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Cannot Afford to Publicly Surrender: The Public's Influence on Ronald Reagan's Strategic Relationship with South Africa

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CANNOT AFFORD TO PUBLICLY SURRENDER: THE PUBLIC'S INFLUENCE ON
RONALD REAGAN'S STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIP WITH SOUTH AFRICA

by

JESSICA PATTON FORSEE

(Under the Direction of Julie de Chantal)

ABSTRACT

Reagan's administration used the policy of constructive engagement to bring gradual reform to the apartheid system and build peace in the southern African region. The coordination of anti-apartheid activist organizations and members advocating for harsher economic pressure on South Africa successfully raised US public awareness and shifted public opinion against constructive engagement's gradualist policies. As a result, leading Reagan staffers like Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker recalibrated constructive engagement's focus to quicken regional peacebuilding maintain stability and control of US foreign policy in the public eye. This thesis analyzes the early influences on constructive engagement and Reagan's efforts to maintain economic gradualism while emphasizing the role of US anti-apartheid activists as active agents of change in Reagan's policies towards South Africa. "Cannot Afford to Publicly Surrender" focuses on how Reagan staffers and anti-apartheid activists used public mediums as stages for their respective agendas on US foreign policy.

INDEX WORDS: Ronald Reagan, Chester Crocker, Constructive engagement, US Foreign Policy, Public perception, Apartheid South Africa, Anti-apartheid activism, Foreign policy influences, 1980s

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in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family and friends, who patiently helped me through the writing process in phone calls and message check-ins. In all honesty, without the following individuals, words would have never made it on these pages: Jacob, Alyssa, and Craig. My fiancé Jacob Turner's encouragement reminds me every day that good scholarship is not done in isolation and to celebrate those little moments of life. Alyssa Windsor is a research partner unlike any other and whose company I will always cherish in the research rooms and at the dinner table.

I am eternally thankful for the early support to "go nuclear!" and pursue this research by the brightest light in Georgia Southern's History Department, Dr. Craig Roell. It is true one can be a historian and hopeful at the same time and Dr. Roell was the epitome of hope. His lessons are something I will carry with me throughout my career and life; and for that, I dedicate this thesis as case study of hope to Craig. It is my intention that this work provides a historical example on how a shared vision of hope for a new South Africa successfully revised a formerly unmoving US foreign policy, with little credit to those who envisioned it.

Ubuntu, friends.

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Within the many footnotes in these pages, one can never fully acknowledge the village it took to bring this thesis into existence. The attempt to do so begins with the people and institutions listed. I want to first recognize the Georgia Southern University History Department for the support I received from the time my application to the completion of this thesis. Each of my professors shaped my training as a historian for the better. I am grateful for the members of my committee, Drs. Julie de Chantal, Cathy Skidmore-Hess, and Mao Lin. They patiently read long-winded sentences, picked my brain for the better, and pushed me in my professional and personal development.

The Graduate Student Professional Development Fund, through the Georgia Southern University Graduate Student Organization, financially aided my travel and transportation to the Reagan Presidential Library to conduct this research in January 2020 prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The archival staff of the Reagan Presidential Library, including Kelly Barton, were helpful to this research project from my first email to the end. The countless digital collections and librarians I reached out to are owed another critical by-line to this research done during uncertain times.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	3
ABBREVIATIONS.....	5
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION.....	6
Historiographical Context.....	9
Sources.....	15
Statement of Thesis.....	17
Organization.....	18
2 CULTIVATING CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT	21
Introduction.....	21
1980 Campaign Influences: Anti-Communist and Anti-Carter.....	23
Opposition during the 1980 Election: Divestment Discontent.....	27
Reagan Elected and Crocker’s Initial Influence.....	31
Pretoria’s Gradual Reforms and Nuclear Power Matches Reagan’s Early Rhetoric.....	33
US Policy to South Africa Policy Formulation Period.....	37
Conservative Schisms Emerging During Policy Formulation.....	42
South African Officials Attempt to Influence Policy Formation.....	44
South African Undeterred Aggression.....	50
3 THE ECONOMIC DISCORD OVER CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT.....	54
Introduction.....	54
Congressional and Executive Strategic Resource and Policy Concerns.....	55
Anti-Apartheid Activists Use of the Strategic Resources.....	61
Regional Peace Attempts and Setbacks.....	65
4 THE DIVESTMENT CAMPAIGN AND 1984 ELECTION IMPACT.....	72
Introduction.....	72
Divestment Efforts.....	74
The 1984 Election.....	75
Domestic Struggle for Good Publicity.....	80
The ‘New Manifesto’ and Public Management of Anti-Apartheid Sentiment.....	87
Reactions to Executive Order 12532.....	93
5 DELIBERATE REFRAMING OF US POLICY ON SOUTH AFRICA.....	98
Introduction.....	98
Public Diplomacy Maneuvering.....	199
Revitalization of Anti-Communist Policy Defense.....	105
1986: The “Path of Peaceful, Constructive Change”.....	107
Selectively Implementing the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act.....	117
Salvaging an Appearance of Change and Avoiding Public Surrender.....	120
6 CONCLUSION.....	128
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	132

ABBREVIATIONS

ACOA-The American Committee on Africa

FLS- Frontline States including Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia (formerly Southwest Africa), Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe

MPLA- People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola

NSC- the United States National Security Council

NP- Nationalist Party

SADF- South African Defense Force

SWAPO- South West African's People Organization

UNITA- National Union for the Total Independence of Angola

UNTAG- United Nations Transition Assistance Group

WOA- Washington Office on Africa

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

When South African Minister of Foreign Affairs R. F. “Pik” Botha first met United States President Ronald Reagan in 1981, he asserted to Reagan that South Africa could “not afford, publicly, to surrender,” the quest for nuclear capability.¹ In this meeting, Botha appealed to the newly elected Ronald Reagan to recognize what had become a problematic international image of South Africa. The apartheid government, isolated in many international forums, hoped that Reagan would be willing to make a public defense of Pretoria’s nuclear program, its supposedly gradual racial reforms, and its regional policies of aggression. As a result, the US relationship with South Africa did not exist in a vacuum. South Africa, an international pariah for its racial separation through the apartheid system, was a critical Cold War ally prior to Reagan’s entrance into the White House. The white Afrikaner government proclaimed itself as a capitalist stronghold in a region where other governments were increasingly allied with the Soviet Union.² For this reason, public criticism from anti-apartheid activists, public figures, and African officials against South Africa forced Reagan’s foreign policy team to publicly justify the administration’s relationship with apartheid South Africa.

Reagan’s ascension to the Presidency in 1981 brought promises of changing the Soviet Union-United States relationship through rollback policies in communist African states, like

¹ "Notes on Meeting between South African Minister of Foreign Affairs R. F. Botha and US President Reagan," May 15, 1981, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, South African Foreign Affairs Archive, File 137/10/02 Vol. 9, doc. No. 82214/006772, obtained and contributed by Or Rabinowitz, the Wilson Center Digital Archive.

²The Afrikaner ethnic group descended from Dutch traders in the 18th century who claimed themselves the rightful settlers of South Africa. The Nationalist Party (NP), a predominantly Afrikaner political group, instituted apartheid in the 1948 Constitution. For this reason, the apartheid South African government will frequently be referred to as “Pretoria,” where the apartheid government capital was located, or the Botha administration, so named after P. W. Botha the Prime Minister and then State President after the constitutional revision of 1983.

Angola, by engaging with the South African government.³ This Reagan Doctrine shaped the early relationship of the United States and South Africa. Anti-communist freedom fighters like the South African Defense Force (SADF) and their support for the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) had to be supported to deter the development of communist-friendly allies in the region. Under US Presidents Ford and Carter presidencies, 11,000 Cuban fighters stationed in Angola promoted the rise of communist liberation groups. In this light, Reagan reinvigorated the direct attack against communism and criticized détente for its weakening of American values abroad.

Yet, the Reagan administration would have provided further support to South Africa had it not been for the Clark Amendment, an amendment added to the US Arms Export Control Act of 1976 to prevent any direct or covert military intervention in Angola after President Ford and Henry Kissinger's proxy-war with Cuba and the Soviet Union in 1975.⁴ In the 1980s, Reagan and his team revitalized their working relationship with South Africa to curb the Soviet influence over the region. Reagan's Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker oversaw the policy of constructive engagement to promote gradual internal reform of apartheid and regional peacebuilding with Angola and Namibia. However, rebuilding the relationship with South Africa meant considering the public perception of the United States' relationship with Pretoria.

White House staffers constantly grappled public perception during Reagan's tenure.⁵ The former actor turned President carefully crafted his image to appeal to the majority of

³ John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 234.

⁴ Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Deputy Director of Intelligence, "Angola: Impact of Clark Amendment," April 14, 1983.; Ronald W. Walters, "The Clark Amendment: Analysis of U.S. Policy Choices in Angola," *The Black Scholar* 12, no. 4 (July 1981): 2–12.

⁵ *The Reagan Show*, directed by Sierra Pettengill and Pacho Velez (Gravitas Ventures and CNN Films, 2017), Kanopy.

conservative voters. Reagan's team paid special attention to Reagan's image and such concerns informed critical policy decisions, including foreign policy.⁶ South Africa, similarly, knew the stakes of having a palatable public image. Pik Botha's explicit concern for the public when discussing South Africa's nuclear weapons with Ronald Reagan compels historians to consider Reagan's relationship with South Africa beyond the Cold War paradigm. The Reagan administration and Pretoria individually formulated their policies toward each other based on public perception, which translated to a relationship based on appearance, rather than on substance.

Public discourse over foreign policy ensured a level of accountability to the US Congress from the US President.⁷ In the case of Reagan's relationship with South Africa, criticism came predominantly from nontraditional foreign policy influences—mostly grassroots anti-apartheid organizations and activists—as well as from congressional members in favor of ending apartheid. During Reagan's first term, critics of the US-South Africa relationship started to coordinate their message to the American public and world in public meetings and joint declarations. By Reagan's second term, anti-apartheid activists' efforts against the Reagan administration's policies toward South Africa—especially with the Divestment Movement—forced an institutional reevaluation of the US-South African relationship and the creation of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act. Grassroot organizers and public critics' efforts shifted Reagan's policy focus toward regional peace negotiation after failing to internally reform South Africa. This thesis expands the traditional analysis of Ronald Reagan's foreign policies by

⁶ Laurence R. Jurdem, *Paving the Way for Reagan: The Influence of Conservative Media on US Foreign Policy* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2018) and Henrik G. Bastiansen, Martin Klimke, and Rolf Werenskjold, eds., *Media and the Cold War in The 1980s: Between Star Wars and Glasnost* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing AG, 2018).

⁷ Paul E. Peterson, ed., *The President, the Congress, and the Making of Foreign Policy* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994).

including the public's influence to create, implementation, and responsively change its South African policies. Thus, this thesis emphasizes the power that nontraditional foreign policy actors wield in foreign policy making.

Historiographical Context

The study of Reagan's foreign policy is an emerging field in history given the close proximity to the present. With the previous time restrictions on source material, much of the interpretation of 1980s foreign policy was left to the observers and participants of the period. To this day, Reagan is credited as the Great Communicator with domestic politics and the Soviet Union.⁸ This is due, in part, to the autobiographical accounts of Reagan officials, news coverage, and political analysts that created the initial observations which firmly placed the US-South African relationship in the Cold War context and Reagan as the sole manipulator of media attention and popular opinion. With more holistic interpretations of the US-South African relationship emerging, the historiography will evolve with it. Based on current findings, this thesis is the sole work that studies Reagan's Southern African foreign policy and the influence of public pressure from anti-apartheid activists in tandem.

A study on the Reagan administration's awareness of public criticism and how the administration conducted its South African policies in response allows for a new interpretation of the relationship while simultaneously expanding existing literature on the public's influence over foreign policy. The historiography covers three different focuses regarding the US-South African relationship: US foreign policy in the Cold War and Southern Africa, the Reagan

⁸ Reagan Gresham Dye, "Applause, Laughter, Chants, and Cheers: An Analysis of the Rhetorical Skill of the 'Great Communicator'" (master's thesis, University of Arkansas-Fayetteville, 2018).

administration's relationship with the public and media, and the role of critics within and outside of the United States and South Africa.

There are two different interpretations describing the United States' foreign policy with Southern Africa in the 1980s. The first interpretation emphasizes that the Cold War alliance hindered any monumental policy changes, which subsequently made Ronald Reagan's constructive engagement policy a minor reframing of the alliance. This framework's long-standing support evolved from the many historians who offered niche explanations for minute political changes. Focused on the Cold War alliance between the US and South Africa, this historiography remains a subfield of the US foreign relations in larger international contexts. For example, while Ben Martin's 1989 article places the diplomacy of Southern Africa in the Cold War theater, he frequently refers to the slow movements of Reagan officials, Chester Crocker in particular, towards achieving any peaceful change in the region.⁹ Martin speaks of a history of foreign relations built upon slow incremental changes, with examples of Reagan's attempts to revitalize a foreign policy that were still bogged down by a Cold War alliance. Richard Goldstone furthers Martin's argument by emphasizing the ambivalence of the Reagan administration towards South Africa's human rights violations in an attempt to shift from President Carter's harsher rhetoric.¹⁰ Studying Reagan's foreign policy towards Southern Africa in a predominately Cold War context extended beyond the South African border into neighboring countries like Angola.

Todd Greentree's 2016 dissertation is a testament to the longevity of this school of thought where the traditional analysis of foreign policy is one of incremental changes. In

⁹ Ben L. Martin, "American Policy towards Southern Africa in the 1980s," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 27, no. 1 (1989): 45.

¹⁰ Richard Goldstone, "Ambiguity and America," *Social Research* 72, no. 4 (2005): 816.

analyzing the Angolan civil war and US involvement, Greentree describes the series of failures—under previous administration—that informed Reagan’s own readiness to frame his foreign policy as an anti-Communist rhetoric.¹¹ Additionally, Chester Pach’s 2006 article analyzes the Reagan Doctrine of aiding anti-Communist resistance groups and countries—such as South Africa—within the context of regional stability and Cold War defense as a pragmatic policy option.¹²

The second US foreign policy interpretation emphasizes regional stability as the key motivator for US actions, regardless of significant policy shifts. While fundamental at understanding the complexity of apartheid’s influence over the region, this interpretation often remove the Southern African region from other international influences or the apartheid state’s level of agency in its relationship with the United States. Early views of this position like Robert Davies and Dan O’Meara’s 1985 article describe a destabilized Southern Africa as the result of South African aggression. Hardly mentioning the United States at all, Davies and O’Meara both argue that the South Africa was a rogue state separated from the rest of the world’s politics.¹³ In presenting the country as an abnormality, this regional interpretation is in direct contrast to the incrementalism school of thought as the region seemingly defies the larger forces of Cold War politics.

More recent scholarship from Alex Thomson, Todd Greentree, and Michel Hendrix further expand the discussions on United States-South Africa relationship by basing the relationship solely on regional stability and ignoring South Africa’s apartheid policy on the

¹¹ Todd Greentree, “The Origins of the Reagan Doctrine Wars in Angola, Central America, and Afghanistan” (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2016).

¹² Chester Pach, “The Reagan Doctrine: Principle, Pragmatism, and Policy,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (2006): 75–88.

¹³ Robert Davies and Dan O’Meara, “Total Strategy in Southern Africa: An Analysis of South African Regional Policy Since 1978,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 11, no. 2 (April 1985): 183–211.

claims of sovereignty.¹⁴ Alex Thomson's 1995 article revisited the policy of constructive engagement through the lens of regional. Thomson argued that, despite the failure the United States' initial goal of seeking internal change in South Africa through constructive engagement, the hastily put together regional peace accord was its saving grace.¹⁵ In his 2012 doctoral dissertation, Michael Hendrix highlights the primacy of regional stability during the Reagan administration. While Hendrix acknowledges Thomson's interpretation of constructive engagement, he claims that regional stability—especially against communism—was always the main goal of Crocker's constructive engagement, not the end of apartheid.¹⁶ Yet again, Hendrix did not take into account the domestic politics in both the US and South Africa in the policy goal and its reframing. This thesis acknowledges these regional complexities but seeks to engage a broader context of influences over the US-South African relationship. The current United States foreign relations historiography overlooks the intricate network of foreign policy stakeholders and obscures the role of anti-apartheid activists in the United States and the southern African region.

Many communications and public rhetoric scholars examine Reagan's skills in manipulating media attention and popular opinion, deeming him the first President to capitalize on the emerging diversified media networks.¹⁷ Robert Mann's biographic depicts a growing

¹⁴ Alex Thomson, "Incomplete Engagement: Reagan's South Africa Policy Revisited," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 33, no. 1 (March 1995): 83–101; Alex Thomson, *U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Apartheid South Africa, 1948-1994* (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2008); Michael Patrick Hendrix, "The Hammer and the Anvil: The Convergence of United States and South African Foreign Policies during the Reagan and Botha Administrations" (Stellenbosch University, 2012); Todd Greentree, "The Origins of the Reagan Doctrine Wars in Angola, Central America, and Afghanistan" (University of Oxford, 2016).

¹⁵ Alex Thomson, *U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Apartheid South Africa, 1948-1994* (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2008).

¹⁶ Michael Patrick Hendrix, "The Hammer and the Anvil: The Convergence of United States and South African Foreign Policies during the Reagan and Botha Administrations" (PhD diss., Stellenbosch University, 2012).

¹⁷ Reagan Gresham Dye, "Applause, Laughter, Chants, and Cheers: An Analysis of the Rhetorical Skill of the 'Great Communicator'" (master's thesis, University of Arkansas-Fayetteville, 2018).

influence of the Republican party, and specifically the far-right, in informing Reagan's early views and political positions. Gil Troy's *Morning in America: How Ronald Reagan Invented the 1980s*, and Laurence Jurdem's 2018 book *Paving the Way for Reagan: The Influence of Conservative Media on US Foreign Policy* both discuss the broader public awareness on foreign policy.¹⁸ However, these works hardly mention the US-South Africa relationship. While Troy explores Reagan as a singular phenomenon that transformed the 1980s, he pays little attention to the significant role administration members had in responsively crafting Reagan's public persona and policies.¹⁹ Jurdem, departing from Troy's earlier focus on Reagan, shifts his attention to the early influences of media, particularly conservative media outlets, crafting foreign policy.²⁰ The two seem disconnected from each other and yet both acknowledge the critical role of the media as a shaper of Presidential policies. For that reason, this thesis incorporates their theories on the growing conservative influence on the Reagan administration as evidence towards the conservative public influences on Reagan's relationship with South Africa.

The final portion of the historiography of this thesis focuses on the role of popular criticisms against the US and South African governments. Joanne Davies 2007's *Constructive Engagement? Chester Crocker & American Policy in South Africa, Namibia, & Angola 1981-8* expands the scholarship with her comprehensive analysis on the criticism against constructive engagement as the main US policy towards southern Africa. Davies argues that public criticism of constructive engagement's basic assumptions—namely South Africa's own willingness to reform—shifted the Reagan policy towards regional peace agreements such as linkage after

¹⁸ Gil Troy, *Morning in America: How Ronald Reagan Invented the 1980s* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005); Jurdem, *Paving the Way for Reagan: The Influence of Conservative Media on US Foreign Policy*.

¹⁹ Troy, *Morning in America: How Ronald Reagan Invented the 1980s*.

²⁰ Jurdem, *Paving the Way for Reagan : The Influence of Conservative Media on US Foreign Policy*.

failing to eliminate apartheid.²¹ However, Davies' brief analysis of nontraditional foreign policy actors focuses on South African exiled political parties. This thesis expands Davies' study on political parties' influence on policy to analyze multiple US-based anti-apartheid organizations' criticism of the Reagan administration's relationship with South Africa.

Another fundamental work on public criticism of US foreign policy comes from George M. Frederickson's 1981 book, *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American and South African History*, where Frederickson covers the long history of African-American civil rights activists struggle to reform policies within the United States on domestic and foreign matters.²² Frederickson's work, though not discussing the public's influence over the Reagan administration, demonstrates the growing political power that anti-apartheid groups possessed in lobbying for the end of apartheid. This thesis expands on the public interference over US foreign relations particularly from minority communities.

Scholars Gail Gerhart and Prexy Nesbitt mirrored Frederickson theory on linking anti-apartheid activism to rising political power of minority communities and advocating for change in US foreign policy to the larger American public.²³ Similarly, William Minter, Gail Hovey, and Charles Cobb, Jr.'s recent works describe the high level of coordination between Americans and Black South Africans from the 1950s to the 2000s to pressure change in US foreign policy, including Ronald Reagan's policies with South Africa.²⁴ Further works from Thomas Borstelmann and Donald Culverson further Frederickson's argument on the growing political

²¹ Joanne E. Davies, *Constructive Engagement? Chester Crocker & American Policy in South Africa, Namibia, & Angola 1981-8* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2007).

