that these conservatives proposed for anti-apartheid legislation appeared in March 1985 in the form of what was called a Worldwide Human Rights Bill by Rep. Robert Walker, (R-Pa.). According to him it would, "provide a consistent, non-selective set of standards," for U.S. foreign assistance. This bill would oppose giving International Monetary Fund loans to nations practicing official racial segregation. (The IMF had already quit loaning money to the South African Government.) It would have also denied federal contracts to employers not implementing a fair employment code similar to the Sullivan Codes. This second measure could be waived if the president determined that South Africa had made

⁶Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, 9 March 1985, pp. 440-445.

⁷Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, 16 August 1986, p. 1863.

"substantial progress" in reforming apartheid practices.⁸

Three amendments to this bill had less to do with restricting aid to South Africa than they did in putting pressure on the Soviets and Marxist countries in Southern Africa. One amendment, if passed, would have required a two-thirds majority vote in the House and Senate, instead of a simple majority, to approve the president's giving most favored nation trading status to communist countries. Another amendment would have repealed a ban on U.S. assistance to UNITA, South African supported right-wing rebel forces in Angola, and a final amendment would have recognized UNITA as the legitimate government of Angola, a now Marxist state.⁹

A succession of conservative coalition proposed amendments followed over the next year and a half: declaring the African National Congress a communist terrorist organization; asking for a five year delay in applying economic pressure against the South African government; extending economic sanctions to all Soviet bloc countries; banning U.S. assistnace to the ANC if any of its members were communists; allowing groups to negotiate with the South African government only if they repudiated violence and committed themselves to a "free and democratic post-apartheid state"; letting U.S. businesses continue

⁸Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, 18 March 1985, p. 500.

⁹Ibid.

their investing in South Africa, irregardless of reform, if those businesses themselves complied with the Sullivan Principles; and the waiving of all sanctions if it they led to higher black unemployment in South Africa.¹⁰

Two amendments proposed by the conservative coalition would find their way into the final package of economic sanctions passed by the Congress in 1986. An amendment proposed by Jesse Helms, denouncing the African National Congress as a terrorist group, and sanctioning U.S. assistance only to black political movements that renounced terrorism and violence, was softened and reworded to allow U.S. aid to any organization (including the South African government), only if it renounced violence and committed themselves to a "free and democratic post-apartheid state."¹¹

Although the rhetoric used by Helms seems to suggest a commitment to the preservation of liberal democracy in South Africa, one wonders if that commitment runs much deeper than the rhetoric. Another amendment introduced by a member of the conservative coalition, and approved on a voice vote, would allow the president to waive any and all

¹⁰Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, 6 April 1985, p. 637; Congressional Quarterly 25 May 1985, p. 1020; Congressional Quarterly, 13 July 1985, p. 1364; Congressional Quarterly, 26 July 1986, p. 1671; Congressional Quarterly, 9 August 1986, p. 1784.

¹¹Congressional Quarterly, 9 August 1986, p. 1784.

sanctions if he determined after six months that we were either becoming more dependent on communist countries for strategic minerals, or if imports of coal and other minerals from communist countries rose higher than the levels set in 1981-1985. A similar amendment had been vetoed during the 1985 debates over sanctions legislation. Such an amendment would allow the South African government to continue apartheid practices that violated liberal principles without penalties from the U.S. as long as we are dependent on them for strategic minerals or wished to avoid economic dependence on any communist country.¹²

Members of the conservative coalition were also of the opinion that increased pressure by the U.S. to end apartheid would only lead to violence and revolution in South Africa, something that could not be tolerated. According to Senator Malcolm Wallop (R-Wyo.), "it is no coincidence that violence in South Africa escalated after the House and Senate acted" in considering sanctions legislation.¹³ Of course it was more than coincidence that this increase in violence also followed the declaration of a State of Emergency in South Africa two weeks before on July 20, 1985. Senator Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), also related U.S. intervention to an increased chance of revolution, worrying that, "if we do anything to cause South Africa to

¹²Ibid.

¹³Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, 3 August 1985, p. 1526.

fall into the hands of the Soviet Union, we will regret it."¹⁴

This concern, with preserving the South African government at all costs, is a reflection of the concerns shown both by the Reagan administration and several conservative columnists reviewed earlier. Since South Africa was at least a marginally democratic state, at least for its white population, preserving that state was one of the major concerns of our foreign policy in that region. What this kind of thinking failed to adequately reflect was the reaction of many liberals and moderates to the actual practices of the South African government. They would question the administration's and conservative coalition's acceptance of South Africa as a truly democratic liberal state, one that could be supported and given a role in protecting both the interests of the United States and South Africa's black citizens.

