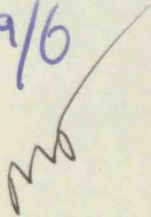


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Prime Minister

COP
19/6



With Compliments

ROBERT JACKSON MP

Since the Prime Minister was interested in a note I wrote for her about my impressions of my visit to South Africa in February, I thought you might like to see the enclosed speech - which was made to a pretty thin House last night.



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON, SW1A 0AA

...e judge which action is effective? The test, ... begun to enunciate, is what brings about attitudes in South Africa. We may have differences of view, and so do people in South Africa. Increasingly, however, more people, black and white, are saying that economic sanctions are now the only course to follow. That is the only peaceful way of filling the vacuum between diplomatic sanctions, which are too meagre, and the military option, which is too severe. The South African Government know the effectiveness of sanctions as they periodically use them against their neighbours. Sanctions have proved effective on them.

It may not be in our short term interests, but it will be in our mid and long-term interests to use sanctions, and we must base our decision on that and not on the interests of tomorrow or next week. The issues are not simple, but pressure has to include economic pressure on South Africa. If the House did not believe that before, it should believe it now after the Eminent Persons Group have made that very clear.

My party's policy on this issue has been clear for many years. In 1959 the Liberal party called for a national boycott of South African goods in Britain. In the same year, we condemned the Conservative Government for voting against a motion condemning apartheid at the General Assembly of the United Nations. In 1969 we called on the Labour Government to stop the South African cricket tour that was to take place in 1970. In 1974 we attacked the Labour Government for carrying out naval exercises with the South African navy, and in 1977 we called upon the Labour Government to implement effective economic sanctions against South Africa. People in South Africa have heard about those policies and they complimented me on the position which the Liberal party has been taking for many years.

As an example of bringing about reconciliation we ought to look at Zimbabwe. It has a non-racial society. It does not have a Westminster-style democracy but people are beginning successfully to live together. [HON. MEMBERS: "Zimbabwe is a tyranny."] No, it is not a tyranny. Black and white people believe that Zimbabwe can have a prosperous future, and I share that belief.

My party says that now is the time to tighten the screws on South Africa. The matter is urgent because we do not have much time. As a British newspaper recently commented, Britain has reached a watershed in its policies on South Africa. I know that, traditionally the advice to the Foreign Secretary by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has been that sanctions are not very effective, but increasingly the advice he is now getting is that they must be used and that we must take the initiative in those international organisations of which we are members.

We must not be seduced by arguments about constructive engagement. Lord Barber, of the Standard Chartered Bank Ltd., a former Conservative Chancellor, says that we must now take effective economic measures. Lord Barber is the Foreign Secretary's former Cabinet colleague and friend. The Foreign Secretary should listen to him and give our Government credibility. Our constituents require that we now begin to move. The timetable is urgent and a window of opportunity is still open. We must take that opportunity on behalf of all the citizens of South Africa. In large part, their hopes rest with this House.

Mr. Robert Jackson (Wantage): I should like to start with a comment on some of the Opposition speeches. When they reflect on this debate tomorrow some of them will, or should, regret many of the things that they have said and especially the tone in which they were said.

Let me declare a personal interest because I was born in South Africa. My father's family emigrated there in the 1840s to farm sheep in the Karoo and many of them are still farming there in that strange arid landscape. I was educated in South Africa and came to Britain for the first time at the age of 18. I go back to South Africa frequently and I have a deep concern for the future of that beautiful, complex, and tragic land. It is against that background that I support further sanctions, not as an expression of moral outrage—because it is far too late in the day for that in Anglo-South African relations—but as an instrument of diplomacy: if I may use the expression, I support them in the spirit of continuing constructive engagement.

This diplomacy should be aimed in two directions: first at the internal situation in South Africa, and, second, at the shaping of international policy towards South Africa.

The right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) analysed correctly the growing divisions among South African whites, between the *verkramp* and the *verlig* within the Government, within the South African military—an important factor—and notably, as the right hon. Gentleman stressed, within the National party. There is a growing convergence between many nationalists and a majority of the English speakers, and I believe that this is a more important political change than the growth of the Afrikaner Right wing because it opens up the possibility of a return to the formula by which South Africa was governed between 1910 and 1948 equally as long a period as that since 1948. There is also growing pressure from South African business. Criticisms have come from that quarter in the past, but now they are becoming more anguished and more effective—and more and more it includes Afrikaner business.

British diplomacy and the diplomacy of the west as a whole should be directed to play on those divisions and to promote dialogue, negotiation and accommodation. I was hopeful that this could be done without sanctions and when I returned from South Africa in February I was optimistic about the noises we were picking up about the Eminent Persons Group. But as I should have probably foreseen, the *verkramp* tendency has prevailed in the recent attacks on South Africa's neighbours and in the declaration of the state of emergency. The hard-liners have prevailed for the time being, but not necessarily for all time; and so we are inevitably in a new phase—the phase of sanctions.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr. Amery) made an excellent speech. He concluded that further pressures would be unnecessary and potentially counter-productive. That of course is a matter for judgment and, for what it is worth, I do not agree with my right hon. Friend. International pressures have already played a big part in bringing about those important measures of progress that have occurred in South Africa.