²² George M. Frederickson, *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study of American and South African History* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1981).

²³ Gail M. Gerhart, *Black Power in South Africa*, Perspectives on Southern Africa, No. 19 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978); Prexy Nesbitt, "Apartheid in Our Living Rooms: U.S. Foreign Policy and South Africa," Midwest Research Monograph Series 3 (Midwest Research, 1986).

²⁴ William Minter, Gail Hovey, and Charles Cobb Jr., eds. *No Easy Victories: African Liberation and American Activists over a Half Century, 1950-2000*.

power that previously disenfranchised groups wielded against the Reagan administration.

Culverson's argues that the efforts of the anti-apartheid movement, the House Subcommittee on Africa, and the Congressional Black Caucus raised public consciousness on South Africa and influenced the shifts in Congress that led to the passage of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 and to the overriding of Reagan's veto that enforced stricter sanctions on the apartheid government.²⁵ Culverson's argument on specific public actors outside of the Reagan foreign policy apparatus informed my initial research into Reagan foreign policy critics.

Historians Thomas Borstelmann's *The Cold War and the Color Line* and Francis Nesbitt's *Race for Sanctions* remain the premiere monographs on popular influences over US foreign policy and the apartheid government. Borstelmann's comprehensive analysis of US policy during the Cold War in relation to international race policies places growing US activist organizations at the center of the public debate over foreign policy.²⁶ Nesbitt's primary focus on African-Americans and Black South Africans as anti-apartheid activists expands the traditionalist view of foreign policy influences and this thesis expands Nesbitt's analysis in include the Reagan administration's internal and public responses to growing anti-apartheid activism.²⁷ Taking these two works together within the context of public criticism of the Reagan administration's foreign policy towards South Africa creates a dynamic analysis of public influence on US foreign policy. Expanding their focus, this thesis analyzes how anti-apartheid activists' public efforts to criticize the US-South Africa relationship caused internal policy shifts within the Reagan White House.

²⁵ Donald R. Culverson, "The Politics of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in the United States, 1969-1986," *Political Science Quarterly (Academy of Political Science)* 111, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 127-149.

²⁶ Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line : American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2001).

²⁷ Francis Nesbitt, *Race for Sanctions: African Americans Against Apartheid, 1946-1994*.

After taking into consideration the work done on the role of media, internal deliberations, my thesis brings together both the internal and external forces at play in the US-South African relationship. These individual historiographical topics: the US Cold War foreign policy, southern African regional stability, awareness of public perception, and anti-apartheid activism and stakeholders in social and economic circles lay the early foundation of this research on the United States-South Africa relationship.

Sources

This thesis uses an array of source material ranging from newspapers to government documents, letters, memos, anti-apartheid tracts and newsletter, as well as oral histories. To understand the perspective of Reagan officials during the policy formulation and subsequent revisions, I analyzed memorandums and policy papers from the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and similarly related digital collections from the National Security Archives. News coverage as well as polling and survey data provide an insight in the public opinion on the administration's policies. Various anti-apartheid digital collections, interviews with former activists including Elizabeth Schmidt, Prexy Nesbitt, and William Minter, and released South African documents from the former apartheid administration and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission testimonies allow us to examine the perspective of nontraditional foreign policy actors' during Reagan's administration. Reagan's Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Chester Crocker, published his autobiography, *High Noon in Southern Africa: Making Peace in a Rough Neighborhood*, in 1992.²⁸ The volume delves into the minutia of eight years of policy making and describes the subtle (and sometimes overt) public influences on Reagan's

²⁸ Chester Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa: Making Peace in a Rough Neighborhood* (USA: Norton, 1992).

Africa team. This study uses Crocker's autobiography as a primary source to highlight the administration's own struggle with crafting policy in response to public perception and their own attempts at swaying it.

This range of material offers differing depictions of the events from 1980 to 1989. Such conflict between source material informs this thesis' central purpose to understand how the public, comprised of both Reagan supporters and left-wing anti-apartheid activists, vied for control of the American perception of the United States-South Africa relationship and influenced policy making in the Reagan White House.

Statement of Thesis

This thesis focuses on a central question: How did nontraditional foreign policy actors influence the Reagan administration's foreign policy with apartheid South Africa? Over the course of three chapters, this thesis argues that the Reagan and his administration frequently defended its relationship with South Africa while anti-apartheid activists raised public awareness as they criticized Reagan's policies towards South Africa as ineffective and inefficient. Furthermore, in spite of the Reagan administration's attempts to publicly defend this relationship, this thesis posits that anti-apartheid activists used public mediums of television and newspapers, local campaigns, and congress to force changes in Reagan's foreign policy regarding South Africa and the southern African region.

By expanding the influences on Reagan's relationship with South Africa to include nontraditional foreign policy actors, the US-South African relationship becomes complex, multifaceted dynamic where the public played a direct role. In fact, media personalities, anti-apartheid activists worldwide, and activist organizations frequently influenced how the US

public saw the US-South African relationship. A careful study of their influences on policy creation, rollout, and defense of constructive from 1981 to 1989 highlights the Reagan administration's obsession with public perception. Beyond P. W. Botha's May 1981 statement, there were several more occasions where US and South African officials called attention to the publicity of their relationship. In May 1985, President Reagan wrote to President P. W. Botha about the newfound attention that the US public paid to the problems of South Africa as "never before... on issues that touch the most sensitive nerves in our body politic."²⁹ Thus, this thesis contends that the US public—including the media reporting on Reagan's policies, lobbyists, and members of anti-apartheid organizations in both national and local capacities— influenced Reagan's relationship with South Africa.³⁰

Organization

Chapter Two covers the early influences on the Reagan administration. The 1980 Presidential Campaign and public speculations on future foreign policy created an early interest in revitalizing the relationship with the Botha administration. During Reagan's electoral campaign and his first year in office, competing conservative influences from media and politicians directly informed Reagan's initial policymaking towards South Africa. It was during this time that Constructive Engagement became the central policy of the United States on

²⁹ Ronald Reagan, "Letter from Ronald Reagan to Mr. President," September 6, 1985, Letters in South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs, Digital Innovation South Africa (DISA), JSTOR Struggles for Freedom: Southern Africa.

³⁰ The all-encompassing term "nontraditional foreign policy actors" will be used interchangeable with anti-apartheid activists to refer to the various types of members in different anti-apartheid organizations including executive leadership, grassroots organizers, and affiliated researchers who all shared the common goal of bringing awareness to the humanitarian crisis of apartheid and ending the oppressive system through foreign policy actions like sanctions and divestment.

apartheid South Africa. Chapter Two concludes with the official announcement of the US foreign policy towards South Africa after nearly a year of planning and drafting.

Chapter Three examines the period from October 1981 to 1983 with the response to Constructive Engagement to the early beginnings of the Divestment Movement in 1983. The Reagan administration's fervent support of the Sullivan Principles—a gradualist economic reform initiative—ensured the support of mainstream conservatives and major corporations. Additionally, since anti-apartheid activists had not yet formed a solid coalition, the Reagan administration was able to engage with the South African government for strategic minerals with little US public criticism.

However, Chapter Four analyzes the impact of the Divestment Movement and the 1984 election on gradually shifting US foreign policy on South Africa. Jesse Jackson's 1984 Democratic bid brought South Africa as a major foreign policy issue to the American people and led to major news coverage of anti-apartheid protests against South Africa's state-perpetuated violence. In 1984, pressure from nontraditional foreign policy actors and politicians led to widespread public awareness of the South African apartheid situation. Ultimately, public awareness did not deter Reagan's opposition to harsher economic sanctions and the administration's continued engagement with Pretoria. Instead, Reagan issued Executive Order 12532 as a preemptive response to the mounting cries for economic sanctions toward South Africa. Chapter Four thus highlights a gradually building of anti-apartheid messaging through economic rhetoric that challenged Reagan's relationship with South Africa.

The fifth chapter examines Reagan administration's critical policy reconfiguring which took place between 1985 and 1988. During these three years, the Divestment Movement gained traction worldwide with mounting support garnered across university campuses and liberal

circles. Through news, campaigns, and demonstrations, the Divestment Movement called for complete economic withdrawal from South Africa. Despite the pressure of the Divestment Movement and the growing public criticism—which even started to influence Reagan’s conservative base—the Reagan administration failed to satisfactorily revise its foreign policy. When Congress deemed the Reagan administration’s previous diplomatic engagements insufficient at facilitating change in the South Africa, it passed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 with bipartisan support. In the subsequent three years of Reagan’s administration, State Department and National Security Council staffers focused on achieving the regional peace agreement as the primary goal of constructive engagement. The heightened public scrutiny on the United States-South African relationship, therefore, influenced shifting regional stability and peace planning to determine the end of South Africa’s military occupation of Namibia and easing of tensions between Angola and South Africa.

This thesis contributes to the foreign policy field by emphasizing the role of nontraditional foreign policy actors in shaping and challenging US foreign policy. It examines how anti-apartheid activists, as nontraditional foreign policy actors, worked throughout the eight years of the Reagan administration to shift the US-South African relationship. This thesis invites a future dialogue on how other nontraditional foreign policy actors have worked to change US foreign policy in different areas and locations. At the heart of anti-apartheid activists’ campaign was a question of equal rights in South Africa and the world, yet the same racial tensions remain in current South Africa and the United States society.

CHAPTER 2

CULTIVATING CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT, NOVEMBER 1980-OCTOBER 1981

Introduction

United States foreign policy was a key topic during the 1980 Presidential election. With the détente with the Soviet Union, and despite their earlier invasion of Afghanistan in 1978 and the subsequent United States support for the Mujahedeen fighters, Ronald Reagan's campaign team positioned itself as the foreign policy alternative to Carter's seemingly stagnant position. As John Lewis Gaddis argued, détente as pursued by the Carter administration, failed to prevent the rising Soviet influence in Developing States.³¹ The prolonged negotiation with Iran during the hostage crisis of 1979 further showed the limits of the détente policies put forth by the Carter administration.³² In the 444 days of stalled negotiations, Ronald Reagan presented himself as a hardline anti-communist alternative to Carter. He used a galvanized Republican party to emphasize his ability to improve the United States' weakened world image. In doing so, conservatives conflated both domestic economic stagnation with Carter's foreign policy. In the conservatives' reinvigorated foreign policy proposal to protect American anti-communist interest, Reagan stood as a refreshing relief from Jimmy Carter.

Under Reagan, conservatives sought to reengage with anti-communist allies, like South Africa, in the Cold War strategic battle. After Jimmy Carter's harsh criticism of the apartheid regime, the white Afrikaner ethnic minority rejected any stable communications with the United States and other Western allies. With growing tension between South Africa and Angola and South Africa's continued occupation of Namibia, the United Nations' Security Council passed

³¹ John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 211.

³² AP, "Transcripts of the Presidential Debate Between Carter and Reagan in Cleveland," October 30, 1980, *New York Times* (NYT).

Resolution 435—a ceasefire which would lead ultimately to the withdrawal of South African forces and to Namibian independence—as the first step towards peace negotiations. Yet, South Africa claimed regional security—Angola was hosting Cuban and Soviet troops—as an excuse for the country’s continued delay in executing the measures negotiated under Resolution 435. In doing so, the South African government posed itself as an anti-communist defender in the region.

South Africa’s geographical location and natural resources played directly into the US national security efforts in the region. As major exporters of cobalt and chromium, the apartheid government secured their stake in Western economies as emerging technologies like computing and communications heavily relied on the two minerals. South Africa’s prolific gold and diamond mining still influenced US consumption. Reagan saw South Africa as a potential ally in their gradual reforms regional defense against communist regimes and in protecting US interest in strategic minerals.

During his electoral campaign and the first year of his administration, competing conservative influences from media, politicians like Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC), and leading figures like UN ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, directly informed Reagan’s rhetoric and the initial policy towards South Africa. This chapter examines how these conservative values influenced Reagan’s campaign rhetoric, galvanized his base for a landslide victory, and influenced Chester Crocker’s early southern African policies. Yet, in the midst of the conservative party’s control over a reinvigorated foreign policy, rising anti-apartheid activism in the United States formulated an early criticism of the Reagan administration’s relationship with South Africa. Attempts to influence this relationship by conservatives and anti-apartheid activists dominated the first months of the Reagan administration and its policy formulation. However, the Reagan administration went to great lengths to protect its strategic relationship with South

Africa—whose natural resources and role in regional stability outweighed any concerns about human rights violations.

The 1980 Campaign Influences: Anti-Communist & Anti-Carter

The Reagan campaign's strategy for foreign policy was critical of Carter's record of rising tensions with anti-communist South Africa. South Africa's increased isolation from international organizations concerned major United States corporations who relied on Pretoria's exports of strategic resources like chromium and cobalt.³³ Aware of the acute needs for such exports in areas of emergent technology in his home state of California, Reagan sought to mend and to improve the United States' economic relationship with South Africa. He even went so far as to claim, in the *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, that the United States, "may need South Africa more than [the South Africans] need us," echoing the sentiment of business E. F. Andrews, who highlighted the dependence of the technology industry on these minerals.³⁴ In campaign rhetoric, Reagan channeled former British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan's 1960 phrase in saying that many American journalists are, "unaware of how strong the winds of change are blowing in South Africa" as the gradual reforms towards apartheid pushed the Afrikaner government towards power-sharing with its Black majority.³⁵ Under a potential Reagan administration, these US-led changes were subject to the influence of conservatives, anti-apartheid activists, and the media. Five months after this op-ed, Reagan entered the Republican primaries for the nomination for President.

³³ Ronald Reagan, "Change in South Africa," *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, June 28, 1979, 43.

³⁴ *Idem.*

³⁵ *Idem.*

Yet, the South African exportation of critical minerals was only one facet of Reagan's early campaign. Appealing to dissatisfied voters, Reagan's campaign promise to reengage the United States interest abroad, especially against the Soviet Union, and presented Reagan as a strong anti-communist candidate. From the conservative viewpoint, Carter's prolonged years of détente only emboldened the Soviets and allowed the USSR to extend its sphere of influence. Consequently, Reagan advocated for increased and direct pressure on the Soviet Union through a renewed support of anti-communist regimes in Developing States.³⁶ Beyond Reagan's own rhetoric during the presidential debates, current and future Reagan team members furthered the message of a stronger United States abroad under a Reagan presidency.

Before entering the Reagan transition team, Chester Crocker, a former National Security Council advisor under Nixon, criticized Carter's UN Ambassador Andrew Young and Carter's "laid-back diplomacy," claiming that it neglected tangible foreign policy instruments that emboldened communist regimes.³⁷ Crocker used the rising legitimacy of the Islamist and Marxist-backed Khomeini regime in Iran to further show that détente was a failed policy. He coupled his assertions with the Palestine Liberation Organization's (PLO) increased aggression against Israel as evidence for poor diplomatic strategies, based on idealistic promises with little substantive gain to protect US interests abroad.³⁸ Reagan staffers used the increasing anger against the Carter administration for meeting with PLO officials on the campaign trail. Reagan's categorical rejection of negotiating with the Iranian student hostage takers and the PLO contrasted with Carter's failed negotiations and was celebrated by conservatives.³⁹ Conservative

³⁶ James M. Scott, *Deciding to Intervene: The Reagan Doctrine and American Foreign Policy* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 16.

³⁷ Chester Crocker, "Young tenure a social epic: A Washington Post special," *The Clarion-Ledger*, August 28, 1979, B3.

³⁸ *Idem.*"

³⁹ AP, "Transcripts of the Presidential Debate Between Carter and Reagan in Cleveland."

critique over Carter's handling of Middle East highlighted why diplomacy in resource-rich areas was a priority for the future Reagan administration, a priority that the campaign centered in the ideological warfare of the Cold War.

The Reagan campaign similarly placed the resource-rich area of southern Africa in the context of the Cold War and the failure of détente. Chester Crocker especially criticized Carter's faltering in the region by reaffirming Reagan's support for economic engagement with Pretoria. Claiming that Carter and Young were playing into the "emotive issue" of Black Americans protests against apartheid, Crocker questioned the feasibility of United States corporate disinvestment from South Africa.⁴⁰ Deeming it idealistic, Crocker warned that complete divestment would weaken the American stake in the internal reform of South Africa from an economic power stance. Furthermore, a continued investment in the southern African anti-communist ally would bolster a crippling South African economy after Carter's withdrawal from several trade negotiations. With a strengthened South African economy with continued US importations, the government would invest in securing its borders against Soviet encroachment.

Jeanne Kirkpatrick, a foreign policy advisor for the Reagan campaign and his future UN ambassador, matched the conservative demands to restore the United States' image as a proactive anti-communist defender. In an essay in the conservative *Commentary* magazine, Kirkpatrick criticized the Carter administration for encouraging democracy through selective decision making and nonintervention.⁴¹ Kirkpatrick argued that this nonintervention weakened US national interests because of its inherent disengagement. Instead, she offered similar views of a reinvigorated foreign policy of the conservative party, one that informed Reagan's support of

⁴⁰ Chester Crocker, "Young tenure a social epic: A Washington Post special."

⁴¹ Jeanne J. Kirkpatrick, "Dictatorships and Double Standards," *Commentary Magazine*, November 1979. Kirkpatrick would later publish a book of the same title in 1983 during her time at the UN reemphasizing this theory of anti-communist cooperation.

supporting anti-communist freedom fighters. This became known as the Reagan Doctrine. In rationalizing alliances between anti-communist regimes with less than favorable human rights records for the sake of Cold War stability, Kirkpatrick saw the potential of US-led reforms “aimed at producing gradual change rather than perfect democracy overnight.”⁴² These continued interactions with anti-communist regimes would, theoretically, lead to internal reform while simultaneously advancing US interest. Ultimately, the US would facilitate democratic change not through direct military engagement but through monetary support.

In southern Africa, this type of reform meant that the US would openly support the anti-communist freedom fighters and move beyond the failures of the Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations’ attempts at détente to control American interests in the region.⁴³ The primary concerns for the Reagan’s campaign were Angola and Namibia, to which South Africa represented a pivotal ally to help against curbing Soviet influence. Angolan guerilla fighters from the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), with its President Joe Savimbi, fought for power after the Portuguese colonial power fell in 1974. The South Africa Defense Force (SADF) trained and supplied UNITA to fight against the Soviet- and Cuban-allied MPLA.⁴⁴ In an attempt to curtail US intervention and direct support for anti-communist freedom fighters in Angola, US Senator Dick Clark sponsored the Clark Amendment in 1976.⁴⁵ Ultimately, the amendment had a limited effect, as Israel became a proxy in supplying US arms to Angola. During his campaign, Reagan sided with the conservatives who supported the repeal of the Amendment as a way to

⁴² Jeane Kirkpatrick, “Dictatorships and Double Standards.”

⁴³ Gleijeses, *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976-1991*.

⁴⁴ Albert R. Hunt and Thomas J. Bray, “An Interview with Ronald Reagan,” *Wall Street Journal*, May 6, 1980, 26.

⁴⁵ Prior to the Clark Amendment’s passage, hardline conservatives believed that the United States’ support for UNITA was effective at prolonging the conflict and economically overextending Cuban and Soviet aid to MPLA. Scott, *Deciding to Intervene: The Reagan Doctrine and American Foreign Policy*.

reinvigorate American anti-communist support worldwide. In a May 1980 interview with the *Wall Street Journal*, Reagan reiterated his staunch support for anti-communist freedom fighters. The President claimed that he did not see “anything wrong with [helping] someone who wants to free themselves from the rule of an outside power,” as he discussed his potential support for Savimbi in Angola against Cuban and Soviet forces.⁴⁶ By framing the regional tension as a rising communist fervor, Reagan presented American voters with an alternative policy where military aid could curb communist influence over the continued American impasse in the region.