A final tactic used by the conservatives, especially during the 1986 election year, was to accuse liberal democrats of taking advantage of the problems in our South African policy in order to embarrass the president and the Republican administration. Senator Larry Pressler (R-S.D.), accused Democrats of turning apartheid and sanctions into a "domestic civil rights issue," and Rep. Mark Siljander (R-Mich.), called the show of moral concern about apartheid by liberals, "self-righteous indignation by

¹⁴Ibid.

middle class white Americans sitting safe in their homes."¹⁵ Although careful not to appear prejudiced against blacks, especially during an election year, Helms and his associates clearly had a different perception of the reform efforts of the South African government than many of their congressional colleagues. Helms even asked for a statement to be added to the Senate sanctions legislation package in 1986, congratulating the South African government for its efforts to bring about "widespread reform" in apartheid. Not unexpectedly, addition of that statement was rejected on a voice vote on the floor of the Senate.¹⁶

One final effort by Helms caught the public's attention in 1986, when the night before the Senate was to vote on overriding President Reagan's veto of sanctions legislation, he facilitated an effort by South African Foreign Affairs Minister, Pik Botha, to lobby several farm state Senators to vote against sanctions. Calling Botha "a friend," and indicating that he saw nothing wrong with letting Senators know about the South African government's threat to boycott American agricultural products if sanctions were passed, Helms came out of two years of debate on anti-apartheid legislation firmly on the side of the South African government.¹⁷

While conservative Senators and Representatives came out

¹⁵Congressional Quarterly, 16 August 1986, p. 1863.

¹⁶Congressional Quarterly, 13 September 1986, p. 2119.

¹⁷Congressional Quarterly, 4 October 1986, p. 2338.

strongly opposed to any U.S. effort to intervene either diplomatically or economically in South African affairs, they were decidedly interventionistic when it came to dealing with any of the Marxist countries in Southern Africa. All things considered, the concerns of the conservative coalition in the Congress were dictated more than anything else by the perceived need to prevent the spread of communist influence in that region. South African practices of apartheid were unpalatable to accept, but were easier to live with than the spectre of that country's majority possibly turning to a communist form of government if they did receive political participation and full civil rights. While accepting that a fully democratic state would be preferable in South Africa, conservatives worried whether or not black citizens of that country would ever be able to use democracy properly. Because of that distrust, conservatives both in the administration and in the Congress supported the South African government's role in promoting stability of that state, even if it meant long term denial of liberal democratic rights to a majority of that country's citizens.

In contrast to the stance taken by Helms and his conservative associates, the position of the liberal Democrats opposed to apartheid would reflect an emphasis on the moral belief that the South African government would have to institute the practices of a liberal democracy before it could enjoy normal diplomatic and economic

relations with the United States. In taking this stance, they were perhaps as singleminded as the conservatives in rejecting the concerns of the opposition, that it was the democratic "state" of South Africa which was most important and to be preserved at all costs. This group of liberal would be led by Senator Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) and House Representatives Howard Wolpe (D-Mich.), and William Gray (D-Pa.).

Although possible economic sanctions against South Africa were discussed long before their consideration in 1985-1986, this was the first time an attempt was made to push a bill through Congress mandating more action than the mandatory arms embargo declared by the United Nations in 1978, and executive actions, such as the Carter administration's ban on selling computer equipment to the South African police and military. In 1984 an amendment was made to an international trade bill, mandating additional economic sanctions against South Africa, but that bill never came up for a vote before the end of the 1984 legislative session.¹⁸

In the 1985 session, liberal Democrats in the House led the reaction to reports of internal turmoil in South Africa and the deaths of several black protestors at the hands of government security forces. Representative Howard Wolpe (D-Mich), would acknowledge what he saw as the, "need

¹⁸Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, 18 March 1985, p. 440; Congressional Quarterly, 28 May 1985, p. 1020.

to distance the U.S. from apartheid." Addressing the issue of economic sanctions Wolpe saw, "a need to say what we stand for and stop financing apartheid...sanctions would attack the South African economy only at the margins, while demonstrating that the continuation of apartheid would have economic costs."¹⁹ Rep. William Gray (D-Pa.), would counter Secretary of State Schultz's assertion that sanctions would "hurt the people we are trying to help" by saying, "arguing that sanctions would hurt black South Africans is tantamount to saying that you can't end slavery because you will create unemployment."²⁰

On March 30, 1985, the House Democratic Caucus unanimously passed a resolution endorsing sanctions against South Africa and urged the Congress to pass a bill, HR1460, which would ban new bank loans and computer sales to the South African government, ban new U.S. business investments, and ban sales of nuclear technology to that country. House conservatives would counter at that time with their Worldwide Human Rights Bill HR1595. Gray would oppose this conservative bill on the grounds that all it would do was impose mandatory Sullivan Principle standards for U.S. business interests, without imposing any real restrictions on the South African government. This minimal measure was also opposed by House democrats because it could also be waived if the president determined that South

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.