Moreover, I say to my right hon. Friend the Member for Pavilion that we need also to think in terms of influencing the trend of international policy towards South Africa. There is a world-wide drift towards sanctions against South Africa and this drift is now irresistible, whether in the EEC, or in the Commonwealth—where I think we now have an implicit commitment flowing from

the Nassau accord—or in the United States where the pressure is coming from within the Congress, if not from the Administration.

Outside South Africa no country's interests are more deeply affected by this drift than Britain's, and it is crucial that we should be able to influence and, to the extent that we can, direct this irresistible international trend towards sanctions. But we can do this only by joining in that trend.

So we should commit ourselves to further measures against South Africa in order to be better able to promote constructive developments inside South Africa and a constructive international policy towards that country. That raises the rather basic question of what developments we should regard as constructive and especially that of the sort of sanctions that we want to encourage. I submit four criteria. The first is that we should avoid unnecessary hardship. I note an element of inconsistency in the speech of the right hon. Member for Devonport, who urged a ban on new investment because it would be less harmful than other forms of economic pressure, but then went on to talk about a ban on fruit and vegetable imports. As I pointed out in an intervention, that would be very damaging immediately to a lot of very poor people. Secondly, the sanctions we adopt should be such that everybody will operate them—and that must mean that they must be limited. Third, they should also be capable of being effectively monitored.

My fourth criterion is more controversial: our sanctions should be specifically targeted. Here I take up a hint from the speech of the right hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey) who spoke about a rolling programme of sanctions. Implicitly, he was saying that we should convey the threat that if nothing is done sanctions will be further increased. I would add the further thought that we should offer the prospect of some relief from those sanctions, if progress were made. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will accept that this important point is another implication of his concept of a rolling programme of sanctions.

Finally, what sort of steps within South Africa should we regard as progress? Here I strike a note of dissent from my right hon. Friend the Member for Pavilion in that I believe we must get the South African Government to recognise that it is no longer merely a question of the reform of economic and social apartheid where admittedly there has been some real progress. Now we must get the South African Government to recognise that the issue is not what they do for the blacks, but what they do with the blacks. It is a question not of economic and social apartheid being abolished, but of political apartheid being abolished.

On the political front, I agree with the right hon. Member for Devonport that we should not seek to dictate the future shape of the South African constitution. In particular, we should not prejudge the difficult, indeed the central, question of the balance between the ethnic principle and the principle of a common South African citizenship. Both elements are likely to be present in any settlement. Certainly a common South African citizenship is fundamental for us; but I agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Pavilion that ethnicity also reflects a fundamental reality in South Africa which probably cannot be disregarded.

Those are, however, matters for the people of South Africa to work out for themselves. The basic objective of our policy should be, not so much to press a particular outcome but to promote a process—a dialogue which

involves all parties, all personalities and all interests. Let that dialogue and those negotiations take place and then we may have to have a genuine debate in this House about the acceptability of its outcome. Meanwhile, the reality is that we are not much divided, so let us unite behind a policy which is designed to get that dialogue going.

8.21 pm

Mr. Peter Pike (Burnley): I welcome the opportunity to speak in this important debate as I, together with my hon. Friend the Member for Bury, North (Mr. Burt) and my hon. Friend the Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes), have recently returned from South Africa. My speech is slightly different from what it would have been if I had not visited South Africa. I have been a member of Anti-Apartheid for 26 years and the only reason why I visited South Africa was because we were invited as three Christian Members of Parliament, and were sponsored by Christians in this country and in South Africa. The arrangements for us were made by Anthony Cordle, who is following this debate closely, and who co-ordinated our Christian contacts in this country and in South Africa.

We had a busy time in South Africa at 39 meetings. We met well over 90 people in formal settings and many people in informal settings. Obviously, our visit to Crossroads, Soweto and Alexandra in Johannesburg had a drastic impact on us. While one may be aware of the position in South Africa from newspaper and television reports, one cannot judge it until one sees it at first hand.

The basis of our visit enabled us to meet people and speak frankly and openly with them, something that would not otherwise have been possible. We met people across the political spectrum of South Africa—from the extreme white Right-wing Members of the Herstigte Nasionale party and Conservative party to the younger Left-wing black extremists in Soweto. It was interesting to meet them and to discuss matters with them.

It is important that the House recognises the importance of the Church in South Africa. Seventy-eight per cent. of the population profess and practice a Christian faith, as is evidenced by church attendances and the way in which people lead their lives. It became clear that whatever legislative decisions are taken by the South African Parliament—they are important and essential—apartheid will not be ended by a parliamentary decision. Only a change in people's hearts and minds will finally resolve the policy of apartheid.

At times when we spoke to members of the HNP and Conservative party I was tempted to wonder why we were wasting our time speaking to people with extreme views who not only believe that no further concessions should be made, but that far too many concessions have already been made. I am in no doubt that we were right to speak to them because it put the issues and difficulties into perspective.

Whether we like it or not, we must accept that under the tri-cameral system the white Parliament has supremacy over the other two Chambers and can take the final decision. The white Parliament and State President Botha have the power. I have grave doubts about whether President Botha genuinely wants to make changes. One of our hosts who knows the President well, said that 20 years ago President Botha would have been the person least likely to want to make changes. He now believes that President Botha genuinely wishes to make changes but is trapped by the Right-wing extremists in his party. He