Opposition during the 1980 Election: Disinvestment Discontent

During the 1980 election, given his lack of hard language and his unclear position on sanctions against the apartheid government, several Black-owned newspapers worried about Reagan’s negative impact on the relationship between the United States and other African states. William H. Gray III, a Black Democratic Congressman from Pennsylvania, shared these concerns. He remarked that a Reagan presidency meant an “Africaless” foreign policy, one of ambivalence towards the continent’s Black leaders and narrowness stemming from Cold War boundaries. Like several African leaders, Gray feared that a Reagan presidency would lead to a policy of self-interest for raw materials in the Developing States. Reagan’s resource-driven diplomacy in the continent extended to southern Africa where the Reagan team preferred an anti-communist ally in control of the exports to prevent Soviet control over critical resources. However, this self-serving foreign policy would prevent the cultivation of a reciprocal relationship with African states opposing South Africa—these states had thirty-seven percent

⁴⁶ Washington Office on Africa, “Reasons Why the Clark Amendment should be Retained,” June 1980, Dean McHenry, Jr. Southern Africa Collection, African Activist Archive (AAA), Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections. Reagan’s interview is quoted within this larger anti-apartheid oppositional newsletter that discusses at length the dangers of repealing the Clark Amendment.

stake in US export business.⁴⁷ The Congressional Black Caucus echoed these concerns over Reagan's unwillingness to engage directly with African heads of states. Furthermore, Gray cast apprehensions over Reagan's irrational abrasiveness towards the Soviet Union and Cuba in the Third World. In criticizing Reagan's own response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Gray was among many Black congresspeople who attempted to show the irrationality of Reagan's foreign policy.⁴⁸

Anti-apartheid activist organizations, like the Washington Office on Africa (WOA), further criticized the Reagan campaign's open support for the Sullivan Principles. Spearheaded in 1977 by Reverend Leon Sullivan, a board member of General Motors, the Principles were a voluntary, self-reporting organization to improve transparency in the working conditions and worker relations in US-based businesses in South Africa. Sullivan rationalized that increased self-accountability in businesses would improve social relations between different races. Reagan's campaign team continued to encourage corporations to sign onto the Principles instead of advocating for increased economic sanctions against South Africa. Rather than help, however, the Principles simply diverted the gaze of the public. Anti-apartheid activists argued that South Africa maintained the trend of increased state-sanctioned violence with little to no substantive economic changes.⁴⁹

Independent researcher, who went to South Africa to interview Black and white workers, further exposed shortcomings of the Sullivan Principles. Anti-apartheid researcher Elizabeth Schmidt was among many academics who condemned the Sullivan Principles for being a

⁴⁷ Jim Davis, "African decry Reagan candidacy, Gray reports," *Philadelphia Tribune*, August 8, 1980, 19. The term "Third World" is taken into the context of the *Tribune* article as well, the author recognizes this term is outdated and uses the term "Developing States" from now on.

⁴⁸ Jim Davis, "African decry Reagan candidacy, Gray reports."

⁴⁹ Pamela J. Smith, "U.S. Companies can stop the bloodbath in South Africa," *Philadelphia Tribune*, June 20, 1980, 1.

piecemeal reform meant to sustain the apartheid system.⁵⁰ The overall lack of sanctions within the Principles offered no incentive for corporations to reform or, following the rationale of Leon Sullivan, to help improve race relations within the country. In several interviews, Afrikaner managers from Sullivan Principles-signatory corporations disclosed to Schmidt that they were “paying lip service to the employment code,” of their American-based offices; they had no intention of changing the business practices that marginalized Black workers.⁵¹ Schmidt’s interviews also found a lack of progress in the evaluation mechanism; any mark of progress whatsoever, no matter how small, automatically showed the corporation as “making good progress.”⁵² Furthermore, despite having over a hundred corporations as signatories to the six principles, over half of signatory status corporations had yet to fill out the self-compliance reporting on workplace conditions. Yet, according to the general Sullivan Principles, these corporations were gradually reforming South Africa from within. Ultimately, the self-reporting accountability structure allowed corporations to use the Principles as “corporate camouflage.”⁵³ Schmidt as well as many anti-apartheid researchers and activists continued to carry interview records and documents to anti-apartheid groups who exposed the uselessness of the Sullivan Principles and shared the information to the American public about the lack of racial progress in South Africa.⁵⁴

Anti-apartheid activist equally criticized Reagan’s potential impact on the southern African region. The WOA’s mailing campaign warned about Reagan’s support for the repeal of the Clark Amendment and claimed that a Reagan presidency would roll back any progress made

⁵⁰ Schmidt, “Decoding Corporate Camouflage: U.S. Business Support for Apartheid.”

⁵¹ Schmidt, “Decoding Corporate Camouflage: U.S. Business Support for Apartheid,” 19.

⁵² *Ibid.* 42.

⁵³ *Idem.*

⁵⁴ Elizabeth “Betsy” Schmidt, interview by author, phone, July 22, 2020.

by the Carter administration at opening relations with the Angolan government. Newsletters to WOA members stated that any attempt to repeal the Clark Amendment signaled a “renewed collaboration with [apartheid] South Africa on Angola.” This reestablished, friendly South African relations with Angola under Reagan would make engagement with other African nations nearly impossible.⁵⁵

Academics, including Ronald W. Walters, Professor of African-American studies and senior policy staffer for Congressman Gray, and Robert L. Allen, editor of *The Black Scholar* Journal in 1980, further challenged Reagan’s position on the Clark Amendment. Allen called Reagan’s support of the repeal tantamount to “an all-out US and South African military campaign against Angola.”⁵⁶ Walters found it even more dangerous that, despite the Congressional restriction on overt military forces, Reagan could seek covert aid to South Africa through other Western allies.⁵⁷ Walters advocated for increased attention by Black American academics specifically to monitor Reagan’s policies and for further studies on the implications of the Clark Amendment’s repeal in future United States-South African relations.⁵⁸

The early anti-apartheid activists’ efforts and their criticism of Reagan’s South African foreign policy failed to generate a collective voting bloc against Reagan. The November 1980 election ended with Reagan’s sweeping victory over Jimmy Carter. The majority of American voters supported Reagan’s promises for a stronger stance against the Soviet Union and the reclaiming of the American identity abroad more than they shared activists’ far-away concerns in

⁵⁵ Washington Office on Africa, “Reasons Why the Clark Amendment should be Retained.”

⁵⁶ Robert L. Allen, “Reagan and the Third World,” *The Black Scholar* 12, no. 4 (July/August 1981).

⁵⁷ Ronald W. Walters, “The Clark Amendment: Analysis of U.S. Policy Choices in Angola,” *The Black Scholar* 12, no. 4 (July/August 1981): 2-12.

⁵⁸ *Idem.*

southern Africa. This did not, however, quell the attempts of anti-apartheid organizations which maintained pressure on the new President during the transition period.

Reagan Elected and Crocker's Initial Influence

The 1980 election marked a shift in Cold War diplomacy with renewed United States proactiveness and the Reagan administration's willingness to engage with apartheid South Africa to achieve regional stability. Reagan's landslide victory coincided with the publication of Chester Crocker's *Foreign Affairs* 1980 article. Crocker, who worked under Henry Kissinger during the Nixon administration, observed his mentor's use of *realpolitik* and saw the benefit in using pragmatism over morality to advance US national interest. Crocker specifically applied this doctrine to promote southern Africa regional stability and to shape the early outline for the policy known as "constructive engagement." With constructive engagement, the United States worked to cultivate a credible and believable engagement with South Africa to address the complex issue of race and equity.⁵⁹

Through constructive engagement, Crocker theorized that encouraging change in South Africa, rather than economically pressuring it, would gradually bring about larger reform. Crocker recognized the role that South African resources played in the emergent technologies and placed the US government in a position to "capitalize quickly on market or policy shifts in other countries," dependent on these resources.⁶⁰ According to Crocker, a stable South African economy properly incentivized by the United States would benefit the United States' own economy and national defense. Many Republicans in Washington encouraged a friendlier

⁵⁹ Chester Crocker, "A Strategy for Change," *Foreign Affairs*, 59, no. 2, Winter 1980/1981.

⁶⁰ *Idem*.

attitude towards Pretoria.⁶¹ For instance, Reagan's campaign defense advisor, Joseph Churba, was among the few who called for the end of longstanding international arms embargo to South Africa.⁶²

A few Washington officials, however, still thought that any veiled criticism of the apartheid regime would turn Pretoria against the United States and remove a pivotal anti-communist ally in the region. This was indicative of the far-right conservatives' own preference to work with apartheid South Africa regardless of its internal race relations. Crocker addressed this concern by subtly supporting South Africa's continued security laws to meet the "rapid rise of black expectations" at power-sharing.⁶³ With this in mind, Crocker's constructive engagement remained a predominantly white-led economic reform between the two nations.⁶⁴

Crocker's early influence laid the foundation for the United States assuming policy of constructive engagement in the southern Africa region. The conservatives' criticism of Carter's foreign policy and their support for Reagan's position to revitalize anti-communist allies and promote gradual reform abroad helped the Republicans win in a landslide victory. While anti-apartheid activists worried for what Reagan's victory meant to the timeline for ending racial oppression in South Africa, they matched the conservative vigor with their own increased membership, nationwide campaigns, and growth of new organizations to establish broad support against apartheid. However, the 1980 electoral victory of Reagan signaled to those in Pretoria

⁶¹ Søndergaard, *Reagan, Congress, and Human Rights*.

⁶² John F. Burns, "Aide to Reagan, in South Africa, Says Arms Embargo Should End," *NYT*, June 13, 1980, A14.

⁶³ Washington On Africa with David Neigus, Christine Root, and Jean Sindab, "Washington Notes on Africa: Reagan and Africa, The Players and the Policy," Winter 1980/1, George M. Houser Collections, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

⁶⁴ Chester Crocker, "A Strategy for Change." While Crocker does admit the need to address the majority Black population of South Africa, his *Foreign Affairs* 1980 article frequently refers to the need to improve Bantustan living environment, stopping just short of fully supporting them, in order to maintain a relative peace between workers. Bantustans were also referred to as "homelands" by popular news outlets, this thesis will interchange the two terms.

that the United States was willing to resume diplomatic relations based on a Cold War alliance for regional stability and gradualist racial progress.

Pretoria's Gradual Reforms & Nuclear Power Matches Reagan's Early Rhetoric

Prior to Reagan's election, the South African government faced concerns of public perception that informed its own gradualist calls for racial reform. Prime Minister Pieter Willem Botha, commonly known as P.W. Botha, was a Nationalist Party (NP) icon who first came to power as the Deputy Minister of International Affairs, then Minister of Coloured Affairs, and finally the Minister of Defense under Prime Minister Vorster. Under Vorster, he built the South African Defense Forces (SADF) to the zenith of power that came at the concerns of Frontline States (FLS) and wariness of Western allies. In 1978, over a scandal that became known as the Muldergate, Vorster voluntarily resigned from his post as Prime Minister and became state president, a mostly ceremonial role without power.⁶⁵ Drawing similarities from US President Nixon's Watergate, the Muldergate caused widespread concerns and swept through the echelons of the apartheid government, launching investigations into its financial branches, foreign affairs contacts with Israel, and into the lives of longtime veterans of the Pretoria regime.⁶⁶ Upon becoming Prime Minister, Botha was ready to restore the country's international reputation and get past this international embarrassment.⁶⁷

His pragmatic belief that whites in South Africa must "adapt or die" favored gradual economic reform—similar to those later supported by the Reagan administration.⁶⁸ However, at

⁶⁵ Massie, *Loosing the Bonds: The United States and South Africa in the Apartheid Years*.

⁶⁶ Anthony Lewis, "Will Muldergate become South Africa's Watergate?" *The Index-Journal*, March 6, 1979, 4.

⁶⁷ *Idem*.

⁶⁸ *Idem*.

the time, US intelligence officials and reporters were skeptical towards Botha's reforms.

Although one report recognized Botha's willingness to improve employment opportunities for Black urban workers to ease employee relations, several others cautioned that any possibility of equal power sharing between Black South Africans and whites was unlikely under Botha.⁶⁹

Botha received early support from the incoming Reagan administration for these minor reforms. However, abstract terms of economic improvement did not satisfy anti-apartheid activists or many in the foreign policy apparatus.

For instance, US national security experts recognized the importance of economic reforms for regional stability, but they were more concerned about South Africa's growing nuclear power. South Africa's continued refusal to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty was tied directly to their claim of increasing Soviet influence in the region.⁷⁰ Contradictory evidence showed that South Africa sought a sustainable enriched uranium supply for the Koeberg reactor near Cape Town from France and Israel.⁷¹ The evidence confirmed the fears of the US intelligence agencies as increasing calls for non-proliferation came from the United Nations; South Africa was willing to rely on other Western allies, besides the US, to increase its nuclear power.

Despite US intelligence concerns of South African nuclear proliferation, the Reagan administration quickly opened discussions with South African energy and security officials to supply enriched uranium through the French government as a means to circumvent UN

⁶⁹ Central Intelligence Agency, "South Africa: Botha's Reforms," March 21, 1980.

⁷⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Scientific Intelligence, "The South African Peaceful Nuclear Program: Its Dependence Upon Foreign Assistance," November 1979 (Washington D.C.: The National Security Archive, U.S. Intelligence and the South African Bomb), National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 181; Director of Central Intelligence, "South Africa: Defense Strategy for an Increasingly Hostile World," January 1980 (Washington D.C.: The National Security Archive, U.S. Intelligence and the South African Bomb), National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 181.

⁷¹ *Idem.*

embargoes.⁷² With Reagan's election, South African officials were equally optimistic about the perceived shared values for gradual racial reform as well as a more open nuclear exchange. South African ambassador to the United States Donald Dole reported on his optimism, after meeting with former director of regulation for the Atomic Energy Commission, L. Manning Muntzing. Muntzing, with his direct ties to Reagan's nuclear security apparatus, informed Dole of the United States' eagerness to "restore its credibility and reliability as a nuclear supplier," to Pretoria.⁷³ Both Reagan and Botha, aware of the press coverage and mindful of national security concerns, answered the calls for reforms in southern Africa with the same gradualist tones.

Pretoria's confidence towards engaging with new United States leadership transformed the public perception of the relationship between the two countries and opened diplomatic channels. Upon Reagan's election, the Johannesburg International Service broadcasted a congratulatory message from Prime Minister P.W. Botha as well as from South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha the following day, with the latter's hopes for continued support against the "slavery of communism."⁷⁴ With these statements, both officials reemphasized the importance of the United States-South African work as Cold War allies. The continued reframing of the relationship within an anti-communist ideology shaped the general policy stance for the Reagan administration. While anti-apartheid influences collaborated in worrisome predictions about the

⁷² "Directive for Discussions of Nuclear Matters with United States Authorities," March 1981, South African Foreign Affairs Archives, Brand Fourie Personal Papers, Nuclear Energy, Top Secret, 1 January 1981 to 8 May 1981, Vol V., obtained and contributed by Anna-Mart van Wyk, Monash South Africa, the Wilson Center Digital Archive.

⁷³ "Telegram from South African Ambassador in Washington Donald Sole on Prospective Reagan Administration Non-Proliferation Policy," March 4, 1981, South African Foreign Affairs Archive, File 137/10/02, vol 8, obtained and contributed by Or Rabinowitz, the Wilson Center Digital Archive.

⁷⁴ "Prime Minister Botha Sends Congratulations to Reagan," Johannesburg International Service (November 5, 1980), Translation by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, FBIS Daily Report, Middle East and Africa, FBIS-MEA-80-216, page U2, heading: South Africa; "Foreign Minister Hopeful Over Reagan Victory," Johannesburg International Service (November 6, 1980), Translation by Translation by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, FBIS Daily Report, Middle East and Africa, FBIS-MEA-80-217, page U1, heading: South Africa, Southern Africa.

future of Reagan’s foreign policy on the African continent, it was not enough to sway voters or policy officials on the Reagan team.

US Policy to South Africa Formation Period

The Reagan administration, with Chester Crocker as its leader, formulated an African foreign policy team based on Reagan’s campaign allusions of successful gradual reforms and anti-communist doctrine. Reagan’s Africa policy group of 12 key decision makers crafted the policies selectively and with particular regard to the influence of conservative think tanks.⁷⁵ Notable members of the group included Reagan’s Secretary of State Alexander Haig— whose anti-communist background from working in Nixon’s National Security Council informed his vigorous support for a rollback policy in Developing States—, UN Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick—who echoed a similar proactive US intervention in southern Africa—, and Robert “Bud” McFarlane—who would serve as Counselor to Secretary Haig until his promotion to National Security Advisor in 1983.⁷⁶ Reagan and his staffers ignored the outgoing Carter administration’s warnings of the United States’ weakening credibility among Black South African leadership and its difficulties in cultivating a large reform policy within South Africa. Reagan and many of the African policy development team instead sought softer language when describing South Africa. In spite of arguments for policies that recognized the inevitable weakness of the regime, apartheid still sustained itself, often “by force of arms.” The Reagan administration used soft language, describing South Africa as a “friendly nation.”⁷⁷ Prime

⁷⁵ Washington On Africa with David Neigus, Christine Root, and Jean Sindab, “Washington Notes on Africa: Reagan and Africa, The Players and the Policy;” Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa*, 63.

⁷⁶ *Idem*.

⁷⁷ Department of State, “Southern Africa: Four Years Later,” by Richard Moose, Washington: Office of Media Services, Bureau of Public Affairs, *Department of State Bulletin* volume 81, no. 2046, January 1981; Joseph C. Harsch, “Containing Soviet Power: Once Again the Top US Priority,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 13, 1981.

Minister P.W. Botha responded in kind, describing the new relationship necessary to the maintain of “civilized value standards.”⁷⁸ By depicting South Africa as a decisive and useful ally in the fight against communism worldwide, Reagan and his team deliberately controlled the narrative in the early months of the administration.

The Reagan administration’s messaging of South Africa as a necessary ally successfully showed in national attitudes towards Pretoria. In a September 1981 Harris cultural survey, over 74% of voting Americans agreed that apartheid was not a justified system, while 54% believed the United States needed to remain on “good terms” with the white government in the interest of national security.⁷⁹ Beyond highlights such as the 1976 Soweto Uprisings, limited exposure to news about South Africa most likely explained the results. Yet, Reagan officials had successfully convinced over half of the country to believe that it was necessary to craft an alliance with South Africa. The United Nations, though, was still reluctant to the idea.

Crocker and Kirkpatrick openly criticized the UN and its bias against South Africa. In particular, they attributed the inherited Namibian impasse to the Carter administration’s weak handling of Security Council Resolution 435. Resolution 435 had set up the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) and called for the withdrawal of South African occupying forces from Namibia. Upon full execution, the Resolution aimed to lead Namibia toward independent rule.⁸⁰ After the January 1981 UNTAG meeting in Geneva, President-Elect Reagan openly condemned what he construed as UN favoritism towards the Soviet-supported South West African’s People Organization (SWAPO).⁸¹ Reagan officials argued that SWAPO,

⁷⁸ Joseph Lelyveld, “Reagan’s View on South Africa Praised by Botha,” *New York Times*, March 5, 1981, A15.

⁷⁹ Louis Harris & Associates, Louis Harris & Associates Poll: September 1981, Louis Harris & Associates, (Cornell University, Ithaca, NY: Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, 1981), Dataset.

⁸⁰ Security Council Resolution 435, S/RES/435, 1978, available from [undocs.org/S/RES/435\(1978\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/435(1978)).

⁸¹ William F. Buckley, Jr., “The Question of Namibia,” July 17, 1981, Firing Line broadcast records, Hoover Institution Archives.

whom he described as “Russian stooges,” did not represent of the majority of Namibians, and therefore could not participate in the negotiation during the peace talks. Crocker supported the appeals from the conservative Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), the minority party in power, which claimed to represent Namibian interests.⁸²

Popular conservative news outlets took this in stride. In his show *Firing Line Broadcast*, William Buckley, Jr hosted several anti-SWAPO Namibians as further means of discrediting SWAPO as the true “voice of Namibia.” Reverend Peter Kalangula relied on the tribal identities of earlier SWAPO party members from Ovamboland, the South African controlled Bantustan in northern Namibia, to make his claim of DTA being more representative of the Namibian population and support for South African occupation. Indicating that the Ovambo people consisted of a sizable portion of the Namibian population, but not the total tribal makeup of Namibia, Kalangula criticized the UN rhetoric of self-determination when other Namibians supported the DTA.⁸³

What could be perceived as public stumbles in the early months of the Reagan administration forced the first of many public justifications for its foreign policy. Shortly after becoming the US ambassador to the UN Jeane Kirkpatrick met with the chief of South African military intelligence, Lieutenant General P.W. Van der Westhuizen. She then met with the notable anti-apartheid and human rights activist, Bishop Desmond Tutu.⁸⁴ Both officials had opposite agendas; Van der Westhuizen wanted to sway the policy formation toward more public favorability of the South African government while Tutu sought stronger language condemning

⁸² Milt Freudenheim and Barbara Slavin, “The World in Summary; All Abroad for Namibia Meeting,” *NYT*, January 11, 1981, 4.

⁸³ William F. Buckley, Jr., “The Question of Namibia.”

⁸⁴ Francis X. Clines, “White House Says Mrs. Kirkpatrick Didn't Know South African's Role,” *NYT*, March 25, 1981, A4.

apartheid from the Reagan administration. Black reporters from South Africa as well as ambassadors to the US denounced the hypocrisy of Reagan administration in meeting with both Van der Westhuizen and Tutu. In particular, the *Sowetan* wrote that the Reagan administration gave the illusion of publicly admonishing apartheid, yet entertaining South African military officials.⁸⁵

Public justification of the emerging policy began nearly as soon as Chester Crocker introduced the phrase “constructive engagement” and the term “linkage” on the international stage. Congress, anti-apartheid activists, African leaders, and even South African officials themselves all shared concerns over what constituted constructive engagement and what linked the broader southern African strategy with apartheid. Crocker’s new strategy of constructive engagement was particularly debated among the Frontline States. Officials of the FLS worried that the anti-communist fervor blinded the Reagan administration to the humanitarian crises brought on by South African aggression.⁸⁶ This marked the beginning of an aggressive public defense for US strategies in the region.