Africa was making "substantial progress" in reforming apartheid, without defining what progress would be acceptable.²¹

In the last week of April 1985 the House Foreign Affairs Committee would adopt HR1460. Rep. Robert J. Torricelli (D-N.J.), would assert that, "this legislation draws the line, we're not talking about apartheid, we're not studying it, we don't want anything to do with it."²² What House liberals would manage to include in this bill was a list of conditions that the South African government would have to meet if they wanted economic sanctions to be waived in the future. Those conditions were: freeing all political prisoners; eliminating all residence restrictions; letting blacks seek work without restriction and enabling them to live near jobs with their families; requiring government to begin "meaningful" negotiations with all black leaders for a fully representative political system; ending racial and economic segregation; requiring that the South African government agree to an internationally recognized settlement over its occupation of Namibia; and ending the policy of forcefully removing blacks from areas designated for whites only.²³

When the Reagan administration replied to the House's sanctions bill by denouncing them as ineffective and

²¹Congressional Quarterly, 6 April 1985, p. 637.

²²Congressional Quarterly, 4 May 1985, p. 826.

²³Ibid.

and calling the U.S. a major source of social and economic reform in South Africa, House liberals scoffed at the idea that there was significant reform going on in that country. Rep. Stephen Solarz (D-N.Y.), called Reagan's emphasis on continuing "constructive engagement" a "monument to moral myopia and wishful thinking...we cannot continue to do business as usual with the apartheid regime as long as that country enforces its system of institutionalized racism."²⁴

While conservative critics such as William Safire would make the claim that neither the South African government nor the black population in that country was ready for a full participatory government, liberal Democrats would ask that the South African government take steps to prove that they were committed to that goal. In doing so, liberals would at least implicitly suggest that they did not believe that the South African government was in intent or practice committed to a liberal democratic form of governance. At the same time they were also questioning the Reagan administration's assertion that South Africa was sufficiently committed to reform in its own country to be trusted to protect western interests and values in the region of Southern Africa, and was indeed a democratic country in the American tradition, or at least something close enough to enjoy normal relations with the U.S.

On July 13, 1985 the full Senate approved a somewhat weaker sanctions package than that of the House, one which

²⁴Congressional Quarterly, 28 May 1985, p. 1020.

would ban computer sales to the South African government, bank loans, and nuclear technology sales in eighteen months if no progress had been made in ending apartheid. This bill met with stiff opposition on the Senate floor by conservative republicans led by Jesse Helms. Even fairly moderate Democrat, Alan Cranston of California would be annoyed by Helms' opposition, saying that "if Helms had been in the Senate 122 years ago he probably would have opposed emancipation because it would throw four million slaves out of work...by his stubborn stand, Helms is hurting and not helping the cause of democracy."²⁵ One of the reasons that the Senate sanctions bill was not stricter than it was may have been due to the fact that liberals had to use much of their influence buying moderate republican votes to block ammendments by the conservative coalition, and did not have the influence left to push for more moderate ammendments.

The passage of sanctions legislation in 1985 seemed almost assured in August of that year when both liberal and moderate legislators listened in dismay as South African President P.W. Botha defended not making any immediate changes in apartheid statutes and practices, and rejected the notion of a one-man, one-vote democracy as, "leading to the domination of one (the blacks) over the other (the white minority)...destroy white South Africa and our influence in this region and this country will drift into

²⁵Congressional Quarterly, 13 July 1985, p. 1364.

fraction, strife, chaos and poverty." Botha asserted, "South African problems will be solved by us, not by foreigners."²⁶

While the Reagan administration would take a wait and see attitude to this speech, to find out if black leaders in Southern African found it credible, liberals such as Rep. Stephen Solarz (D-N.Y.) would reply, "to call Botha's speech too little, too late, would endow it with a significance to which it is clearly not entitled."²⁷ Only the last minute signing of an executive order applying limited sanctions by the Reagan administration would block the Senate's passage of a conference committee anti-apartheid sanctions bill. Liberals such as Rep. William Gray (D-Pa.) would call the action of the president "meaningless and full of loopholes, geared to avert a Senate defeat instead of dealing with the situation in South Africa."²⁸

On May 24, 1986, sanctions legislation would reappear on the House and Senate agenda, with bills identical to 1985 proposal HR1460 introduced in committee by congressional liberals. They were introduced five days after the South African government's security forces carried out bombing and commando raids in Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe in an effort to hit African National Congress guerilla camps and

