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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

SYSTEM 22
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September 7, 1985

National Security Decision
Directive Number 187

UNITED STATES POLICY TOWARD SOUTH AFRICA ✕

The United States and its allies have important political, commercial, and strategic interests in South Africa. These are being threatened by widespread violence and increased tension in South Africa, and continued Soviet challenges to our important interests in the area. At the same time, there has been growing Congressional and public criticism of our policy despite our active engagement and strong record of accomplishment during the past four years. It is, therefore, now necessary to re-emphasize the broad objectives of U.S. political strategy toward South Africa which are:

- Use U.S. influence to promote peaceful change away from apartheid, to a system which provides justice and opportunity for all with a government based on the consent of all its people;
- Use U.S. influence to reduce the prospect of revolutionary violence and the opportunities for expansion of Soviet influence;
- Encourage peace and coexistence between South Africa and its neighbors, promoting policies which can enhance regional stability and foster the benefits of democracy to all peoples of South Africa and the region. ✕

In order to achieve these objectives, the U.S. will remain actively involved and pursue a comprehensive and coordinated strategy toward South Africa. This strategy will consist of the following specific elements:

- Maintain close diplomatic communications including Presidential messages, when appropriate, and quiet diplomacy, to influence the actions of that government;
- Make it clear to South Africa that our present relationship can be sustained only in a framework of cooperation, continued internal reform toward ending apartheid and with a system of rule based on the consent of all governed;
- Urge and apply pressure on South Africa to pursue the course of reform energetically and without delay, to begin genuine negotiations with the country's black leadership, and take steps to redress black grievances;

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-- Expand contacts with representative black organizations in South Africa and encourage them to pursue change by nonviolent means;

-- Increase funding for education, labor, business, self-help and human rights programs in South Africa aimed at improving conditions for black Africans, and black awareness of U.S. initiatives and policies;

-- Urge U.S. business entities in South Africa to continue and to consolidate programs to improve the welfare of black South African employees, to assist black-owned companies and to use their influence to argue for change away from apartheid;

-- Combine the resources of the White House and the Departments of State, Treasury and Commerce to oppose or satisfactorily limit the imposition of new legislative sanctions against South Africa;

-- Pursue negotiating possibilities offered by the South African Government, including high level meetings, as appropriate, to discuss internal developments; seek to establish and maintain a cooperative framework for a relationship based upon realistic appraisals of both achievable goals and U.S. influence;

-- Review the possibilities of joint diplomatic efforts with key Western allies to foster progress toward internal reform and away from apartheid;

-- Continue U.S. efforts to work with South Africa and the IAEA to safeguard South African nuclear facilities and obtain South African adherence to the non-proliferation treaty. ~~X~~

Recent South African Government actions require more forthright public diplomacy to create better public and media understanding of our policies, especially our opposition to apartheid and our encouragement of reform, and to broaden both domestic and international support for them. Our Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs strategy shall consist of the following elements:

-- I, the Vice President, and other senior Administration officials will make public statements or speeches when appropriate reflecting high-level concern over developments in South Africa, explaining our principled opposition to apartheid, and underscoring our commitment to promote peaceful, non-violent change away from that system;

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-- Mobilize a coordinated State Department-led public affairs strategy involving senior officials throughout government, including the White House Public Liaison Office, to explain and seek public understanding and support of our policies and of why punitive sanctions are counterproductive;

-- Under the leadership of USIA, engage in renewed and vigorous public diplomacy abroad to defend our policy and our long-term goals and carefully explain the explosive and unacceptable alternatives to peaceful change and continued U.S. engagement in South Africa;

-- In the United Nations and other international fora, actively promote understanding of U.S. policy; oppose new, international mandatory economic sanctions against South Africa;

-- Mobilize and coordinate U.S. mission outreach and USIA Visitor Programs in South Africa to promote human rights and constitutional reforms broadly acceptable to the parties inside South Africa; seek to move these key issues from the discussion to the agenda stage;

-- Work with non-governmental groups, including the National Endowment for Democracy and key private groups representing labor, business, and religious groups to help strengthen the democratic forces in South Africa. ~~X~~

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