Shortly after Kirkpatrick’s conflicting meetings, Chester Crocker went on an unsuccessful exploratory policy research tour of eleven African states while awaiting Senate confirmation in April 1981. Crocker described the trip as frustrating. The Frontline States criticism brought negative publicity for the administration and Crocker’s policies.⁸⁷ An Angolan radio broadcast during Crocker’s visit condemned his campaigning for a racist regime, and harkened back to earlier criticism from the FLS during the earlier UNTAG Geneva meeting in

⁸⁵ United States Consulate General, Johannesburg (South Africa), Press Coverage of Bishop Tutu's Meeting with Ambassador Kirkpatrick, March 26, 1981, Digital National Security Archive (DNSA), South Africa: The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989.

⁸⁶ Chester Crocker, interview by Charles Stuart Kennedy, June 5, 2006, Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection, Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, Arlington, VA.

⁸⁷ Chester Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa*, 93-94.

January.⁸⁸ Another radio broadcast criticized Crocker for using the same tired lines used by South African government, claiming that their aggression was to rid the region and Namibia of the Soviet influence.⁸⁹ Several FLS released a joint communiqué expressing grave concerns over Crocker and Reagan's intention to repeal the Clark Amendment soon before Crocker departed back to Washington.⁹⁰ The early concerns of anti-apartheid activists and supporters, like those of Congressman Gray, appeared well-placed in saying that Reagan's foreign policy for Africa was "Africaless," at least in considering US foreign policy in relation to other African states without white minority-ruled South Africa.

Crocker felt an unexpectedly similarly tensed reception from the South African government. In fact, since Reagan's election, the Botha administration believed that Reagan had failed to deliver on his campaign promises.⁹¹ Citing the FLS and UN pressure, Foreign Minister Pik Botha expressed concerns about South Africa's distrust towards the United States in their support against SWAPO in Namibia. Department of State cables detailed Prime Minister Botha's further wariness towards the linkage policy. He saw the policy as an attempt "to satisfy the rest of the world," by forcing South Africa to de-escalate what Pretoria believed to be unrelated regional tensions.⁹² Botha was not the only one to be skeptical about the linkage policy. As a complementary condition towards constructive engagement, linkage tied any future regional

⁸⁸ United States Department of State, "Luanda Radio Says Crocker Campaigning for Racists 1981," DNSA, South Africa: The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989.

⁸⁹ United States Department of State, "Luanda Radio Says Crocker Campaigning for Racists 1981."

⁹⁰ Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa*, 93.

⁹¹ "Memorandum of Conversation Between R. F. Botha and Chester Crocker of the US Department of State," April 15, 1981, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, published in "Namibia 1884-1984: Readings on Namibia's History and Society" and included in "Southern Africa in the Cold War, Post-1974," edited by Sue Onslow and Anna-Mart Van Wyk, the Wilson Center Digital Archive.

⁹² United States Embassy, South Africa, "Prime Minister's Comments [Regarding Prime Minister Botha's Statement Concerning the Reagan Administration's Policy in South Africa] 1981, DNSA, South Africa: The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989; Associated Press (AP), "S. African Leader Objects to U.S. Official's Actions," *The Tampa Tribune*, April 17, 1981, E6.

peace agreements, including following through with the measures prescribed by Resolution 435, to the simultaneously withdrawal of Cuban troops in from Angola and the SADF withdrawal from Namibia.

Conservative Schisms Emerging During Policy Formation

The Botha administration and the FLS were not the only political actors concerned with Crocker's new policies. Due to delayed confirmation hearings, Crocker left for his eleven-state tour without being officially confirmed by the US Senate. This delay challenged his legitimacy as an official, prompting yet another justification of emerging foreign policy from Reagan's Africa team. Additionally, it exposed the early fractions in the Reagan's conservative coalition—the coalition that had brought him to the White House. It took careful and prolonged negotiations with Congress to rally all Republicans behind Reagan's policy towards regional stability.

For eighty-five days, far-right conservatives held Crocker's confirmation. Crocker had received the support of moderates in the Senate. Senator Majority Leader Howard Baker and Senator Nancy Kassebaum, for example, argued that Crocker's confirmation would provide a conservative, yet level-headed, expertise to the necessary peace negotiations in Namibia.⁹³ Republican Senator Jesse Helms thought otherwise and used his legislative hold to obstruct Crocker's confirmation. Helms' verbose and often abrasive speeches on the Senate floor disparaged Crocker's supposed friendliness towards African governments and his rigid elitist approach to foreign policy.⁹⁴ Helms spoke to the far-right conservatives' suspicions towards students of Henry Kissinger, as Crocker had been. Like many right-wing congressional

⁹³ Nomination of Chester A. Crocker of the District of Columbia to be an Assistant Secretary of State, 97th Cong., *Congressional Record* 127 (June 9, 1981): S5877.

⁹⁴ Senator Helms speaking on the nomination of Chester A. Crocker, 97th Cong., *Congressional Record* 127 (June 9, 1981): S5884.

representatives, Helms was apprehensive of the growing communist influence in the region. However, he did not believe that constructive engagement was conducive to fighting communism and to bringing stability to the region—claiming it too ambiguous and still critical of South Africa’s internal politics.

This dispute was, however, indicative of broader underlying tensions between the far-right and moderate conservatives in the Reagan coalition that seemed unified in the electoral landslide victory of November 1980. Senator Helms asked Crocker hundreds of questions in an attempt to trip him up. He felt that Crocker’s views on apartheid were too critical of the Pretoria government and not at all helpful in a partnership with the anti-communist bulwark.⁹⁵ Helms further disapproved of Crocker’s support for political change in southern Africa, particularly with Robert Mugabe’s government of Zimbabwe or Sam Nujoma of SWAPO. Helms argued that the destabilization in the region was a consequence of Crocker’s “unqualified support,” a strategy of Marxist change that would only harm South Africa, the United States’ true Western ally in the region.⁹⁶ Helms believed that Crocker and his staff were too willing to engage with Black South African leaders to challenge Pretoria leadership.⁹⁷ Yet, Crocker did not meet any Black opposition leaders during his South African stop on the tour.⁹⁸

The drawn-out senate confirmation exposed the initial Congressional Republican divide over foreign policy toward Africa. Albert Hunt, a staff writer at the *Wall Street Journal*, argued that “while Senator Helms and a handful of like-minded colleagues can make a lot of noise here,

⁹⁵ Chester Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa*, 91; Robert Massie, *Loosing the Bonds*, 490.

⁹⁶ Senator Helms speaking on the nomination of Chester A. Crocker, S5885.

⁹⁷ United Press International, “Crocker Confirmed in Africa Post” *NYT*, June 10, 1981, A4; US Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Nomination of Chester A. Crocker, 97th Cong., 1st sess., 1981.

⁹⁸ United States Department of State, “Crocker Mission: US media reaction [Regarding Chester Crocker's mission to Africa] April 1981, DNSA, South Africa: The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989.

they clearly lack the support to take on the conservative-oriented Reagan administration.”⁹⁹ Senator Jesse Helms’ gamesmanship in holding up the nomination signaled to African leaders—including South Africa—that the United States was fumbling as it pieced together its foreign policy. Crocker later considered Helms’ hold on his nomination as reflective of some South African officials’ own concerns about and desire to shape said policies.¹⁰⁰ Department of State Press Secretary Dean Fischer attempted to downplay Helms’ concerns as he explained that Crocker’s eleven state tour was a fact-finding mission, and not evidence of any formalized foreign policy towards the region.¹⁰¹ Appeasing the far-right conservatives’ concerns on southern African policies became a major factor in justifying policy during Crocker’s tenure. Yet, he was altogether reluctant to recognize the power of a disaffected senator or larger far right conservative groups to influence staffing decisions or policy rhetoric.¹⁰²

Regardless, Helms’ stalling was the first of many instances where pressure on US foreign policy forced defensive posturing from the White House. Crocker’s confirmation after his April tour of Africa placed additional pressure on Reagan’s Africa team. So did Pik Botha when he arrived in Washington, D.C. in May hoping to sway the administration toward more favorable policies and to secure the United States’ support regarding the Afrikaners’ handling of Namibia.

⁹⁹ Albert Hunt, “Senate Confirm Crocker 84 to Seven, Highlighting Hard Right’s Limited Power,” *Wall Street Journal*, June 10, 1981, 8, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

¹⁰⁰ Chester Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa*, 91.

¹⁰¹ United States Department of State, “Daily Press Briefing Multi-Issue Foreign Policy Namibia; Lebanon; Poland; El Salvador; Iraq; Cuba; and Other Subjects,” by Dean Fischer,” Press Briefing No. 66, April 14, 1981.

¹⁰² Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa*, 92. The disaffected senator Crocker explicitly refers to is Senator Helms who attempted to leverage Lannon Walker’s position with his own choice of the well-connected apartheid ally Clifford Kiracofe. Robert Massie’s *Loosing the Bonds*, 489-492, also provides further information on the Helms stalling of the nomination process.

South African Officials Attempt to Influence Policy Formation

Pik Botha's visit in Washington, D.C. May 1981 was tactfully used to advance South Africa's public image in foreign affairs. Pik Botha made public statements, after meeting with both Reagan and Secretary Haig. He promised that South Africa was willing to engage with Reagan and to become an anti-communist stalwart alongside the United States.¹⁰³ However, this willingness only went so far with the Afrikaner government. Crocker disclosed that, during closed-door meetings, both Botha and Brand Fourie, then Pik Botha's Secretary Foreign Affairs, skirted around the question of Pretoria's withdrawal from Namibia. Rather, in choosing to inflate the "true meaning of Reagan's election," the Afrikaners proposed unclear and conflicting concessions on the independence settlement in Namibia.¹⁰⁴ The official recognition gained from Reagan and Secretary Haig helped mend South Africa's international image after the years of stifled Carter diplomacy.

Botha found solace in Haig's ideas of gradualism. Specifically, he welcomed Secretary Haig's dismissive attitude towards Resolution 435's timed negotiation benchmarks. These benchmarks, especially in the case of Namibian independence, threatened South African interests.¹⁰⁵ Without the implicit threat of punishments, gradualism promised to be more constructive and to garner more desirable outcomes toward regional settlements.¹⁰⁶ Without using the phrase "linkage," the white South African press discussed the package settlement favorably,

¹⁰³ AP, "President, S. Africa Official Seek Namibia Settlement," *The Los Angeles Times* May 15, 1981, 8.

¹⁰⁴ Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa: Making Peace in a Rough Neighborhood*, 94-5. Crocker goes so far to claim the South Africans "could not help fantasizing" about Reagan's election and what that meant for their anti-communist rhetoric in their May 1981 visit.

¹⁰⁵ R. F. Botha, "Off-the-record statement by Minister R. F. Botha at a meeting between the Minister and representatives of the South African media in Washington, May 16, 1981," Press Releases in South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs, DISA, JSTOR *Struggles for Freedom: Southern Africa*.

¹⁰⁶ *Idem*.

but echoed Botha's caution towards the UN supposed impartiality towards SWAPO.¹⁰⁷ Following the meeting, Botha extended the ideas of gradualism and negotiations to internal racial reforms, crediting the Reagan administration for its revitalized approach towards reform. For once, it was an approach where Afrikaners did not have to completely surrender power.¹⁰⁸ Botha used similar language toward South Africa's nuclear program and called into question the true validity of earlier constitutional reforms during his visit in Washington.

News of Botha's visit brought together angered Black South Africans and anti-apartheid groups in a shared criticism over the new Reagan administration's reengaged relationship.¹⁰⁹ A coalition of TransAfrica and WOA assembled over 500 people in a protest in D.C. during Pik Botha's visit. The coalition promised that similar demonstrations would continue as long as the US kept close relations with Pretoria.¹¹⁰ The presence of civil rights leader Reverend Ben Chavis, who described Botha's visit as "a Klan meeting between common racists," attracted media attention to the small protest.¹¹¹ After Botha's visit, TransAfrica continued to apply pressure. In May, TransAfrica founder Randall Robinson leaked a State Department position paper written by Crocker to the *New York Times*. According to Robinson, the documents showed that while the United States had moved "rapidly toward an open and obvious alliance with military dimensions in South Africa," it had no intention in committing to a "any substantial movement on their domestic viciousness," i.e. the apartheid regime.¹¹² Crocker envisioned a future where South

¹⁰⁷ United States Department of State, "Namibia: *Die Burger* Reports on Possible Settlement Arrangements," May 1981, DNSA, South Africa: The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989.

¹⁰⁸ United States Department of State, "South Africa: Pik Botha Returns from Washington," May 18, 1981, DNSA, South Africa: The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989; "Notes on Meeting between South African Minister of Foreign Affairs R. F. Botha and US President Reagan," May 15, 1981.

¹⁰⁹ Daniel Sutherland, "Botha visit seen as upturn in US-South African ties," *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 18, 1981, ProQuest Central U.S. Newsstream.

¹¹⁰ Margaret Lee, "Protest Against Botha Visit," *Washington Informer*, May 21, 1981, ProQuest Central U.S. Newsstream.

¹¹¹ *Idem*.

¹¹² AP, "Documents Link Namibia Solution to Better U.S. Ties to South Africa," *NYT*, May 30, 1981, 4.

Africa returned to the “regional framework of Western security interests,” as a restored actor with which the US could cooperate.¹¹³ In another separately leaked memo to Haig, Crocker affirmed that the United States would be willing to publicly cooperate with “a society undergoing constructive change.”¹¹⁴ However, he informed Haig that he “must help to make this approach credible.”¹¹⁵ In discussing these leaked memos, Robinson argued that the Reagan administration had stopped pressuring South Africa to change their racial policies. Instead, the administration had opted for an appearance of reform, just like businesses had opted for corporate camouflage when “adopting” the Sullivan Principles.

This exposure and criticism of Reagan officials continued when Crocker visited South Africa with Deputy Secretary of State William Clark in June 1981, only days after his Senate confirmation. The Crocker-Clark mission to South Africa, occupied Namibia, and Zimbabwe was another attempt to shape the narrative around the rekindled US-South African relationship. Both P.W. and Pik Botha invited Clark to visiting a SADF outpost in northern Namibia, while outfitted in military garb.¹¹⁶ Worried about a potential publicity backlash, Crocker understood that South Africans could use Clark’s visit to the Namibian SADF outposts to show a US alliance in regional wars.¹¹⁷ Crocker was not comfortable with obvious support for the SADF, but he had hoped that a closer cooperation with South Africa would include the training of the South African Coast Guard and the expanding the current military attaché exchanges.¹¹⁸ *Die Burger*, the

¹¹³ AP, “Documents Link Namibia Solution to Better U.S. Ties to South Africa.”

¹¹⁴ TransAfrica with editor Salih Abdul-Rahim, “TransAfrica Special News Report: New U.S. Policy on South Africa, State Department Documents Uncover Developing Alliance,” August 1981, Private collection of David Wiley and Christine Root, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

¹¹⁵ TransAfrica with editor Salih Abdul-Rahim, “TransAfrica Special News Report: New U.S. Policy on South Africa, State Department Documents Uncover Developing Alliance.”

¹¹⁶ Chester Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa*, 99-100.

¹¹⁷ Chester Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa*.

¹¹⁸ Reuters, “U.S. seeks closer military ties with South Africa,” *The Baltimore Sun*, June 18, 1981; United States Department of State, “Crocker Testimony on Namibia [Chester Crocker's Testimony on Namibia before the House

Afrikaner nationalist newspaper, optimistically used Crocker's testimony in front of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa and Botha's own statements on the visit to show the normalizing relations between the two countries.¹¹⁹ In a memo to Afrikaner security officials, Pik Botha stated that the visit established a mutual trust and a shared agreement between the two nations condemning the UN favoritism towards SWAPO.¹²⁰

Rising Anti-Apartheid Activism

The African National Congress, the leading South African outlawed and exiled political party, worked within the Frontlines States and the Organization of African Unity to train the armed resistance wing of *Umkhonto we Sizewe* (Zulu)— the Spear of the Nation. Oliver Tambo, the exiled ANC President, frequently travelled from Tanzania, where he was exiled, to allied countries and the UN in New York City, to gather financial support, and to coordinate with anti-apartheid grassroots organizations. Even prior to Reagan's campaign for revitalized engagement with South Africa, Tambo recognized the work of various worldwide anti-apartheid groups; without them, he claimed, the "struggle would not have reached the level that it has today."¹²¹

The US anti-apartheid activists' challenge to US foreign policy continued with the "Building Forces Against United States Support for South Africa" conference and rally in June 1981. Notable anti-apartheid activist, including D.C. Mayor Marion Barry, Nigeria's UN Ambassador Akporode Clark, Congressman Gray, Randall Robinson, Tambo, and SWAPO's

Foreign Affairs Africa Subcommittee on Wednesday, June 17],” June 17, 1981, DNSA, South Africa: The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989.

¹¹⁹ Humphrey Tyler, "Hopes Rising in S. Africa for Closer Ties with U.S." *The Palm Beach Post*, June 28, 1981, 24.

¹²⁰ R. F. Botha, "Besoeek van Mnr Clark aan Suid-Afrika en Suidwes-Afrika: 10-13 Junie 1981," Report in South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs, DISA, JSTOR Struggles for Freedom: Southern Africa.

¹²¹ Oliver Tambo, "We Shall Win: Statement at the meeting of the Special Committee against Apartheid to launch the International Anti-Apartheid Year, March 21, 1978" (1978), in *Oliver Tambo: Apartheid and the International Community*, ed. E.S. Reddy (New Delhi: Namibia Foundation Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1991), 73.

secretary Moses Garoeb, attended the conference.¹²² On June 8, the conference issued a declaration which highlighted a shared anger toward the increasing South African aggression in Namibia and the lack of American reprisal.¹²³ The joint statement discussed the apartheid regime's "continued intensified resort to brutality and terrorism."¹²⁴ The South African unchecked use of force constituted an international threat to peace and security which jeopardized the lives of all South Africans and Namibians.

The conference was the first publicly received and nationally reported concerted effort to rally US support against apartheid. Olive Tambo rightfully described it "as the starting point of the total mobilization forces for justice."¹²⁵ It sparked several national and local campaigns pushing the administration to engage with the idea of dismantling the apartheid regime. Though still in the early stages of policy formation, Washington's message had been clear; the US-South Africa relationship would be an open one willing to reform, with gradualist speed, but also willing ignore racial offensives. The question was, for all the stakeholders involved, how far would the United States go to maintain a constructive relationship with apartheid with little substantive results towards racial equality.

While activists from TransAfrica and WOA pressured for accountability in D.C., several other anti-apartheid organizations made headway in local and state levels of politics. Members of the Africa Fund organization, part of the larger American Committee on Africa (ACOA), pushed state legislators and college campuses to divest state bank loans from South Africa.¹²⁶ State level organizations, like the Massachusetts Coalition for Divestment from South Africa, frequently

¹²² Margaret Lee, "U.S. Tilt Toward Support for South Africa Sparks Display of Solidarity," *Washington Informer*, June 18, 1981, 6, ProQuest Central U.S. Newsstream.

¹²³ Margaret Lee, "U.S. Tilt Toward Support for South Africa Sparks Display of Solidarity."

¹²⁴ *Idem.*

¹²⁵ *Idem.*

¹²⁶ Dumisani Shadrack Kumalo, interview by David Goodman, New York, New York, January 31, 2005, Transcript provided by William Minter's *No Easy Victories*.

lobbied for economic sanctions, and used the missteps of the Reagan administration to press the urgency of the matter.¹²⁷ In May 1981, after Kirkpatrick/Van der Westhuizen meeting, the Massachusetts Coalition drafted a leaflet in support of Massachusetts Senate Bill 1138 to divest state pension funds.¹²⁸

Divestment soon became a national topic of conversation. Activists like Dumisani Shadrack Kumalo, Gail Hovey, Jennifer Davis met with state legislators and local community officials to discuss the impact that their states had in propping up the economy of the apartheid government. Kumalo, who worked in the Africa Fund, traveled extensively during the 1980s to bring South Africa to people's minds, for the fight to become "a local campaign, a homegrown campaign," against apartheid.¹²⁹ This continued bottom-up pressure matched the early rhetoric of Ted Lockwood, the executive director of WOA, when he asserted that United States corporate support via loans and technical aid "further escalat[ed] the struggle." Jesse Jackson, the President of People United to Save Humanity (PUSH), called for an end of any American corporate partnership with South Africa.¹³⁰ This bottom-up approach and accompanying national rhetoric laid the necessary groundwork for larger national campaigns that emerged in the mid-1980s like the Free South Africa Movement (FSAM) to attract national headlines and executive responses.