²⁶Congressional Quarterly, 18 August 1985, p. 1652.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

offices. It is ironic that these raids were carried out at the same time as a British Commonwealth mission was negotiating with the leaders of the ANC in an effort to get them to renounce their terrorist tactics, and seemed to be persuading them to do so and sit down at the negotiating table with the South African government. Others in and out of Congress, such as liberal columnist Anthony Lewis, would view this as an attempt by the South African government to block having to negotiate with major black political movements in that country.²⁹

The next set of actions by congressional liberals would be prompted by the declaration of another State of Emergency in South Africa on June 12, 1986. In arguing for passage of a House bill Rep. Solarz would say, "If we are going to stand up against repression in Central America and the middle east, then...it is time to stand up against racism in South Africa."³⁰ Once again the theme suggested by liberals would be that the South African government was acting more like a repressive authoritarian regime than any kind of democratic state.

Perhaps the greatest accomplishment for the liberal Democrats in pressing for action against the South African government would come because of the widespread reaction to the State of Emergency and continuing unrest in that

²⁹"Use of Force in South Africa," San Francisco Chronicle, 18 June 1986, p. 51.

³⁰Congressional Quarterly, 14 June 1986, p. 1317.

country, and a little bit of luck. On June 18, 1986 the House would adopt on a voice vote a bill sponsored by Rep. Ron Dellums (D-Calif.), calling for the total divestment of U.S. business assets in South Africa within eighteen months. It helped that most of the House Republicans were absent during the voice vote, later claiming that it was a tactic to ensure that the House passed a bill that would be the "kiss of death" for influencing a conference committee dominated by more moderate Senators.³¹

Although conservatives insisted that the House bill was of no significance in influencing Senate action, it did serve to block consideration of another bill once proposed by liberals, but which had been changed so much by amendments that it was now unacceptable to House democrats. One of those amendments sponsored by conservative Rep. Burton (R-Ga.) would have banned U.S. assistance to the African National Congress if any of its members were communists, even if they had no ties to other Soviet bloc countries.³²

It would be up to President Reagan to provoke the greatest outburst of anti-apartheid sentiment on the part of congressional liberals. A presidential address on July 22, 1986 defended continued relations with the South African government, and allowed that the white minority controlled government had "the right" to use repression

³¹Congressional Quarterly 21 June 1986, p. 1384.

³²Ibid.

as a means to control a population that was resorting to terrorist tactics and violence, ignoring the fact that much of the violence had been instigated by government security forces.³³

The Democratic response to the president's speech was written by Rep. William Gray (D-Pa.), and presents in depth the liberal opposition to apartheid and the U.S. policy with the South African government known as "constructive engagement." Gray accused the Reagan administration of failing to recognize what the American public, the Congress, and the world community had known for a long time, that its South African policy did not work. He argued that we were dealing with a country where blacks had suffered because they cannot vote, they have no due process under the law, can be arrested without trial or charge, and squeezed onto 13% of that country's land although they constitute 73% of the population.³⁴

According to the Democratic response, sanctions may cost some jobs, but, "the issue is not jobs, but the loss of life and the denial of justice."³⁵ One thing Gray saw as a major concern was the perceived ambiguity of the administration's approach to ending apartheid. "Reagan has always stressed a single message in foreign policy, 'The

³³"Ending Apartheid in South Africa," Department of State Bulletin, vol. 86 September 1986, pp. 1-5.

³⁴Congressional Quarterly 26 July 1986, pp. 1671-1675.

³⁵Ibid.

Reagan Doctrine', bargaining from a position of strength... to fight for freedom wherever it has been denied." Gray questions, "Where is the Reagan Doctrine in Pretoria, in all of South Africa? Why do we give them words when they plead for action?"³⁶

What the Democratic response to Reagan's speech was asking for was something other than vague rhetorical condemnations of apartheid while the administration and U.S. businesses continued to provide economic support for the South African government by bolstering its economy. They saw a need for a new policy, once that would totally disassociate us from apartheid and the South African government until there was a total dismantling of apartheid practices, and not just cosmetic reform. "Our policy must demand the release of all political prisoners, and the start of negotiations between the black majority and white minority to develop a timetable for full democracy, one-man, one-vote."³⁷ In rejecting the administration's emphasis on protecting South Africa's sources of strategic minerals, Gray would argue that it was time to stop thinking about minerals and diamonds and start practicing American values. "What you do not see (in South Africa) is our moral presence, and that is the problem."³⁸