Foreign policy experts outside of the Reagan administration made their own conjectures about the future of US-South African relations. Former US deputy ambassador to the UN, Donald McHenry argued that, after the Crocker-Clark June mission, any friendly relationship would "reward South African Government intransigence," and would validate American

¹²⁷ David Goodman, "The 1980s: The Anti-Apartheid Convergence," in *No Easy Victories*, ed. William Minter, Gail Hovey, and Charles Cobb, Jr., 153.

¹²⁸ Massachusetts Coalition for Divestment from South Africa, "Foreign Relations, not Racist Relations," May 1981, Boston Coalition for the Liberation of Southern Africa, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

¹²⁹ Dumisani Shadrack Kumalo, interview by David Goodman, New York, New York, January 31, 2005.

¹³⁰ Pamela J. Smith, "U.S. Companies can stop the bloodbath in South Africa."

shortsighted anti-communist goals.¹³¹ The OAU criticized the Reagan administration for colluding with Pretoria to hinder Namibian independence by provoking a continued armed struggle.¹³² In a joint declaration, the OAU further described the relationship as “an unholy alliance.”¹³³ Continued support for the President of SWAPO, Sam Nujoma, from the OAU additionally pressured the US-South African relationship. Nujoma publicly declared in the 1981 summer that the guerilla warfare in Namibia would continue so long as South African continued its occupation and aggression.¹³⁴ Seemingly taunting the international community, the South African Defense Force increased its aggression in Namibian and neighboring Angola after the Crocker-Clark mission. The following US response defended their strategic ally and reaffirmed their Cold War alliance over Pretoria’s own aggression in the region.

South African Undeterred Aggression

Following the Crocker-Clark mission, South Africa increased resources to the SADF and reemphasized South Africa’s position as an anti-communist bastion in the region. Critics within South Africa, including high schoolers and churches, were not immune to SADF and police violence.¹³⁵ By limiting the movement and silencing voices of internal resistance, South Africa’s military forces continued to its muscular intervention without impunity during the summer of 1981. The SADF destroyed radar and anti-aircraft installations in Angola to weaken SWAPO and MPLA. Despite proof of South Africa’s unleashed and illegitimate aggression, Chester

¹³¹ Donald F. McHenry, “Southern Africa Policy,” *NYT*, July 10, 1981, A23, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

¹³² Pranay B. Gupte, “Africans Condemn U.S. for 'Collusion' on Namibian Plans,” *NYT*, June 28, 1981, 1.

¹³³ *Idem.*; Curtis T. Perkins, “U.S. unholy alliance with South Africa is condemned,” *Philadelphia Tribune*, August 4, 1981, 6, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

¹³⁴ Curtis T. Perkins, “U.S. unholy alliance with South Africa is condemned;” Washington Office on Africa, Ted Lockwood, Christine Root, Jean Sindab, “Washington Notes on Africa: Reagan's Namibian Charade,” Summer 1981, Washington Office on Africa Collection, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

¹³⁵ Noel Hughes, AP, “South Africa Cracking Down on Its Critics,” *The Palm Beach Post*, June 28, 1981, A24.

Crocker continued to draw on the Reagan administration's rhetoric of anti-communist regional stability to claim that severing of South African diplomatic ties would drive the region into further chaos and disarray.¹³⁶

Yet, it was the SADF itself that drove the region into further chaos and disarray. In August and September 1981, the SADF staged its largest mechanized military operation—Operation Protea—since their involvement in World War II.¹³⁷ The South African government warned the Angolan government that Pretoria reserved the right to attack SWAPO terrorists and to build up SADF forces on the Angolan-Namibian border, if the Angolan government continued to offer shelter and supplies to Sam Nujoma's SWAPO soldiers. This cabled warning came as a response to Nujoma's threatening speech at UNTAG's meeting in Geneva. At the meeting, Nujoma threatened to increase SWAPO forces and to attack occupying SADF.¹³⁸ By the end of the eighteen-day Operation Protea, the SADF seized control of the Cunene province on the Angola-Namibian border, displaced over 160,000 Angolans, killed over 1,200 SWAPO and Angolan forces.¹³⁹ The SADF documented and published evidence of their destruction, showing the captured oil tanks and military equipment as war bounty to the press.¹⁴⁰ This large scaled aggression did little to help the Reagan foreign policy team defend its stance to reengage South Africa on the basis of gradual reform.

¹³⁶ Bernard Gwertzman, "U.S. takes neutral stand in southern Africa," *The Palm Beach Post*, June 28, 1981, A24.

¹³⁷ South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), "Truth and Reconciliation Commission Final Report Volume Two Chapter Two: The State outside South Africa between 1960 and 1990." Johannesburg: South Africa, 1998.

¹³⁸ South African Government, "Message to Angolan Government from the South African Government," April 3, 1981, Memorandum in South Africa Department of Foreign Affairs, DISA, JSTOR *Struggles for Freedom: Southern Africa*.

¹³⁹ TRC, Truth and Reconciliation Commission Final Report Volume Two Chapter Two: The State outside South Africa between 1960 and 1990.

¹⁴⁰ Jack Foisie, "S. Africans Back After Triumphant Thrust into Angola," *Los Angeles Times*, September 25, 1981, C1.; UPI, "Claims South Africans killed 1,000 troops in Angola raid," *The Baltimore Afro-American*, September 26, 1981, 6.

South Africa's renewed aggression in Namibia marked another policy roadblock for the Reagan administration. Crocker remarked that Operation Protea heightened FLS suspicion on the credibility of South Africa's commitment to peace negotiations.¹⁴¹ Operation Protea forced the Reagan administration to take a carefully-crafted stance where Secretary Haig urged South African immediate withdrawal but acknowledged the Angolan military support of SWAPO in the following Security Council meetings.¹⁴²

Regardless of the FLS concerns at increasing South African aggression, the Reagan administration started its push to repeal the Clark amendment. Secretary Haig rationalized that a complete repeal of the Clark Amendment would open up all possible policy options in southern Africa.¹⁴³ Full repeal of the Clark Amendment did not happen until 1985, but Pik Botha frequently encouraged it for the sake of regional security in the hopes that US would bolster the South African military forces.¹⁴⁴

Secretary Haig, in the October 1981 National Foreign Policy Conference for Editors and Broadcasters, stated the clear goals of Reagan's southern Africa policy—without publicly responding to the backlash against Operation Protea. Reagan's African policy team envisioned South Africa's support for Resolution 435 with their withdrawal from Namibia. South Africa's willingness to follow through with Resolution 435 was contingent on Cuban troop withdrawal from Angola within the next year, thus linking the different regional skirmishes together. With the lofty goal of achieving full peace and independence by 1982, Haig claimed South Africa's acceptance of Resolution 435 with new provisions with the United States were clear signs of

¹⁴¹ Chester Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa*, 106.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 105.

¹⁴³ Richard Fairbanks, United States Department of State, "Talking Points [Regarding the Repeal of the Clark Amendment]," September 18, 1981, DNSA, South Africa: The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989.

¹⁴⁴ United States Department of State, "Namibia: Pik Botha's Comments in Windhoek," October 22, 1981, DNSA, South Africa: The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989.

regional stability as an achievable goal within the year.¹⁴⁵ There was no mention of influencing internal race reform within apartheid, another facet of Chester Crocker's constructive engagement. Instead, Reagan's African policy team articulated the idea of a US-South African relationship which clearly prioritized an anti-communist regional stability.¹⁴⁶ The Reagan administration's official policy to engage with South Africa, undeterred by Pretoria's external aggression or internal oppression, was not without public criticism from anti-apartheid activists.

The luxury of ignoring public criticism did not last. In the years that followed the Reagan administration's initial backpedaling of poorly planned meetings or misspeaks, anti-apartheid activists' swelling pressure translated to substantial policy reframing within the following year and throughout Reagan's tenure in the White House. Future arguments over international bank loans, trade of strategic minerals, and divestment from South Africa, all while the apartheid state increased its violence in Black townships and across its borders, galvanized anti-apartheid organizations to maintain national and local attention.

¹⁴⁵ United States Department of State, "Official U.S. Policy toward Southern Africa [Extracts of Remarks by Secretary Haig before the National Foreign Policy Conference for Editors and Broadcasters]," October 29, 1981, DNSA, South Africa: The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989.

¹⁴⁶ Humphrey Tyler, "Hopes Rising in S. Africa for Closer Ties with U.S."

CHAPTER 3

THE ECONOMIC DISCORD OVER CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Introduction

During Reagan's first term, the Africa team focused its southern Africa policy on cultivating open and constructive relations with South Africa, minimizing economically aggressive policies from Congress, and negotiating a new policy for the Namibian independence settlement. To the administration's credit, most Americans believed in the reluctant practicality of South Africa as a Cold War ally on the continent. However, increasing activist pressure on state legislators and Congress kept the economic argument of sanctions against South Africa as a major policy option. The Reagan administration's frequent outspoken support to bolster its Cold War ally in the continent downplayed sanction talks.

The Reagan team initially relied on a relationship based on economic cooperation with South Africa to sustain its continued military alliance in the region, especially as tensions with Angola and Namibia increased. In justifying the need to finance the anti-communist bastion against Soviet-influenced forces such as People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), Reagan maintained the support of most transnational corporations operating in the region. Using a loophole in the Export Administration Act 175 that allowed US trading to Pretoria's more distant military subsidiaries, Reagan continued its economic support of the apartheid military state. Anti-apartheid organizations publicly rebuked the administration's actions enough to prompt congressional inquiries in US involvement in bolstering South African forces at the detriment of its own people. Both the increasing coordination of anti-apartheid organizations and the prominence of anti-apartheid leaders in congressional hearings transformed the anti-apartheid

message—tying economic concerns of US engagement with Pretoria to the humanitarian concerns of labor rights and violence.

Congressional and Executive Strategic Resource and Policy Concerns

Reagan’s Africa team—with Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker at the lead—advanced its southern African foreign policy in 1981 through the language of strategic minerals and resources. This, the team felt, would limit oppositional support for sanctions and divestment.¹⁴⁷ Despite the growing international discontent, the Reagan team worked at reestablishing the trade relationship that the Carter administration limited, especially in terms of technology parts and equipment. The Reagan administration’s lax enforcement of the congressional arms embargo was among the first targets of anti-apartheid activists.

Congressional hearings, in response to South African news reports, sought to uncover the extent of this trading engagement. In December 1981, the *Rand Daily Mail*, a left-leaning South African newspaper, reported a sale of computers from the United States to Pretoria’s Atlas Aircraft Corporation, a military development corporation part of the Armaments Corporation of South Africa (ARMSCOR).¹⁴⁸ *Rand Daily Mail* wagered that this deal represented a test case for future trade deals between the State Department and Pretoria through ARMSCOR-affiliated businesses. Civil rights lawyer Goler Butcher testified to the Subcommittees on Africa and International Economic Policy that US computer sales served as an “essential element in the enforcement of the panoply of apartheid laws.”¹⁴⁹ US embargoes outlawed direct sales to

¹⁴⁷ AP, “Excerpts from Policy Speech on Southern Africa,” August 30, 1981, *NYT*, 18.

¹⁴⁸ United States Department of State, “Atlas Computer Sale Hits the Fan [Summary of Article Discussing Sale of Computer to ARMSCOR Subsidiary,” December 22, 1981, DNSA: South Africa: The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989.

¹⁴⁹ U.S. Congress, House, Subcommittees on International Economic Policy and Trade and on Africa, “Controls on exports to South Africa: hearings before the Subcommittees on International Economic Policy and Trade and on Africa of the Committee on Foreign Affairs,” 97th Congress, 2nd sess., February 9 and December 2, 1982, 5.

ARMSCOR, yet by supplying Atlas Corporation, the Reagan administration used a trading deal loophole for this sale. In doing so, Thomas Conrad, a staff researcher with the American Friends Service Committee, argued that the administration was giving the South African government the necessary equipment to “design its own weapons and equip its state apparatus with awesome repressive powers.”¹⁵⁰ By 1982, Sullivan Principles signatory corporations, like IBM, had sealed trade deals with ARMSCOR subsidiary companies.¹⁵¹ The early legislative oversight of Reagan’s relationship with South Africa remained focused on the economic and Cold War parameters that Reagan imposed early in his administration and provided substantive flexibility for the administration to start economically reengaging with Pretoria.

With Capitol Hill’s increasing attention on the trade situation in South Africa, resources and Cold War ideologies dominated most congressional dialogue in lieu of humanitarian concerns.¹⁵² This economic focus initially limited Congressional oversight, especially when high-profile hearings on the status of embargoes with South Africa underscored the humanitarian situation. Nongovernmental organizations such as the American Friend Service Committee and TransAfrica advocated to Congress for increased legal oversight regarding the US enhancement

¹⁵⁰ U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Subcommittees on International Economic Policy and Trade and on Africa, “Controls on exports to South Africa: hearings before the Subcommittees on International Economic Policy and Trade and on Africa of the Committee on Foreign Affairs,” 71. The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) was originally founded as a Quaker pacifist organization, the wide-ranged focus of the AFSC meant they frequently supported other anti-apartheid organizations in preparing for legal and congressional appearances and conducting research into the extent of U.S. involvement in supporting oppressive regimes through the exchange of weapons and military equipment.

¹⁵¹ U.S. Congress, House, Subcommittees on International Economic Policy and Trade and on Africa, “Controls on exports to South Africa: hearings before the Subcommittees on International Economic Policy and Trade and on Africa of the Committee on Foreign Affairs,” 76-79.

¹⁵² Rasmus Sinding Søndergaard’s *Reagan, Congress, and Human Rights: Contesting Morality in US Foreign Policy* (2020) provides a comprehensive analysis between the dynamics of the US Congress and Reagan administration in one chapter specifically on the South African humanitarian situation. Chapter Two will further Søndergaard’s argument of Congress and the Congressional Black Caucus as purveyors of both humanitarian and economic policies to include how Reagan’s own transformation to humanitarian and economic policies against South Africa were pressured by activist organizations.

of South African military in the name of Cold War defense.¹⁵³ TransAfrica researchers frequently pointed out that the technology used to bolster South African borders also aided South African domestic police forces as part of the apartheid system. Yet, in an effort to limit Export Administration Act 175, Reagan's team presented Congress with an economically advantageous argument for the continued support to their anti-communist ally regardless of its apartheid policies.

The Conservative leadership on the Hill bolstered Reagan's economic rhetoric in committees. In supporting the United States' economic engagement with South Africa, the Senate Judiciary Committee investigated the rising threat of communist militant support of South African anti-apartheid groups and the extent of their planned militant sabotage attacks against the South African government. Chester Crocker, at a March 1982 hearing, explained the potential danger of the communist influence in South Africa to the larger region as a national security concern in Angola and Namibia.¹⁵⁴ Continuing on the administration and conservatives' frequent support for South Africa, Chairman Senator Jeremiah Denton (R-AL) used the power of the committee to label the African National Congress (ANC) as a Communist terror organization, intent on sabotaging the stability of the Afrikaner government.¹⁵⁵ In weaving both security and economic concerns together, conservatives and Reagan's Africa team, particularly Chester Crocker, kept most of the Congressional focus away from sustained criticism of constructive engagement.

¹⁵³ American Committee on Africa, "Emergency Alert: On the Arms Embargo," February 12, 1982, American Committee on Africa Policy Documents, Africa Action Archive, JSTOR Struggles for Freedom: Southern Africa.

¹⁵⁴ U.S. Congress, Senate, Subcommittees on Security and Terrorism, "The Role of the Soviet Union, Cuba, and East Germany in fomenting terrorism in Southern Africa: hearings before the Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism of the Committee on the Judiciary," 97th Congress, 2nd sess., March 22, 1982, 9-10.

¹⁵⁵ TransAfrica with editor Salih Abdul-Rahim, "TransAfrica News: Senate Terrorism Subcommittee," Winter 1981/1982, Private collection of David Wiley and Christine Root, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

However, the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) and the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives often criticized the administration's policies concerning South Africa on similar economic grounds. Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Africa and Representative for Michigan, Howard Wolpe frequently used the Subcommittee to challenge Reagan officials for relaxing the arms embargo and US trade engagement.¹⁵⁶ Congresspeople partnered at public events with anti-apartheid organizations to strategize on policymaking. In a keynote speech at the International Seminar on the Role of Transnational Corporations in Namibia with the American Committee on Africa, the Executive Director of the CBC, Francesta Farmer, called the renewed trading partnership with South Africa "morally bankrupt," as it only bolstered the apartheid system.¹⁵⁷ This late November 1982 Seminar was a legislative planning session between congresspeople, members of Namibia's SWAPO, and American and South African labor union workers to organize against Reagan's economy messaging on the Hill.¹⁵⁸ The resulting declaration outlined the legislation's anti-apartheid agenda. Seminar attendees additionally created a list of demands which included the immediate implementation of UN Security Council sanctions against South Africa and the withdrawal of transnational corporations that supported the occupying South African forces from the Namibian mining industry.¹⁵⁹ Democratic Congress members like Farmer and Wolpe blended both economic concerns with apartheid's oppressive policy in the anti-apartheid message and weaponized Reagan's own economic rhetoric against Crocker's constructive engagement policy.

¹⁵⁶ TransAfrica with editor Salih Abdul-Rahim, "TransAfrica News: Senate Terrorism Subcommittee," Winter 1981/1982.

¹⁵⁷ Francesta Farmer, "Address by Francesta Farmer, Executive Director, Congressional Black Caucus. Document No. NS-40," November 29, 1982, African Action Archive, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

¹⁵⁸ American Committee on Africa, "List of Participants at the International Seminar on the Role of Transnational Corporations in Namibia," November 29, 1982, American Committee on Africa Collection, JSTOR: Struggles for Freedom: Southern Africa.

¹⁵⁹ *Idem.*

Yet, Reagan still received favorable support from corporations for his policy to expansive military and technological equipment to Pretoria, which saw increased profits from these international sales. The administration used the international stage to signal its economic support for South Africa and its resource economy. The rapidly declining prices of major export commodities, like diamond and gold, brought huge deficits to South African corporations such as the De Beers Corporations, East Rand Proprietary Mines, and the South African government's own investments in the early 1980s. *The Atlantic* reporter Edward Epstein predicted that "with increasing pressure for the independence of Namibia... De Beers's days of control in black Africa seem numbered."¹⁶⁰ To relieve the balance deficit downturn of 4 billion Krugerrand, South Africa applied for a USD\$1.1 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund (I.M.F).¹⁶¹ Leaked State Department cables highlighted the private efforts to support South Africa's loan application notwithstanding the recent UN resolutions calling for the expulsion of South Africa from the I.M.F.¹⁶² Publicly, however, the State Department reiterated its abhorrence of the apartheid system while recognizing the financial merit of supporting the anti-communist ally.¹⁶³

The Reagan administration's continuing diplomatic relationships with South Africa and other anti-communist countries informed public diplomacy efforts in the Reagan White House. Evidence of this multi-focused approach on diplomacy and public relations began with National

¹⁶⁰ Edward Jay Epstein, "Have You Ever Tried to Sell a Diamond?" *The Atlantic*, February 1982; AP, "South Africa's Sick Economy," July 7, 1982, *NYT*, 1D.

¹⁶¹ The 1982 I.M.F. loan of \$1.1 billion is the equivalent of \$2.8 billion today. TransAfrica with Salih Abdul-Rahim, Mark Wenner, and Anne Kabagambe, "TransAfrica News Vol. 2, No.4," Summer 1982, Private Collection of David Wiley and Christine Root, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections; Richard M'Bayo, "IMF Loan to South Africa," *The Hilltop: 1980-1990*, November 2, 1982, 8, Howard University Archive, Digital Collections.

¹⁶² AP, "So. African Loan Prompts Censure," *The Hilltop: 1980-1990*, October 22, 1982; Richard M'Bayo, "IMF Loan to South Africa," *The Hilltop: 1980-1990*, November 2, 1982; United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 37/2, *The U.N. General Assembly Requests IMF Not to Issue Credits to South Africa* (19 October 1982), available from <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/36963?ln=en>.

¹⁶³ United States Department of State, "IMF loan for South Africa [Statement Issued by the Department of State on November 3, 1982]," November 3, 1982, DNSA, South Africa: The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989.

Security Decision Directive 77 in January 1983. This Decision Directive set the State Department and National Security Council's priority on cultivating a favorable perception of Reagan's foreign policy. NSDD 77 established a 5-member Special Planning Group (SPG)—made of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Director of the United States Information Agency, the Director of the Agency for International Development, and the Assistant to the President for Communications—to coordinate public diplomacy relative to national security interests and to monitor public favorability on foreign relation policies.¹⁶⁴ The NSC, in accordance with NSDD 77, bolstered economic support to democracy promoting organizations as key messengers of Reagan's foreign policy outside of the standard foreign policy apparatus. Initially, South Africa was not under the direct purview of the SPG. Instead, Reagan's Central American policies with Nicaragua occupied the initial focus of SPG.¹⁶⁵ In Nicaragua, the SPG worked with public organizations to build favorably policy options with on US support of the Nicaraguan Sandinista regime for the State Department to then explore. Yet, NSDD 77 was a strategic step that committed bureaucratic focus on ensuring favorable presentation of Reagan's foreign policy to the US public. The extent of this interest was first seen in SPG's budget of \$65 million in 1984 for "overt political action." This earmarked funding went directly the United State Information Agency (USIA), led by longtime Reagan ally Charles Wick. Wick and Secretary of State George Shultz then selected conservative think-tank organizations to financially influence research studies that supported Reagan's economic

¹⁶⁴ Ronald Reagan, "National Security Decision Directive 77: Management of Public Diplomacy relative to National Security," January 14, 1983, NSDD Digitized Reference Copies, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

¹⁶⁵ Ronald Reagan, "National Security Decision Directive 77: Management of Public Diplomacy relative to National Security," January 14, 1983.

message.¹⁶⁶ The SPG and its particular focus on sustaining politically beneficial relationships to advance Reagan's foreign policy continued throughout Reagan's tenure.

Capitol Hill's and the White House's prioritization of strategic resources over humanitarian concerns dominated most political dialogues in the early years of the Reagan administration. Reagan's defense over South Africa's economic situation prompted conservative congressmembers to parrot their support in the Senate and to allocate funding to the SPG. In the years that followed, Reagan's SPG and the accompanying public diplomacy apparatus, categorically transformed the role of policy making in South Africa. In response, anti-apartheid organizers followed the strategy outlined in the International Seminar on the Role of Transnational Corporations in Namibia's similar economic-based tactics to oppose Reagan's economic argument. By first presenting an economically unfair situation to Black workers in South Africa, activists extrapolated it to specific humanitarian concerns for social and political rights for Black South Africans.

Anti-Apartheid Activists Use of the Strategic Resources

Following the "Building the Forces Against United States Support for Africa" conference, anti-apartheid activists put their efforts into shifting the US policy away from constructive engagement and toward harsher economic consequences and criticism of apartheid. The coalition building seen following 1981 not only advanced the efforts of organizations like TransAfrica or the American Committee on Africa (ACOA) to end apartheid on a national level but also raised public awareness of the anti-apartheid message itself as membership increased and donors came in with monetary support. Now armed with several examples of US

¹⁶⁶ Walter Raymond, "Public Diplomacy NSDD [National Security Decision Directive] Implementation: First Special Planning Group Meeting," 1983, DNSA, *The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989*.

ambivalence towards South Africa's oppressive internal dynamics in exchange for economically strategic policies, anti-apartheid activists adapted their message against both the apartheid regime and the current Reagan policy. Anti-apartheid organizations transformed Reagan's rhetoric of strategic resources to show the economic hardships placed on Black South Africans. In establishing that Black South African's labor situations remained unchanged, anti-apartheid activists claimed constructive engagement stagnated change in South Africa.

The United States' support for South Africa's I.M.F. loan was among the many moments where anti-apartheid activists further used economic-based criticism against the Reagan administration. In several editorials about the \$1.1 billion loan, religious leaders and anti-apartheid supporters argued that the I.M.F. support would bolster apartheid's military apparatus. Some religious leaders affiliated with faith-based organizations, such as the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility and the National Council of Churches, denounced Reagan's support for the loan application. Calling attention to US Chase Manhattan bank for its more limited economic engagement with South Africa, faith-based organization called Reagan's support a "mockery of [the]... conscience by US banks."¹⁶⁷ The Democratic House echoed its concerns over the loan. In several letters, House Democrats urged the Treasury Secretary Donald Regan to rescind its support and criticized the administration for politicizing the I.M.F. while financially supporting oppression in Pretoria. If the I.M.F. approved the loan, the letters argued, the US would be responsible for \$200 million of the \$1.1 billion.¹⁶⁸ House Africa Subcommittee Chairman Howard Wolpe bluntly described South Africa's economy as "inextricably bound up

¹⁶⁷ Timothy H. Smith, Richard E. Stenhouse, Audrey C. Smock, Willis Logan, "An I.M.F. Loan Would Aid Apartheid," *NYT*, November 1, 1982, 18A.

¹⁶⁸ Center for International Policy, "Congressional Opposition to the IMF Loans to South Africa," October 18, 1982, Private collection of David Wiley and Christine Root, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

with the politics of apartheid,” and supporting the I.M.F. loan articulated US support for the apartheid system.¹⁶⁹ Nonetheless, the I.M.F. voted in early November to grant South Africa its largest grant application to the Republic. Of the 140 voting members, sixty-eight of the African and Middle Eastern members voted against South Africa’s application.¹⁷⁰ The United States’ lobbying during the meeting likely influenced the favorable result for the South African government.

Anti-apartheid activists’ influence on the House spurred Democratic legislation and investigations into US economic support of apartheid while expanding the reach of their economic message against apartheid. Democratic congresspeople moved to limit the Treasury Department’s role in the I.M.F. In May 1983, California Representative Jerry Patterson introduced an amendment to the House Banking Committee bill to bar the nation from supporting I.M.F. loans to South Africa.¹⁷¹ In an effort to pass the annual foreign spending bill, Senate expanded the House’s restriction to bar both apartheid and communist governments from receiving US Executive Director of the International Monetary Fund’s support in the International Recovery and Financial Stability Act, S.695.¹⁷² Fernand St. Germain (D-RI), Chairman of the House Banking Committee, told reporters that S.695 would not pass if it did not include language prohibiting future loans to apartheid governments.¹⁷³

Oppositional editorials and reporters described Reagan’s anti-communist justification as an illogically planned policy that underserved the economic interests of the United States. David Tongue and Quentin Peel, researchers at the political think-tank Center for International Policy,

¹⁶⁹ Center for International Policy, “Congressional Opposition to the IMF Loans to South Africa,” October 18, 1982.

¹⁷⁰ Clyde Farnsworth, “I.M.F. Loan to Pretoria is Voted,” *NYT*, November 2, 1982, D1.

¹⁷¹ Clyde Farnsworth, “House Unit Would Curb I.M.F. Loans to Pretoria,” *NYT*, May 6, 1983, D1.

¹⁷² US Congress, International Recovery and Financial Stability Act, S.695, 98th Cong.

¹⁷³ Jonathan Fuerbringer, “I.M.F. Bills Advances in House,” *NYT*, July 30, 1983, 33.

leaked I.M.F. board meeting minutes on South Africa's application and exposed that the US' continued to support the South African government. Tongue and Peel exposed the United States' ambivalence towards the unfair labor practices forcing Black workers into unskilled positions.¹⁷⁴ TransAfrica's Legislative Assistant for Political Military Affairs, Salih Abdul-Rahim, argued that South Africa's I.M.F. loan only "refurbish[ed] its war chest," against its own people.¹⁷⁵ Additionally, anti-apartheid activists reported on the divisive labor situation in South Africa where strenuous working conditions in the strategic mineral mines predominantly impacted the health of Black South African miners. Nonetheless, the Reagan administration remained steadfast in its efforts to bolster South Africa's economy. *New York Times'* Alan Cowell observed that "Washington's sense of strategic interest outweighs" any other workable African policy without the white-led South Africa as the key player.¹⁷⁶

International news outlets heavily reported that South Africa in the early 1980s was fraught with labor strikes and state-perpetrated violence on Black South Africans.¹⁷⁷ Anti-apartheid activists used news coverage to educate the US public about the reality of South Africa and Reagan's failed policies. Anti-apartheid activists maintained the attention of the US public on humanitarian concerns as well by frequently exposing imprisonment and violence in Namibia at the hand of the SADF, and news of internal resistance within South Africa. While publicizing the turmoil in South Africa, anti-apartheid activists emphasized the shortcomings of constructive engagement's supposedly economically-friendly policy. In operating in both an economic and

¹⁷⁴ David Tonge and Quentin Peel, "How South Africa won its billion-dollar battle in the IMF," *Financial Times*, January 25, 1983, rpt. in Center of International Policy, George M. Houser Collections, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

¹⁷⁵ Robin McGinty, "TransAfrica: Black American's Influence on Foreign Policy," *The Hilltop: 1980-1990*, January 14, 1982, 3, Howard University Archive, Digital Collections.

¹⁷⁶ Alan Cowell, "U.S. Policy and Africa; News Analysis," *NYT*, November 18, 1982, 3A.

¹⁷⁷ Alan Cowell, "South Africans Hone Their Tactics and Attitudes," September 30, 1984, *NYT*, 12A; "Apartheid opponents held," November 9, 1984, *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto), 12.

humanitarian-based argument, anti-apartheid activists highlighted the overwhelming rise of Black trade unions in South Africa with labor strikes seen in the strategic mineral mines. In July 1982, 12,000 Black goldminers struck across eight mines against unequal pay and unsafe work conditions. In response, the South African police killed eight strikers and relocated over a thousand workers to the homelands in retribution.¹⁷⁸ This report followed the several more critical coverage in national and local papers on the widespread strike in July.¹⁷⁹ That November, PBS's Nova science series broadcast a special episode that detailed the intertwining of the US' interest in cobalt as a strategic mineral and the health consequences of the mining on the Black workers striking an additional blow to constructive engagement.¹⁸⁰

Salih Abdul-Rahim, then TransAfrica's Legislative Assistant for Political Military Affairs, gave credit to the anti-apartheid organization's ability to collaboratively promote the economic-humanitarian goals to end apartheid.¹⁸¹ This anti-apartheid message carried onto Congress with the S. 695 and into public forums of television. Consequently, the continued state-perpetuated violence in South Africa strengthened the anti-apartheid message.

Regional Peace Attempts and Setbacks

Reagan's Former Secretary of State Alexander Haig's early prediction of achieving regional peace within a year of Reagan's arrival to the White House was an unrealistic conclusion. Yet, even with the appointment of new Secretary of State George Shultz, the Africa team struggled to navigate South Africa's continued aggression towards its neighbors to achieve

¹⁷⁸ TransAfrica with Salih Abdul-Rahim, Mark Wenner, and Anne Kabagambe, "TransAfrica News Vol. 2, No.4," Summer 1982.

¹⁷⁹ AP, "Around the World; 1,000 Blacks Leave South African Gold Mine," *NYT*, July 5, 1982, 2; UPI, "New Unrest Among Black Workers Shuts a Gold Mine in South Africa," *NYT*, July 6, 1982, 3.

¹⁸⁰ Walter Goodman, "TV: 'Cobalt Blues,' on Strategic Minerals," *NYT*, November 23, 1983, 15C.

¹⁸¹ Robin McGinty, "TransAfrica: Black American's Influence on Foreign Policy," *The Hilltop: 1980-1990*, January 14, 1982.

the peace resolving efforts of UN Resolution 435's Namibian independence framework.¹⁸² The South Africa Defense Forces' military raids of African National Congress outposts in Maseru, Lesotho, that killed thirty-seven people and decimated housing in twelve different areas of the capitol in December 1982, did not make the regional peace building any easier.¹⁸³

Crocker's team tried to placate South African security members by asserting that South Africans could not use the United States' relationship as cover for an aggressive policy of air strikes and raid. However, the South Africans were resolute in defending their borders regardless of "any external power" or United States' caution.¹⁸⁴ Thus, FLS leaders like Angola refused to separate South African aggression with the United States' unwillingness to publicly check Pretoria's military based on Reagan's continued support of its anti-communist position.¹⁸⁵ Crocker and the rest of the Africa team focused on curbing South African aggression by asserting that constructive engagement was a viable foreign policy instrument from 1982 through the end of Reagan's tenure.

Yet, despite increased congressional oversight into the trading relationship with South Africa, the State Department continued to sell military supplies to Pretoria. A report from the American Friends Service Committee in January 1984 argued that the highest level of authorized US commercial sales to Pretoria was from 1981 to 1983 with an increase of \$28.3 million sales of military equipment.¹⁸⁶ The report detailed how the State Department exploited loopholes and

¹⁸² Chester Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa*, 143, 148. Crocker does not touch upon the reasoning behind the cabinet dismissal of Haig or Shultz's new post. He does mention that Haig's hardline "No Angola, No Namibia" stance was polarizing in the White House.

¹⁸³ Chester Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa*, 154; Allister Sparks, "S. African Commando Attack Kills 37 in Lesotho," *Washington Post*, December 10, 1982.

¹⁸⁴ Chester Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa*, 154, 170.

¹⁸⁵ Chester Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa*, 171.

¹⁸⁶ The National Action/Research on the Military-Industrial Complex (NARMIC) of the American Friends Service Committee, "Military Export to South Africa-A Research Report on the Arms Embargo," January 1984, DNSA, South Africa: The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989.

justified sales to Pretoria on the basis of anti-terrorism against the ANC.¹⁸⁷ The ANC's public outlets described the United States open collaboration with South Africa to "exchange of intelligence and military personnel and information," and to sell advanced computers and enriched uranium in an efforts to sabotage the FLS.¹⁸⁸ This exchange between the United States and South Africa supported apartheid's aggressive regional control and sustained South Africa's oppressive control of the South African Black population.

Supplied with United States' arms and advanced technology, Pretoria's forces attempted to maintain their political power and to cripple Black resistance under the guise of crime control.¹⁸⁹ The South African "Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons Bill" of late 1982 expanded the restriction on Black movement and enabled the police to enforce the passbooks—documents that implemented movement restrictions and dictated preapproved locations and curfews for individual Black South Africans.¹⁹⁰ The Black Sash organization, a mostly white liberal women-led organization in South Africa, referred to the bill as influx control—dictating the movement of Black bodies traveling throughout South Africa for work and into townships.¹⁹¹ A growing number of trade unions' peaceful protests and sit-ins frequently broken up by local police also garnered US news attention. These trade unions fought against exploitation, unfair wages, poor living conditions in townships and sought to reclaim their labor,

¹⁸⁷ NARMIC of the American Friends Service Committee, "Military Export to South Africa-A Research Report on the Arms Embargo," January 1984.

¹⁸⁸ Aziz Pahad of the ANC, "Apartheid Terror: How Pretoria Wages War on Africa," March 1983, Sechaba Journal, DISA.

¹⁸⁹ Richard Leonard of the American Committee on Africa, "Brief Review of Current U.S. Actions on Enforcement of an Arms Embargo Against South Africa," April 1983, Africa Action Archive, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

¹⁹⁰ "Pretoria's New Nightstick," *NYT*, September 19, 1982, A18, ProQuest News and Newspapers.

¹⁹¹ Sheena Duncan, "The New Influx Control: The Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons Bill," July 12, 1982, Black Sash Digital Collection, Advice Office: Responses to Apartheid Legislation, Manuscripts and Archives Department, University of Cape Town (UCT) Libraries.

or “black gold.”¹⁹² Supplied with US shock batons and weaponry, SADF used advanced surveillance systems and imprisonments to curb labor resistance. In some instances, this state violence was unprovoked. One 7,000 South African police ten-hour raid in the Sebokeng township in 1984 led to the arrest of hundreds of people.¹⁹³

The Reagan administration frequently defended its relationship with South Africa despite the rising state violence to US media outlets citing the Afrikaner government’s efforts at gradual reform. But according to the US press, even governmental reform was not adequate enough justification for continued US economic engagement with Pretoria. The new 1984 constitution established the tricameral parliament where white, Indian, and Colored races were represented in separate legislative chambers.¹⁹⁴ One US report stated that the tricameral parliament epitomized Botha’ government’ superfluous apartheid reforms and were a sham.¹⁹⁵ Under this new system, the President largely maintained control over the legislative agenda.¹⁹⁶ According to Crocker, the “favorable climate of change” in the apartheid regime showed a “new willingness” of the white government to step in the right direction of political representation.¹⁹⁷ Crocker claimed that Botha, formerly Prime Minister now State President, supposedly increased political participation for Indians and Coloreds.¹⁹⁸ Yet, Black South Africans still had no political representation in this

¹⁹² Joseph Lelyveld, “Misery in a South African 'Homeland,’” *NYT*, September 25, 1983, A37, ProQuest News and Newspapers.

¹⁹³ Prexy Nesbitt, “Apartheid in Our Living Rooms: U.S. Foreign Policy and South Africa,” 12. Nesbitt details several reports of South African police unprovoked violence on townships.

¹⁹⁴ These racial classifications were instituted by the apartheid government in 1948 and served to further separate races within the country. The white race referred to anyone of Afrikaner or British descent, Indian to the predominant Indian and South Asian population, and Colored referred to anyone who descent mixed with the Black South African race, otherwise known as Bantu, an equally discriminatory term of the time period.

¹⁹⁵ Henry Giniger and Milt Freudenheim, “The World; Apartheid Fallout in South Africa,” *NYT*, September 30, 1984, A2, ProQuest News and Newspapers.

¹⁹⁶ South African Government, “Republic of South Africa Constitution Act 110 of 1983,” Part IV, September 22, 1983.

¹⁹⁷ Chester Crocker, “An update of constructive engagement in South Africa: September 26, 1984.”

¹⁹⁸ Chester Crocker, “An update of constructive engagement in South Africa: September 26, 1984,” Washington: Office of Media Services, Bureau of Public Affairs, *Department of State Bulletin*, September 1984.

new tricameral parliament. Botha justified this parliament exclusion claiming that the six Bantustans emulated Black self-rule and that Black political leadership in the townships was too closely tied to Communist organizations. But even with new proportional representation of non-whites in South Africa, several hundreds of white liberal and Black organizations denounced the constitutional reform as indicative of Botha's total strategy against Black organizations under the rouse of anti-communism.¹⁹⁹ Following the vote on the new Constitution, the industrial Vaal triangle area south of Johannesburg, including the Sebokeng township, erupted in massive unrest.²⁰⁰ A State Department internal memo admitted that the "seriously flawed" new parliament was, in part, responsible for SADF violence, arrests, and voter intimidation—despite the public approval of the new constitution.²⁰¹

Nonetheless, the Reagan administration sought to salvage South Africa's reputation on the international stage and within regional negotiations. The administration frequently supported the release of high-profile anti-apartheid leaders, albeit ones not directly linked to the ANC. For example, Crocker encouraged Foreign Minister Botha to keep up pretending to work towards a peaceful unbanning negotiation between Afrikaner Reverend Beyers Naudé and the South African Minister of Law-and-Order Louis Le Grange.²⁰² Naudé was forced into house arrest in 1977 following his support for the multiracial Christian Institute of South Africa; he was ultimately released in late 1984.²⁰³

¹⁹⁹ Gail Hovey, "Apartheid's New Clothes: White South Africa Votes on a Constitution," December 1983, Africa Action Archive, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

²⁰⁰ "The Vaal Triangle," 1984, Delmas Treason Trial 1985-1989, Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand Libraries and Digital Collections.

²⁰¹ United States Department of State, "Current Foreign Relations, Issue No. 36, September 5, 1984 [Section Entitled "South African Elections Marred by Arrests and Violence]," September 5, 1984, DNSA, South Africa: The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989.

²⁰² South African Foreign Affairs Ministry, "Meeting held at Jan Smuts Airport on Friday 25 May 1984," May 25, 1984, DISA.

²⁰³ J. Reagan Kerney, "South Africa Moves On Foes of Apartheid," October 20, 1977, *The Washington Post*.

Another concern of the Reagan's Africa team on South Africa was the stalled negotiations with Angola and Namibia on implementing Resolution 435 for Namibian independence. These delayed negotiations prompted Crocker to extend open communication with the SADF-supported National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). UNITA's singular negotiations with its ally stifled any open dialogue with the FLS or MPLA on curbing violence between the two Angolan parties. Crocker recognized the power that meeting the UNITA leader, Jonas Savimbi, potentially had in removed South African-induced skepticism towards Cuban willingness to negotiation its withdrawal from Angola.²⁰⁴ The ensuing four-hour meeting between Crocker and Savimbi was no doubt influenced by the growing restlessness that followed Crocker's remarks that the "time [was] ripe for talks" between all relevant parties—including UNITA—involved in the 435 negotiations.²⁰⁵ Crocker foresaw a formal meeting between the South African, UNITA, and the Soviet-supported SWAPO leadership as a step towards more open discussions between conflicting Angolan UNITA and MPLA. Whereas the United States sometimes urged actions of goodwill, other times the administration cautioned that South Africa's delayed willingness to engage allowed "the Soviet's agitpropaganda [that] can poison the wells of southern Africa."²⁰⁶ Involving UNITA leadership was, according to Crocker, a pivotal step in repairing South Africa's regional image, as it signaled to FLS the country's willingness to engage and support UNITA-led negotiations. Crocker cautioned South Africans against abstract language in negotiations with the Soviet

²⁰⁴ R. F. Botha, "A letter from R F Botha to Geagte Kollega/Samepsrekings tussen Crocker En Savimbi, Pretoria, 18 Februarie 1984," February 18, 1984, Original South African History Archive: AL 2457, DISA.