Although most of this rhetoric would come out of the

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

House, Senate liberals would try to take action that would affect the final package of sanctions that became law in 1986. Senator Kennedy (D-Mass.) would sponsor an amendment barring the import of agricultural products, iron and steel from South Africa, and would prohibit U.S. export of oil and petroleum products to that country. An amendment sponsored by Alan Cranston (D-Calif.) would ban the importation of South African textiles, while another by Kennedy would bar U.S. government agencies from buying goods and services from South Africa and ending promotion of trade and tourism. All those amendments would pass on the floor of the Senate along with another by Senator Eagleton (D-Mo.) which would increase the list of actions the South African government would have to take before economic sanctions would be lifted.³⁹

House liberals would take one more opportunity to try to shape the outcome of sanctions legislation passed in 1986. Due to time restrictions surrounding the 1986 election year legislative calendar and the threat of a Senate stall on appointing members to a Conference Committee, the House accepted intact the Senate version of sanctions legislation. It did, however, accompany the acceptance of the Senate bill with a resolution stating that they did not mean for federal sanctions legislation to preempt state and local laws.⁴⁰

³⁹Congressional Quarterly, 9 August 1986, pp. 1784-1786.

⁴⁰Congressional Quarterly, 13 September 1986, p. 2119.

this effort was taken by the House in an attempt to distance itself from the intentions of Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman, Richard Lugar, who had implied that federal legislation in this area was meant to preempt state and local laws. Liberal leaders in the House thought such an emphasis would detract from the significance of the legislation as a measure punishing the South African government for not ending apartheid, because it would preempt stricter statutes enacted by the state of California and many cities and public universities. Although this resolution passed in the House and was added to the Senate version of sanctions legislation, the measure was of questionable legal significance since precedence established that federal legislation on foreign affairs did usually supercede state and local statutes.⁴¹

The rhetoric used by Congressional liberals would mirror the moral concerns of many of the commentators writing during the summer of 1986, while downplaying the anti-communist, economic and strategic interest arguments put forth by the Reagan administration. Those congressional liberals would justify economic sanctions and divestment measures both on the insistence that South Africa conform to democratic practices or face economic penalties, and on the perception that there was not adequate reform efforts being taken by the South African government. They were also rejecting, at least implicitly, the Reagan

⁴¹Ibid.

administration's insistence that laissez-faire economic liberalism and progressive force" economics would eventually bring about reform of apartheid out of the self-interest of the marketplace.

Although the effectiveness of efforts by congressional liberal to put pressure on the South African government to support reform of apartheid was limited since they had to persuade a majority of both congressional Democrats and Republicans to back their proposals. An attempt was made, and it was to some degree successful, since a legislatively mandated foreign policy concerning South Africa was passed for the first time in 1986. It also reflected those individuals' moral concerns, stated specifically in reference to a perceived absence of liberal social justice practices in South Africa. References were made not just to some kind of generalized moral concern, as seen by Barron and Immerwahr, but specifically to how apartheid violated due process, infringed on political participation for all citizens, and restricted freedom for economic and social opportunity.

Even though there was enough sentiment favoring putting increased pressure on South Africa to assure passage of sanctions legislation over a presidential veto in September 1986, there was considerable debate over just how that pressure should or could be applied. Some in the House and Senate including Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Richard Lugar favored continuing diplomatic

pressure and "active constructive engagement" in order to bring about change in South Africa.

Although Lugar would eventually accept that sanctions might be necessary to "send a message" to the South African government about our continued opposition to apartheid, Lugar's ambivalent attitude towards using congressional legislation to shape foreign policy would be one of the factors that would determine why sanctions legislation was not any more punitive than the bill that finally passed in the Senate. Another factor was Lugar's influential position as head of the Foreign Relations Committee, and his sponsorship of sanctions bills that would be voted out onto the floor of the Senate in both 1985 and 1986. His attitude combined with the ability to gain coalitions in committee in order to block both liberal and conservative bills, favoring those substitutes written by himself.⁴²

Lugar was not the only legislator who opposed sanctions based on principles similar to those shared by the Reagan administration, but the number of those opposing economic sanctions would carry more votes in the Senate. In contrast, in the House, fairly restrictive economic sanctions passed easily out of committee. One was passed without amendment on the floor of the House in 1985, and in 1986 a stricter bill mandating total business divestment passed over a less restrictive committee approved bill.

This House passage was over the complaints by several

⁴²Congressional Quarterly, 26 July 1986, p. 1671.