²⁰⁵ South African Foreign Affairs Ministry, "Meeting held at Jan Smuts Airport on Friday 25 May 1984; South African Foreign Affairs Ministry, "Summarised Minutes of Discussions Between South African and United States Delegation, 27 January 1984, Fleur du Cap, Somerset West," January 27, 1984, DISA.

²⁰⁶ South African Foreign Affairs Ministry, "Letter from Chester A Crocker to the Honourable R F Botha," March 24, 1984, DISA.

Union. Crocker's letter speaks to Reagan's own concern over the presentation of reform in southern Africa to the broader public, including international actors.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷ South African Foreign Affairs Ministry, "Letter from Chester A Crocker to the Honourable R F Botha," March 24, 1984.

CHAPTER 4

THE DIVESTMENT CAMPAIGN AND 1984 ELECTION IMPACT

Introduction

In the wake of increasing state violence and anti-apartheid activists' arguments on the irrationality of constructive engagement, Reagan's economically friendly policy could not sustain itself. Divestment supporters' actions on university campuses and in front of state legislatures further nationalized the debate as sanctions were discussed in the Democratic primary race of 1984. This chapter examines how rising anti-apartheid activism using the images of South Africa to increase public awareness of South African state violence and, in turn, to build alliances against constructive engagement as a failed policy of the Reagan administration. This chapter expands on historian Francis Nesbitt's theory that liberal involvement in the anti-apartheid movement increased the movement's publicity. In widening Nesbitt's scope to include mass activist organizations, this chapter looks at the deliberate influence of anti-apartheid activists on Reagan's southern African policy.²⁰⁸ In creating a multifaceted anti-apartheid message centered on both humanitarian and economics concerns, anti-apartheid activists shaped the public perception through state and federal campaigns, news broadcasts, and open protests. The anti-apartheid activists' challenge to the President in public forums thus called into question the validity of Reagan's foreign policy—to the point of forcing policy reframing in September 1985 with Executive Order 12532.

Spurred by an increase in legislative oversight by the House Democrats, anti-apartheid activists and Divestment supporters continued their economically-based message against

²⁰⁸Nesbitt, *Race for Sanctions: African Americans Against Apartheid, 1946-1994*, 117. Nesbitt argues this mass support for the anti-apartheid movement began in the first year of the Reagan administration and this chapter will extend how Nesbitt's study of TransAfrica and other organizations influenced congressional and executive policy shifts.

Reagan's relationship with South Africa. The action of grassroots activists and far-reaching networks who pressured local and state officials the Divestment Campaign. Their tactic gradually yielded small but pivotal legislative victories. Following S.695's passage to bar US support of the I.M.F. to Pretoria, Jennifer Davis, the Executive Director of the ACOA, recognized Divestment supporters for their continued engagement with state legislators.²⁰⁹ Speaking to the UN Special Committee on Decolonization, Davis made an important note on the Divestment Campaign's grassroots approach. The Divestment Campaign's approach changed the minds of the local legislators, who then pressured state and federal legislators and, eventually the US foreign policy at large.²¹⁰ Anti-apartheid activists worked through state and local legislators in coordinated, grassroot networks to convey the anti-apartheid message to target sectors of the American public directly. The political effects of the anti-apartheid efforts were not immediately apparent with the landslide re-election of Reagan. However, despite the lack of political success on the national stage, anti-apartheid activism remained a featured American news topic.

Divestment Efforts

Pressure from divestment organizations continued under Reagan at the academic, city, and state levels. The Massachusetts Coalition for Divestment from South Africa campaign provided one such example of a state to divest \$68 million from companies operating in South Africa.²¹¹ While divestment remained the oppositional viewpoint to the Sullivan Principles, Reagan officials and supporters attempted to strengthen the Principles' efficacy in response to the Divestment Movement's mounting attention. Yet by 1983, nearly a third of signatory

²⁰⁹ Jennifer Davis, "Statement before the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization," June 17, 1983, Africa Action Archive, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

²¹⁰ *Idem.*

²¹¹ David Goodman, "The 1980s: The Anti-Apartheid Convergence," in *No Easy Victories*, 154

corporations had left the Principles. They opposed the additional requirement that forced them to recognize Black unions and to perform additional audits on workplace conditions.²¹² Sullivan reaffirmed the Principles' motivation to maintain American business influence over Pretoria. However, with increasing number of businesses not following the Principles and rising calls for divestment, supporters of the Principles—including the President—struggled to show its success at reforming and ending apartheid.

The Divestment Campaign's local efforts brought the far away events of apartheid into the homes of everyday Americans. ACOA researcher and organizer Prexy Nesbitt described the Campaign's education efforts to meet and explain to state legislators how pension funds or endowments were directly linked to South African businesses. Nesbitt referred to the local education efforts as uncovering the "iron curtain of ignorance" of the American public on apartheid.²¹³ Reflecting Dumisani Shadrack Kumalo's stance that the Divestment being a "homegrown campaign," the local campaigns were slowly recognized by legislators.²¹⁴ By January 1983, states including Minnesota, Oregon, Kansas, and Nebraska passed divestment legislations and twenty-three other states considered divestment as part of their legislative agenda.²¹⁵ The pressure was felt in Pretoria. The *Rand Daily Mail* reported that Dr. Ernie van der Merwe, the head of South Africa's Central Bank, was concerned that divestment could lead to a

²¹² Tamar Lewin, "Rev. Sullivan Steps Up His Anti-Apartheid Fight," *NYT*, November 6, 1983, 12.

²¹³ Prexy Nesbitt, interview by author, phone, July 27, 2020. Nesbitt's metaphor of the iron curtain fits well with Winston Churchill's original usage of the Iron Curtain to refer to the Soviet Union control of East Europe as communist countries as the Divestment Campaign sought to open up relations with anti-apartheid activists' message to divest from South Africa and educate the American people on the reality of South African apartheid.

²¹⁴ Dumisani Shadrack Kumalo, interview by David Goodman, New York, New York, January 31, 2005.

²¹⁵ Thomas Lippman, "Growing Number of States, Localities Barring Investments in South Africa," *The Washington Post*, January 23, 1983, American Committee on Africa, George M. Houser Collections, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections; Sandy Boyer of the American Committee on Africa, "Divesting from Apartheid: A Summary of State and Municipal Legislative Action on South Africa," March 1983, Africa Action Archive, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

twenty percent drop in foreign investment.²¹⁶ Clearly, the efforts at universities, localities, and states had a financial impact on apartheid's governance. To make up for the loss of revenue, the South African government's international loan applications increased to supplement the loss of foreign investment.²¹⁷

The pressure on American politicians was equally apparent. John Chettle of the South Africa Foundation claimed that divestment was such a divisive argument that it allowed anti-apartheid activists to label any politician voting against the measure as racist.²¹⁸ The talks of divestment swept across the United States in time for the 1984 Democratic Presidential primaries and general election. As Randall Robinson accused the Reagan State Department of being the most "Pro-South African" department since World War II, the national debate over proper economic policies against South Africa consumed the campaign arguments yet again.²¹⁹

The 1984 Election

Civil Rights leader Jesse Jackson, who visited South Africa two years after the death of Steve Biko, was among the first Democratic contenders to extend his foreign policy focus to South Africa.²²⁰ Involved in the anti-apartheid movement prior to his presidential bid, Jackson had supported other national Black figures like singer Harry Belafonte and tennis player Arthur Ashe in the "Artists and Athletes against Apartheid cultural" boycott of South Africa in 1983.²²¹

²¹⁶ "Direct Foreign Investment in SA falls," *The Rand Daily Mail*, December 6, 1982 within The Africa Fund and American Committee on Africa, "Divestment Information Packet," 1983, Africa Action Archive, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

²¹⁷ "Direct Foreign Investment in SA falls," *The Rand Daily Mail*, December 6, 1982.

²¹⁸ Jeffrey W Carmel, "US businesses are taking more political heat for their ties to South Africa," *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 4, 1984 within the American Committee on Africa, African Action, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

²¹⁹ Kenneth B. Noble, "Lobby Views Success as Being Out of Favor," *NYT*, November 29, 1983, A26, ProQuest Central U.S Newsstream.

²²⁰ Ronald Smothers, "The Impact of Jesse Jackson," *NYT*, March 4, 1984, 41.

²²¹ Dennis Hevesi, "Thousands in New York Rally Against Apartheid," June 15, 1986, *NYT*, 10. Artists and Athletes against Apartheid coordinated the effort of over 500 Americans protesting against performing in South Africa in music or sports venues.

Even Jackson's early efforts in local divestment efforts carried significant promise to the larger Divestment Movement. In 1983, while still President of PUSH—Operation People United to Save Humanity—, Jackson worked with University of Michigan student groups to pressure the Regents to divest from South Africa and to “be a voice to the voiceless.”²²² While Jackson did not mobilize enough voters to win the presidential nomination for his party, his human rights-centered campaign elevated marginalized voices on foreign policy. It also magnified the hope of Dennis Brutus—the South African exiled writer living in California—that “the resistance of the people... become the focal point” of national discussion.²²³ According to Brutus, the 1984 election forced Americans to choose between being complicit with constructive engagement or maintaining pressure on the Reagan administration.²²⁴

In the months leading to the Democratic National Convention, Black Americans frequently repeated Jackson's human rights centered message on South Africa and extended it to other foreign policy regions such as Grenada and Lebanon, in which the Reagan administration used similar anti-communist national security messaging to justify invasion. Speaking to the UN Special Committee against Apartheid in June, Jackson argued that in order to shift US foreign policy against oppressive regimes, activists must first shift the “United States public opinion in a new direction.”²²⁵ This new direction followed the anti-apartheid call for increased support for Black resistance groups and for harsher punishment against oppressive governments like the

²²² “Jesse Jackson tells the Regents to vote for divestment,” *Divestment for Humanity: The Anti-Apartheid Movement at the University of Michigan*, accessed February 22, 2021.

²²³ Dennis V. Brutus, “The Writer's Role in Shaping Society,” *New Directions* Vol 11, iss. 4, July 1, 1984, Howard University Archive, Digital Collections.

²²⁴ Dennis V. Brutus, “The Writer's Role in Shaping Society.”

²²⁵ Jesse Jackson, “Don't Adjust to Apartheid: Text of address delivered at the opening meeting of the North American Regional Conference for Action against Apartheid held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, 18-21 June 1984,” Private collection of Paquetta Palmer, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

apartheid regime. Other Democratic contenders, like Walter Mondale from Minnesota, soon echoed Jackson's call for increased sanctions against South Africa in public debates.²²⁶

However, recent peace agreements between South Africa and Angola on troop withdrawal boded well for Reagan's "victory for negotiation" tactic.²²⁷ Jackson continued to energize anti-apartheid activists in the foreign policy debate, even when Mondale was well on his way to securing the Democratic nomination. At the Democratic Convention, Jackson's passionate speech described the United States as being at "its worst" and in moral disgrace as it continued to work with South Africa and to ignore cooperative trading opportunities with the rest of the continent.²²⁸ Jackson helped organize an anti-apartheid demonstration in Kansas for the final Presidential debate.²²⁹ As a result, South Africa foreign policy made national headlines in the lead up to the debate between Reagan and Mondale in Kansas City, Missouri. Mondale supported Bishop Tutu's claim, in his acceptance for the Nobel Peace Prize, that Reagan cozied up with apartheid despite the humanitarian concerns in the debate.²³⁰ But Reagan overcame Mondale's criticism through his own ability to sway public opinion. Reagan famously countered concerns over Reagan's age in this debate by emphasizing Mondale's own "youth and inexperience" in foreign policy making, an irony considering Mondale's lengthy career as a legislator.²³¹

²²⁶ Howell Raines, "3 Democratic Presidential Rivals Meet in Mildest Debate of Drive," *NYT*, April 6, 1984, 1A.

²²⁷ Alan Cowell, "South Africa Seeks Support in Europe," *NYT*, May 25, 1984, 3; Charles E. Cobb with United Church of Christ, "South Africa's Sledgehammer Diplomacy: Civil Rights Journal Commentary #139," AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

²²⁸ Jesse Jackson, "Address before the Democratic National Convention," *PBS Frontline*, July 18, 1984, The Pilgrimage of Jesse Jackson collection.

²²⁹ Jesse Jackson, "The Rainbow Coalition is Here to Stay," *The Black Scholar*, 15, no. 5 (September/October 1984), 72-74; AP, "Jackson fires up marchers," *The Manhattan Mercury (Kansas City, MO)*, October 22, 1984, 6.

²³⁰ "Debate 1984, Presidential #2; Ronald Reagan And Walter Mondale," 1984-10-21, Iowa Public Television, American Archive of Public Broadcasting (GBH and the Library of Congress), Boston, MA and Washington, DC, <http://americanarchive.org/catalog/cpb-aacip-37-39k3jgxn>

²³¹ "Debate 1984, Presidential #2; Ronald Reagan And Walter Mondale," 1984-10-21, Iowa Public Television.

Further efforts by the Reagan administration to defend its relationship with South Africa continued during the campaign. The House attempted to renew and amended the Export Administration Act of 1979 that prohibited the United States from investing in companies not endorsing the Sullivan Principles.²³² Private memos from Reagan’s Chief of Staff—James Baker—discussed lobbying Senate Republicans to halt the bill’s renewal to protect Reagan prior to the October debate. Rather than bow to the Democrats’ “indictment of the Administration’s failed policy of constructive engagement,” Baker successfully pressured Senate Republicans to halt the renewal of the Export Administration Act.²³³ Removing the possibility of Reagan’s veto also lessened the pressure from the press on the eve of the October debate. Furthermore, it limited the possible debate time Reagan would have to spend defending his veto on the renewal the Export Administration Act and his support of South Africa.²³⁴ This clear and deliberate action to preserve a favorable view of Reagan’s policy and candidacy underscores the true intention of the Reagan administration on cultivating change in South Africa. Reagan was unwilling to lend support to Congress on enforcing the Sullivan Principles to dictate trading policies with South Africa. The Republican halt of the Export Administration Act legislation ensured that the executive branch was in charge of export regulations, including trade to non-Sullivan Principles signatory businesses in South Africa until late 1985.

The Reagan administration’s additional efforts to limit the discussion of sanctions was funding research projects to provide evidence towards constructive engagement’s supposed effectiveness. The administration supported for the South African Institute of Race Relations financially to conduct research on Black union workers’ view of international sanctions was one

²³² US House, Export Administration Act Amendments of 1984, H.R. 4230, 98th Cong.

²³³ James Baker, “Talking Points for Call with Jake Garn on EAA,” October 1984, Legislative Affairs (8) folder, box 8, James A. Baker Files, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

²³⁴ James Baker, “Talking Points for Call with Jake Garn on EAA,” October 1984.

such example. The resulting survey from the South African Institute of Race Relations research, gathered primarily from white South African workers who identified as conservative, supported Reagan's constructive engagement. In the survey, seventy-five percent of the 551 interviewed workers disapproved of divestment efforts on the grounds on potential economic impact.²³⁵ This effort coupled of strategic legislative pressure on Congress to halt the Export Administration Act renewal and selective polling within South Africa during the latter months of the 1984 election salvaged Reagan's southern African foreign policy to the public.

Yet apartheid had yet to become a national security crisis for most American voters looking at the various Cold War hot zones in 1984. While voter turn-out rose for the first time since the 1960s, voters did not collectively favor the anti-apartheid stance yet.²³⁶ In reflecting on the landslide Reagan victory, *Washington Post* reporter William Raspberry claimed that the public's general perception was that Reagan stood for American issues. Consequently, Mondale with his internationalist stance failed to create a energize platform of truly American issues, including those on domestic and foreign policy compiled from Jackson's Rainbow Coalition.²³⁷ However, Raspberry's attention to Reagan's ability to shape American's general perceptions categorically ignores the similar efforts outside of the candidates to shape campaign policies. While early November seemed bleak for anti-apartheid organizations' prospective policies of increased sanctions, these organizations soon held national attention in the weeks that followed. In leading mass mobilization across the country in the fallout of the 1984 election, anti-apartheid organizers further empowered the small locality-based organizing still hard at work.

²³⁵ Alan Cowell, "Foes of Apartheid Disputed in Poll," *NYT*, September 23, 1984, 7.

²³⁶ U.S. Bureau of the Census Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 405, *Voting and Registration in the Election of November 1984*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1986.

²³⁷ William Raspberry, "The Real Reasons Mondale Lost," *The Washington Post*, February 20, 1985.

Domestic Struggle for Good Publicity

In the weeks following the 1984 election, anti-apartheid activists scheduled a meeting with the South African embassy in Washington, D.C. On Thanksgiving eve, TransAfrica leader Randall Robinson, D.C. Representative Walter Fauntroy, and US Civil Rights Commission lawyer Mary Frances Berry met with South African diplomats for forty minutes.²³⁸ At the meeting, they shared a list of demands with South African Ambassador Bernardus Fourie. The list included the release of Nelson Mandela and of thirteen Black labor resistance leaders, all political prisoners. While a small crowd of protestors stood outside the embassy, the three refused to leave the premises until the South African government met their demands. Embassy officials arrested them on the charges of unlawfully entering the embassy.²³⁹ Five days later, Capitol police arrested Michigan Representative Charles Hayes and President of the Southern Christian Leadership Council, Reverend Joseph Lowery, on unlawful entry charges, for employing similar tactics outside the embassy.²⁴⁰ Each time, protesters waited outside the embassy with signs calling for the release of the political prisoners and the end of the apartheid system.²⁴¹ The arrests of Congresspeople and high-profile activists, like Robinson and Berry, garnered national attention over the Thanksgiving holiday. Prompted by the continued state violence in the Black townships, the embassy sit-ins participants described their actions as an act of “moral witness” against apartheid and as a public solidarity effort with the labor organizers in

²³⁸ Later in 1984, Ronald Reagan attempted to remove Mary Frances Berry from her post as US Civil Rights Commission lawyer. The later federal court case *Berry, et al. v. Reagan* reversed the fire to keep her post.

²³⁹ “Free South Africa Brief Chronology of Events,” 1984, Cheryl Johnson-Odim Collection, College Archives and Special Collections, Columbia College Chicago; Kenneth Bredemeier and Michel Marriott, “Fauntroy Arrested in Embassy,” *The Washington Post*, November 22, 1984.

²⁴⁰ AP, “Congressman and Rights Leaders Arrested at South African Embassy,” November 27, 1984, *NYT*, 20A; “Free South Africa Brief Chronology of Events,” 1984.

²⁴¹ Zein Nakhoda, “U.S. activists and politicians’ campaign at South African Embassy for end to apartheid, 1984-1985,” *Global Nonviolent Action Database*, February 14, 2010, <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/us-activists-and-politicians-campaign-south-african-embassy-end-apartheid-1984-1985>.

South Africa.²⁴² In the weekend following the initial sit-in, the organizers named their group the Free South Africa Movement (FSAM).²⁴³ Overnight, the FSAM made national headlines as daily demonstrations and arrests occurred at the South African embassy. Rosa Parks participated in the sit-in on the 29th anniversary of her arrest on the Birmingham bus. She was once again arrested, this time outside the South African embassy for protesting the apartheid system.²⁴⁴ Reporter Chuck Stone, observing the news from Philadelphia, remarked that the FSAM provided the anti-apartheid movement with “more political oxygen”; it could now raise a “prairie fire.” In saying so, Stone deliberately co-opted a popular conservative metaphor that used to describe Reagan’s ability to rally conservatives behind his policies.²⁴⁵

The Reagan administration’s immediate concern was on maintaining the course for its economic policy and supporting the South African government to salvage its public appearance. Fourie publicly compared the FSAM sit-ins to the siege of the American embassy during the Iran hostage crisis of 1979.²⁴⁶ Reagan officials quickly tried to reassure Fourie. The FSAM participants were simply “the administration’s enemies.” Chester Crocker reaffirmed that constructive engagement was sufficient pressure to prompt change in South Africa, especially in light of the recent successes of regional negotiations.²⁴⁷ With the de-escalation of tension along the border of Namibia and Angola and the initial SADF troop removal in one of the Angolan

²⁴² AP, “Fauntroy calls Protest ‘An Act of Moral Witness’ to Apartheid,” *Boston Globe*, November 23, 1984, 18, ProQuest News and Newspapers.

²⁴³ Free South Africa Brief Chronology of Events,” 1984.

²⁴⁴ UPI, “Rosa Parks demonstrates against South Africa,” *UPI Archives*, December 11, 1984.

²⁴⁵ Chuck Stone, “S. Africa and America’s Conscience,” *Philadelphia Daily News*, November 27, 1984, 2.