House conservatives such as Rep. Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) who called sanctions, "a symbolic pinprick that will irritate the whites, worsen the standard of living for the blacks and minimize American influence, creating a vacuum filled by European, Japanese and other interests...none of whom have any experience in integrating societies." Ginrich argued further that business pressure and economic ties were too important to be threatened by sanctions.⁴³

What one notices in both the House and Senate is that the majority of their members either did not take an active concern in the debates surrounding sanctions, or at least were not verbally opposed to anti-apartheid legislation. Aside from the liberal Democrats and conservative Republicans making an issue out of apartheid and sanctions, and such moderate supporters of the administration such as Senators Lugar, Dole and Kassenbaum, most congressional members stayed out of the debates over sanctions, leaving those debates to their own opinion leaders on the issue of apartheid.

One explanation of this tendency to stay out of the debates over sanctions is found in the proximity of the debates to an upcoming congressional election. As conservatives would be quick to point out, 1986 was an election year, and many legislators had black constituents of their own to consider. In light of the highly publicized State of Emergency in South Africa, and

⁴³Congressional Quarterly, 28 May 1985, p. 1020.

continuing news reports of press censorship and repression of protest in that country, legislators did not wish to be perceived as supporting continued relations with a racist government.

Those in Congress were also annoyed with the fact that, in 1985, they had allowed themselves to abandon passing sanctions legislation, listening to Reagan's plea that they give the South African government a chance to reform. Considering the new State of Emergency in that country and increased repression of civil rights, Reagan's speech on July 22, 1986, which in part advocated giving the South African government even more time to reform would be met with disbelief. Even staunch administration backers such as Senator Nancy Kassenbaum (R-Kan.) would be disillusioned. As Kassenbaum put it, Reagan's speech, "gave no new direction to our policies toward South Africa, and perhaps more importantly offered no renewed vigor in our pursuit of peaceful change there."⁴⁴

Once attention was called to what was perceived as a worsening situation in South Africa, even conservatives would be more likely to speak out against apartheid. In August 1985, the hardline stance against reform taken by South African President Botha would lead even extreme conservative Rep. Mark Siljander (R-Mich.) to comment, "this makes it more difficult for those of us who have been trying to hold the line against pressure on South Africa,

⁴⁴Congressional Quarterly, 26 July 1986, p. 1671.

pressure that we feel would be counterproductive."⁴⁵ A similar sentiment would be expressed in August 1986 after the new State of Emergency in South Africa and the president's speech. Senator Lowell P. Weicker Jr. (R-Conn.) would state, "For sixteen years nothing much was done, as much by the Senate as anyone else (about apartheid). Now congress is speaking out against the greatest moral wrong of our time."⁴⁶

Implicitly, the opposition to imposing economic sanctions, as voiced by the administration and some moderates and conservatives in the Congress does represent a distaste for meddling in established foreign policy and economic relations. They downplayed the value of interventionism, while relying on an established policy based on diplomatic persuasion, in itself a form of intervention. Although U.S. strategic interests were not discussed much in the House and Senate debates except by those in the conservative coalition, representatives from the administration attended the hearings where sanctions legislation was being debated. When Secretary of State Schultz engaged in a shouting match with Senator Joseph Biden (D-Del.) during a defense of Reagan's July 22, 1986 speech, it became apparent that the administration's position was not being taken seriously by Senate liberals. Schultz could not explain to their satisfaction why Reagan

⁴⁵Congressional Quarterly, 17 August 1985, p. 1652.

⁴⁶Congressional Quarterly, 16 August 1986, p. 1680.

failed to stress the need for reform in South Africa, and instead concentrated on defending that government's use of force to maintain order.⁴⁷

There is a not so subtle change in emphasis when one compares anti-apartheid legislation alongside those actions taken by the Reagan administration in continuing the policy of "constructive engagement." This is primarily due to the fact that, beyond that policy's emphasis on marketplace reform, "constructive engagement" was a policy concerned more with regional stability in Southern Africa, and excluding communist influence from that region, than it was with promoting the end of apartheid. Reform was left up to "progressive force" economic change and the supposition that there was a reformist sentiment among the leadership of the South African government. While the semblance of reform was necessary to justify continuing normal relations with the South African government, along with justifying its role as a strategic partner in that region, "constructive engagement" was perceived by congressional liberals and moderates as providing no active opposition or encouragement for reforming apartheid.

While this type of policy would not have been a problem during the years when South Africa was not in the public's view, now that apartheid was being discussed outside official channels, legislators would feel some public

⁴⁷"Whose Side Are We On?" Grand Forks Herald, 27 July 1986, sec. C, p. 2.

pressure, or at least the perception of public advocacy to either reform apartheid or disassociate the U.S. from the actions of the South African government. Since the administration's policy of "constructive engagement" was perceived as failing to adequately press for reform of apartheid, legislators saw few options but to look for methods to demonstrate our opposition to apartheid, or risk being perceived as supporting the existence of a government that supported undemocratic practices and institutionalized racism. In doing so they rejected the administration's notion that South Africa qualified at that time as a democratic "state" that would eventually assume the practices of a liberal democracy.

VI

CONCLUSION

While the majority of both Democrats and Republicans were opposed in principle to apartheid, and that the goal of ending apartheid included advocating the same style of liberal democracy that each group valued, we were less sure about how to interpret the current situation in South Africa, and what kind of foreign policy to prescribe to address that situation. That is where it became necessary to find some method of simplifying the jumble of information coming out of South Africa and that region, so that critical judgments could be made by those involved in the policy making process. That is also where the format used by Barron and Immerwahr, or something similar, comes into play. When the American public had to address foreign policy issues that were not well understood, what Barron and Immerwahr found them doing was falling back on general principles, historically founded moral beliefs that had widespread agreement, combined with current concerns such as anti-communism, the perils of interventionism, and the perceived need to protect strategic and economic interests. When it came to opposing apartheid based on liberal, moral principles of social justice, what was sought was a method to do so that posed the least risk to damaging our perceived interests in the region of southern Africa.

Although liberals and conservatives seemed to share two separate visions of what liberal, moral values were

involved in opposing apartheid, there was even less agreement on what our strategic and economic interests were, and how important they were, but more agreement on the need to block communist influence in that region of the world. That would in turn shape disagreements on what tactics, if any, to use in encouraging the end of apartheid, or if looking at long term consequences, it was more important to address strategic issues, such as the threat of regional instability and internal unrest in South Africa.

In examining the different commentaries coming from the administration, the press, and the Congress, what seems visible are differing levels of perception about the urgency of ending apartheid. Liberal Congressmen and commentators would stress immediate reform and downplay the importance of strategic interests, asserting that the need was to make a moral and economic statement in opposition to apartheid. Conservatives in the administration and elsewhere would stress that we had already rhetorically demonstrated our opposition to apartheid, but now must leave reform in the hands of the South African government, and concentrate our efforts on addressing strategic concerns in a regional anti-communist strategy. Extreme conservatives would even argue that moral concerns should be set aside until such a time as South Africa was economically sound and secure against communist encroachment.

While the Barron and Immerwahr article was informative

in presenting as it did the milieu of concerns that Americans would possibly consider when addressing foreign policy issues, it must be recognized also that those concerns change over time. The fear of interventionism that came out of the Vietnam experience manifested itself in a different fashion than Barron and Immerwahr visualized. It appeared that many in the Congress were against intervening in South Africa, but not so much out of a fear of aligning themselves with a losing side, as with being perceived as intruding into the jurisdiction of the executive branch and State Department to set foreign policy. Even members of the administration were less enthusiastic about intervention, not because of the reasons Barron and Immerwahr cited, but because they believed that the situation in South Africa would reform itself through marketplace forces and the good intentions of the South African government.

The reaction of opinion leaders in the administration, press, and Congress also demonstrates Barron and Immerwahr's contention that there needs to be a balance of concerns when considering foreign policy issues. What the Congress seemed to be addressing was the perception that our foreign policy stressing regional "constructive engagement" failed to sufficiently address the moral concerns of Americans about the continuation of apartheid practices in South Africa. But, even in trying to redress the grievances of black South Africans, the path the

Congress chose was in itself a moderate reflection of conflicting concerns, imposing limited, punitive economic sanctions instead of divesting all business interests and breaking off diplomatic ties. In that fashion, we demonstrated our moral opposition to the lack of liberal social justice in South Africa, without severely endangering what was perceived as our strategic and economic interests in that region of the world.

What does this say about the American reaction to apartheid, beyond this official reaction, as demonstrated in a legislatively mandated foreign policy that supposedly replaced "constructive engagement" and condemning rhetoric? Perhaps it says that those opinion leaders concerned with shaping our public policies weighed the options, and decided that the cost of opposing apartheid in concrete terms was worth the price when considering how our stance in opposition to apartheid made a statement about the values we cherished as a nation. They also appeared to say that it was no longer enough for the South African government to claim to be a democratic country, but that it had to demonstrate through visible practices its commitment to conforming with human, political and civil rights in a liberal tradition that Americans could relate to.

What is left to be done is to try and make some sense out of the individual voices in the collage of concerns expressed throughout this thesis. While more time could have been spent outlining the procedural details of the

Congressional debates over anti-apartheid legislation, or in presenting the final form of that legislation endorsing economic sanctions, those details have less to do with what we are concerned with here than they are visible recognition that a choice was made. Given the option to reaffirm an established foreign policy dealing with South Africa, and implicitly accepting the arguments used to justify its existence, Congress chose instead to legislatively divorce the U.S. from its previous policy stance.

If one follows the argument presented by Herbert McCloskey, the values expressed by these opinion leaders should also find acceptance among the American public, since the general population takes its cues on issues from opinion leaders such as those in the administration, press, and Congress. As such, the compromise worked out during the 1986 legislative session would also serve as a reflection of American liberal concern about a decidedly non-liberal society and its practice of apartheid.

That is not to say that imposing sanctions was a new idea. President Reagan signed an executive order on September 9, 1985, imposing limited sanctions a year before Congressional anti-apartheid legislation passed both House and Senate over a presidential veto. What Reagan did, however, was to downplay the importance of the intention of those sanctions, while continuing to support in public the policy of "constructive engagement" as a method to deal

with the South African government. What Congress tried to make clear was that it was the intention of the United States to economically punish the South African government until apartheid reform could be seen as being credibly and visibly pursued, and that the continuation of near normal relations under "constructive engagement" was a thing of the past.

Perceptions have a lot to do with the opinions presented in this thesis. The administration and State Department perceived that what was both in the best interest of the U.S. and the region of southern Africa was a stable, long-term foreign policy with clear cut goals that would protect our strategic interests in that region and exclude communist influence. In doing so, they committed the U.S. to support of the South African government as a key partner in protecting our interests in that region of the world, and to a diplomatic timetable for apartheid reform, where radical change was bad, and slow, evolutionary change was preferable.

Those in the administration who supported "constructive engagement" as a regional strategy saw working with the South African government a positive step, since we were aligning ourselves with the most economically sound country in that region, one which the administration perceived as having great influence on its neighbors. The Reagan administration also found this policy morally acceptable since they believed that the South African government had rejected apartheid as an unworkable approach to race

relations, and would slowly move away from apartheid to a form of power sharing with black South Africans. The Reagan administration, as with previous administrations, believed that our continued business presence could aid economic development in South Africa, which would work as a laissez-faire marketplace "progressive force" to bring about social and political change.

While the Reagan administration and other conservatives were able to philosophically accept that economic development and the steps the South African government would take would set the stage for the reformation of apartheid, liberal perceptions in the press and Congress would differ. For the administration it was diplomatically acceptable that it had taken over six years for the South African government to progress from the point of accepting that apartheid, or "separate development" was unworkable, to reaching the stage that an alternative such as limited power sharing could be openly discussed. It was near impossible, however, in light of the recent events in that country, to defend the pace of reform to the press and Congress. When liberals would suggest that perhaps the South African government was not serious about ending apartheid, our whole diplomatic policy and the justifications behind it was called into question. When asked why South Africa was not moving away from apartheid, President Reagan would not help his case by insisting, in spite of recent events, that the South African government

had satisfied him as to their commitment towards reforming apartheid.

A question was asked back in the second chapter of this thesis, did liberal values help shape the American reaction to apartheid? In the case of the Reagan administration, as one set of opinion leaders in this country, their liberal values could be seen in their belief that reform would happen through a growing economy, and not through government intervention into South Africa's internal affairs. It was also seen in their conservative belief that what was most important was the continuation of a democratic state in South Africa, a state under which reforms could be made leading to a full participatory government sometime in the future.

In contrast, liberals in both the press and Congress appeared to be looking for the visible signs of a healthy liberal democratic government in South Africa, signs that would only come with a reformation of apartheid laws and the rescinding of the State of Emergency restriction that were repressing civil rights and freedom of the press. While believing as the administration did that apartheid was morally wrong, liberals did not look for a stable government and growing economy to signify the possibility of reform in South Africa, as did the administration. Instead, they looked for what Chester Crocker once called "simplistic" answers, one-man, one-vote democracy, political participation, majority rule, minority rights,

due process, civil rights, freedom of the press and equality of opportunity. While a conservative supporter of the administration's policy of "constructive engagement," William Safire, would argue that no realist believed that one-man, one-vote democracy would come now or soon to South Africa, liberals would stress that goal, and look for signs of its coming, demanding that the U.S. disassociate itself from the South African government until it had taken visible steps towards instituting the practices of a fully participatory democracy.

It would be left to a few extreme conservatives to express the fear that perhaps black South Africans were not ready for democracy, that maybe, someday, they would be, only once they had been educated and absorbed into a productive economy. While even these conservatives, such as Jesse Helms, would endorse the need for a democratic state in South Africa, this would be tempered by their perception that poverty stricken, poorly educated, politically disenfranchised rural and urban blacks in that country may misuse political participation due to their susceptibility to Marxist or communist pipedreams of instant economic equality. Perhaps those opinion leaders, if any, came closest to reflecting on a continuing concern in this country, whether or not the majority of the people can be trusted to run their own affairs, even though our ideology insists that they be given the chance to do so.

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