²⁴⁶ Robert M. Kimmitt, “Memorandum for Phil Ringdahl from Robert Kimmitt; Secretary Shultz’s Evening Report of Armacost Meeting with South African Ambassador Fourie,” November 29, 1984, South Africa-Working file 10/84-6/86 folder, box 9.2, African Affairs Directorate, National Security Council Records, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

²⁴⁷ Robert M. Kimmitt, “Memorandum for Phil Ringdahl from Robert Kimmitt; Secretary Shultz’s Evening Report of Armacost Meeting with South African Ambassador Fourie,” November 29, 1984

hot-zones, Ondjiva, Crocker argued that the United States' current relationship with South Africa was productive in the peace-making process.²⁴⁸

The US Mission to the UN further defended gradual reform by extending scholarships to Black South African students to study in the United States.²⁴⁹ The increase in admission of Black South African students in American universities promoted a shared goal in investing in Black South African education and the principle of self-help. This investment in Black South African education, the administration argued, was in direct opposition to the Divestment Movement's effort to remove US support completely from South Africa.²⁵⁰ In emphasizing Black education endeavors after 1984, the Reagan administration presented itself as an ally compared to the Divestment Movement's economically radical agenda would only harm Black South Africans.

Further rejecting the pressure from the FSAM, State Department memos emphasized the need to oversee gradual evolutionary change and to minimize the influence of anti-apartheid organizations with communist ties, like the ANC.²⁵¹ On the international stage, the United States Mission to the UN placed doubts on the "high-minded pronouncements" and aspirations of outside observers and the Divestment Movement to gather more international support for economic gradualism.²⁵² The administration attempted to defend its stance on evolutionary change to certain Black resistance leaders not affiliated with the ANC. For example, Archbishop

²⁴⁸ Chester Crocker, "Developments in Southern Africa [Extract of Transcript of a Press Briefing by Chester Crocker, December 3, 1984,]" DNSA, South Africa: The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989.

²⁴⁹ United States Department of State, "Foreign Investment in and Alleged Military Ties with South Africa; Statement of the US Mission to the UN," October 24, 1984, DNSA, South Africa: The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989.

²⁵⁰ George Shultz, "The Role of U.S. Businesses in South Africa [Address by the Secretary of State Shultz,]" March 29, 1984, DNSA, South Africa: The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989.

²⁵¹ United States Department of State, "U.S. African Policy: The Opportunity and Need for a Pro-Western Strategy [U.S. Objectives--Proposal for a New Approach; Southern Africa]," January 1985, DNSA, South Africa: The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989.

²⁵² United States Department of State, "Foreign Investment in and Alleged Military Ties with South Africa; Statement of the US Mission to the UN," October 24, 1984.

Desmond Tutu met with Reagan for the first and only time on December 7th; the meeting garnered little goodwill between the two. Reagan's diary entry after the meeting referred to Tutu as naïve and unaware of the "considerable progress with [the United States'] quiet diplomacy."²⁵³ Just mere weeks after the FSAM sit-ins, Reagan resolutely ignored the changing winds and renewed his commitment to constructive engagement as the sole policy regarding South Africa to the most prominent public Black South African resistance leader.

In managing the concerns on Capitol Hill following the FSAM sit-ins, Reagan's Africa team faced yet another lobbying battle with anti-apartheid organizers. TransAfrica and its FSAM branch organized a list of demands and shared protest tactics with its remote chapter members outside of D.C. Setting up remote branches across the US and capitalizing on the local anti-apartheid efforts, TransAfrica promoted similar sit-ins at South African consulates in many major cities.²⁵⁴ Eventually becoming a "Who's who of American civil rights," the FSAM brought together internationally known celebrities like Harry Belafonte, Stevie Wonder, and tennis star Arthur Ashe, as well as local activists and city officials, all behind a same cause, the end of the apartheid system. These national figures of FSAM amplified the political strain on local officials.²⁵⁵ This local pressure translated once again into pressure on Capitol Hill as Congress continued to discuss sanction legislation. Letter writing campaigns targeted moderate Republicans, asking them to support House sponsored bills like H.R. 1460.²⁵⁶ Senator Edward

²⁵³ Ronald Reagan, "Friday, December 7th, 1984," *White House Diaries*, Public Papers of Ronald Reagan, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

²⁵⁴ TransAfrica, "TransAfrica Launches Free South Africa Movement at Capitol Hill Conference," November 23, 1984, Southern African Solidarity in the U.S. Pacific Northwest Selma Waldman Collection, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

²⁵⁵ Lucia Mouat, "Anti-apartheid protests spread to cities across US," *The Christian Science Monitor*, December 4, 1984.

²⁵⁶ H.R. 1460 prohibited the importation of South African currency and the exportation of computer technology and nuclear-related materials. Washington Office on Africa, "Action Alert: Sanctions Bills Needs Support," March 1985, George M. Houser Collections, AAA, Michigan State University Library and Special Collections.

Kennedy (D-MA) followed the House's own action with his own bipartisan-supported bill, S. 635. The bill included much of the House's bill on import/export restrictions and prohibited new corporate investment in South Africa.²⁵⁷

The Reagan administration and South African lobbyists criticized these bills that they deemed them harmful to the reform process in South Africa. South Africa, quick to preserve a stable economic relationship with the United States, spent over USD\$1 million in pursuing new conservative lobbyists, especially those tied to the far-right and the emerging "New Right," to carry out a message of gradual reform.²⁵⁸ Both South Africa and the Reagan administration used Black conservative figures and lobbyists, like North Carolina businessman William Keyes as a member of the South African funded International Public Affairs Consultants, Inc. to convey their message.²⁵⁹ Conservative think-tanks like the Heritage Foundation continued to support constructive engagement. They accused the Divestment Campaign of depicting a skewed image of Afrikanerdom and of ignoring the complex details of peacemaking. Heritage Foundation researcher Stuart Butler stated that complete divestment would only make hardline Afrikaners more stubborn against reform and force them to turn to other anti-communist allies, like France or Israel, for economic support should the US divest.²⁶⁰ Conservative news outlets acted as an echo chamber for the Reagan administration. William Buckley Jr.'s *Firing Line* frequently

²⁵⁷ *Idem*; US Congress, House, Committee on Banking, and Urban Affairs, Anti-Apartheid Act of 1985, S. 635, 99th Cong.

²⁵⁸ Anne Newman with Africa Fund, "Pretoria's US Lobby Tied to 'New Right,'" January 1985, Africa Fund Publication, JSTOR Struggles for Freedom: Southern Africa. Ron Nixon's *Selling Apartheid: South Africa's Global Propaganda War* (2016) goes into great depth on the South African government's efforts on maintaining a favorable image on the international stage, especially with the United States, seen especially in the 1970s and 1980s.

²⁵⁹ *Idem*.

²⁶⁰ Stuart M. Butler, "An Investment Strategy to Undermine Apartheid in South Africa," *The Heritage Foundation*, April 30, 1985, Heritage Foundation Backgrounder No. 427.

hosted South African allies who opposed divestment leaders to gather support for the Reagan administration.²⁶¹

The South African government sponsored South African Foundation trips for conservative congressional members. During these trips, congressional members toured South African businesses and relayed the message that divestment or sanctions was harmful to Black South Africans.²⁶² Anti-apartheid organizations were quick to attack the South African Foundation as “an apologist organization” that carefully curated a favorable image of South Africa on these congressional visits.²⁶³ Pretoria fostered similar conversations between South African corporations with non-affiliated US businesses. John C. Hall, a senior executive at the South African industrial management corporation Barlow Rand, sent over thirty letters to US corporations urging them to support constructive engagement. Hall argued that apartheid was “slowly but surely being dismantled,” but cautioned business executives against the quick pace of revolution that would end the “hopes of peaceful existence.”²⁶⁴ This yet again mirrored the continued Botha’s administration’s messaging of gradual reform led by the apartheid government. Reagan and South African officials’ appeals were insufficient to counter the growing anti-apartheid demands of the American people.

News coverage of the rising anti-apartheid message made Reagan staffers’ task of maintaining economic gradualism with South Africa difficult. US ambassador to South Africa Herman Nickel commented on this rising tide of anti-apartheid messaging alongside the news coverage of state violence. In an interview with the *Time*, he stated “that images of repression

²⁶¹ William F. Buckley, Jr., “What Is the Challenge of South Africa?,” April 1, 1985, Firing Line broadcast records, Hoover Institution Archives.

²⁶² Anne Newman with Africa Fund, “Pretoria’s US Lobby Tied to ‘New Right,’” January 1985; William E. Gibson, “Shaw’s Visit to South Africa Stirs up Controversy,” *The Sun Sentinel*, January 6, 1985.

²⁶³ William E. Gibson, “Shaw’s Visit to South Africa Stirs up Controversy.”

²⁶⁴ United States Department of State, “Divestment: Barlow Rand South Africa Sends Letter,” May 25, 1985, DNSA, South Africa: The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989.

will always blot the more complicated story of reform.”²⁶⁵ American reporters frequently questioned the feasibility of Reagan’s continued course of action for gradualism. *New York Times* reporter Bernard Gwertzman claimed the administration had difficulties making its opposition to apartheid “credible” against public demands for sanctions while the Black townships continue to face state-sponsored violence.²⁶⁶ A *New York Times* writer noted that the current movement on the Hill was indicative that “Americans [were] no longer accept[ing] the...pities called ‘constructive engagement.’”²⁶⁷ Growing discontent equally came from the business community tired of the rhetoric and political upheaval. A few key South African businesses shifted their views and called for the ANC ban repealed to encourage reform.²⁶⁸ Barlow Rand’s CEO, Mike Rosholt, accused Botha of shuffling his feet towards reform.²⁶⁹ By the late summer of 1984, the Botha regime felt pressure from the ever-growing opposition from all directions: the anti-apartheid apparatus, Washington, and now its own business community.

Even the Reagan administration recognized the pressure growing from its own conservative allies on the Hill. While Reagan defended South Africa against the legislative sanctions, he also wrote to Botha in September 1985 advising him to take bold initiatives to open dialogue with Black leaders in South Africa.²⁷⁰ Conscious that apartheid currently “occupied the attention of the American public as never before,” Reagan argued that opening the dialogue would keep criticism of the current United States-South African relationship at bay.²⁷¹

²⁶⁵ Pico Iyer, “South Africa: Something Burning Inside,” *TIME*, March 5, 1985.

²⁶⁶ Central Intelligence Agency, “There Time to Talk Apartheid?” *NYT* rpt., July 28, 1985.

²⁶⁷ “The Public Makes Apartheid Policy,” *NYT*, June 9, 1985, 22.

²⁶⁸ Steve Mufson, “White Reaction: Businessmen Pressure South Africa’s Botha to Modify Apartheid,” *The Wall Street Journal*, September 13, 1985, 1, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

²⁶⁹ *Idem*.

²⁷⁰ Ronald Reagan, “Letter from Ronald Reagan to Mr. President,” September 6, 1985.

²⁷¹ *Idem*.

The ‘New Manifesto’ and Public Management of Anti-Apartheid Sentiment

Anti-apartheid organizations used their economic argument against the Reagan administration to demand change in the current South African policy. South Africa, a state in internal turmoil, recognized that the standard policy justification for its gradualist reform—on the basis of anti-communism defense against rising Marxist neighbors—was no longer a justifiable position for the larger international community. Just like Ronald Reagan’s team, the South African government was aware of the perception and optics of its public decision-making. Botha’s response to these demands for reform, however, was unexpected to the Reagan administration and energizing to the anti-apartheid apparatus.

On August 15, 1985 President Botha addressed 2,500 people at the National Party Natal Congress opening in Durban, South Africa. Over 200 million others watched worldwide as Botha outlined and defended his “manifesto for a new South Africa.”²⁷² Everyone, including members of Botha’s own cabinet, expected an outline of progressive reforms. Yet, Botha professed to the world that to “destroy White South Africa and [its] influence” would lead the country into “faction strife, chaos, and poverty.”²⁷³ Botha dug his heels further and defended the apartheid regime. He accused outside observers like the United States of being out of touch to the reality in South Africa.²⁷⁴ Botha, in his view, believed Mandela promoted violence instead of a true reform process.

Liberal South African critics of the administration argued that Botha’s speech “widen[ed] the gap in perception” between South Africa’s allies, its critics, and the true intention of the

²⁷² P W Botha, “Address by State President P. W. Botha at the Opening of the National Party Natal Congress Durban,” O’Malley Archives, August 15, 1985, South African Consulate General, New York, New York, Appendix A; Ben Bradlee, Jr, “Botha says he will bring change at his own pace,” *Boston Globe*, August 16, 1985, 10.

²⁷³ P W Botha, “Address by State President P. W. Botha at the Opening of the National Party Natal Congress Durban.”

²⁷⁴ P W Botha, “Address by State President P. W. Botha at the Opening of the National Party Natal Congress Durban.”

Botha regime on what reforms were necessary to improve race relations in South Africa.²⁷⁵ Alister Sparks of the *Washington Post* wrote on liberal Afrikaners own confusion over the conflicting statements from Foreign Minister Pik Botha on South Africa's willingness to withdrawal from Namibia. Yet, President P. W. Botha's speech—meant to outline the forthcoming legislative agenda for the year—had no mention of peaceful negotiations with FLS.²⁷⁶ An Afrikaner History Professor at the University of Cape Town, Hermann Giliomee described Botha's speech as “an attempt by the Afrikaners to find the secret of sharing power without losing control” in the face of growing liberal Afrikaner domestic pressure.²⁷⁷ The press dubbed Botha's speech as the “Rubicon speech” and Afrikaners' last stand to racial change. Botha, with invoking the historical metaphor, attempted to capitalize on the Afrikaner national pride by asserting its control over the country and its people. Botha proclaimed to be “crossing the Rubicon” on a new South Africa, based entirely on of white-led change, where his government was unwilling to balk at reform demands. The speech sent shock waves through the United States and allies.

Struggling to understand the dramatic shift from Pretoria, Reagan officials shared the immediate US reaction of supporting continued and open negotiations between all relevant parties, except communist-influences groups like the ANC. While aware of growing talks on Capitol Hill for sanctions, McFarlane and his deputy John Poindexter discussed with the State Department on how to best seize the public's attention on sanctions in light of Botha's speech. According to historian Robert Massie, it was in response to the public backlash that the National

²⁷⁵ Allister Sparks, “Reality of S. Africa's Apartheid Underlies Rhetoric of Reform,” *The Washington Post*, August 20, 1985, A1, rpt. in the Episcopal Churchpeople for a Free Southern Africa's newsletter, August 25, 1985, the Elizabeth S. Landis collection, National Archives of Namibia, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

²⁷⁶ *Idem.*

²⁷⁷ *Idem.*

Security Council and the Africa team met to create the list of sanctions that would be a part of Ronald Reagan's upcoming Executive Order 12532.²⁷⁸ Executive Order 12532 became the first executive sanction leveled against South Africa since 1960. Publicly, McFarlane's statement called on Botha to clarify his language while reiterating the United States' support for ongoing negotiations between all relevant parties in South Africa.²⁷⁹ The day after the Rubicon Speech, Chester Crocker argued that constructive engagement was the only productive policy with South Africa. Crocker did, however, state that the release of Mandela and removal of influx control—the passbooks and the Orderly Movement Bills—were critical to the US to support, as these measures would be definitive evidence of Botha's willingness to reform. In attempting to downplay Botha's fiery speech, Crocker argued that the "Rubicon" for South Africa was not the possibility of apartheid ending itself as it would bound to take place, but *how* and *when* these pivotal reforms would begin.²⁸⁰

Botha's Rubicon speech did little to garner sympathy from Americans. Rather, Botha's fevered speech emboldened the anti-apartheid activists' desire for sanctions and aggravated legislative tension in Washington, D.C. According to a secret NSC memo, the Reagan administration anticipated that "the speech [would] do little to quiet domestic and international criticism."²⁸¹ Following their own criticism South Africa's state of emergency declared in July, anti-apartheid activists continued their demands of Black citizenship as a necessary reform to

²⁷⁸ Massie, *Loosing the Bonds: The United States and South Africa in the Apartheid Year*, 587.

²⁷⁹ Robert McFarlane, "Statement by Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs McFarlane on Apartheid in South Africa," August 15, 1985, Public Papers of Ronald Reagan August 1985, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

²⁸⁰ William F. Martin, "Memorandum for Phil Ringdahl from Robert Kimmitt; Secretary Shultz's Evening Report of Crocker's Commonwealth Club Speech," August 16, 1985, South Africa-Working file 10/84-6/86 folder, box 9.2, African Affairs Directorate, National Security Council Records, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

²⁸¹ Executive Secretariat, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, "Current Reports, August 16, 1985, South Africa: Botha's Reform Speech Vague and Evasive," August 16, 1985, South Africa-Working file 10/84-6/86 folder, box 9.2, African Affairs Directorate, National Security Council Records, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

ease tensions in South Africa. Without reform, the racist policies would continue and so would resistance.²⁸²

The continued pressure from anti-apartheid activists in September 1985 echoed the seventy-seven percent of Black South African workers who also supported US sanctions against the South African government.²⁸³ United States corporations, in response to this pressure, followed suit almost immediately. Within weeks of Botha's Rubicon speech, some US banks withdrew over \$4.1 billion from South Africa. *Washington Post* reporter Erin MacLellan observed the move as indicative of protecting US business interest against the ongoing political unrest in South Africa. However, many banks only temporarily halted their trade with South Africa. CitiCorp and Morgan Guaranty stipulated that they would resume business with the South African government once genuine progress for the "political, economic, and social conditions" improvement of all races took place.²⁸⁴ With the shifting business interest in the United States and growing support of anti-apartheid activists, the Reagan administration responded in an effort to quell criticism.

Reagan's NSC followed the model of National Security Decision Directive 77 to maintain a favorable image of the President's foreign policy. Internal memos claimed that the most important element of the NSC's South African diplomacy was an "appropriate US public stance" on apartheid as it was "a vital element in selling [its] policy both domestically and

²⁸² Coalition for Illinois' Divestment from South Africa, "CIDS Update #10," July/August 1985, Private collection of Basil Clunie, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

²⁸³ Peter Godwin and David Lipsey, "Sanctions: Black Support Grows," *The Sunday Times*, August 25, 1985, rpt. by ACOA, Private collection of David Wiley and Christine Root, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

²⁸⁴ Erin MacLellan, "U.S. Banks Restrict Loans to South Africa," *The Washington Post*, August 18, 1985, A21, rpt. in the Episcopal Churchpeople for a Free Southern Africa's newsletter, August 25, 1985, the Elizabeth S. Landis collection, National Archives of Namibia, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

internationally.”²⁸⁵ On September 7, 1985, Reagan began his fully committed efforts to public policy targeted South Africa specifically with the new NSDD 187. The SPG’s role specific to South Africa included promoting US businesses investing in Black South African development and limiting “the imposition of new legislative sanctions against South Africa.”²⁸⁶ The US embassy in South Africa, however, reported growing discontent about the United States’ inaction against increased economic pressure.²⁸⁷ This inaction made it difficult to “sell [the United States’] message,” as Black South Africans increasingly viewed constructive engagement as a policy “overloaded with carrots” over substantive pressure to reform.²⁸⁸

With harsher congressional action in the pipeline, the Reagan administration preemptively sought to craft an executive-led economic policy on South Africa. On September 9, 1985, Reagan announced the rollout of Executive Order 12532. Reagan’s original speech at the signing of EO 12532 admitted that, “after much soul-searching,” the administration was taking hardline action “against the machinery of apartheid” to economically dissociate the US from apartheid.²⁸⁹ The phrase “soul-searching” never made it to the final draft; instead, Reagan claimed that he would implement these sanctions in an effort to “develop a bipartisan basis of consensus,” on US policy towards South Africa.²⁹⁰ Yet, later in the speech, Reagan claimed that US policy towards South Africa could only come in carefully structured terms to maintain

²⁸⁵ Robert McFarlane, “Meeting with the National Security Council,” July 16, 1985, South Africa-Working file 10/84-6/86 folder, box 9.2, African Affairs Directorate, National Security Council Records, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

²⁸⁶ Ronald Reagan, “National Security Decision Directive 187: United States Policy Towards South Africa,” September 7, 1985, NSDD Digitized Reference Copies, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

²⁸⁷ Richard Barkley, “Challenges and Risks of Public Diplomacy in SA,” September 9, 1985, DNSA, South Africa: The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989.

²⁸⁸ Richard Barkley, “Challenges and Risks of Public Diplomacy in SA.”

²⁸⁹ John G. Roberts, “Presidential Remarks: South Africa, Monday, September 9, 1985,” September 9, 1985, Roberts, John G. Files, JGR/South Africa Sanctions folder, Office of Counsel to the President, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

²⁹⁰ Ronald Reagan, “Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session with Reporters on Signing the Executive Order Prohibiting Trade and Certain Other Transactions Involving South Africa,” September 9, 1985, Public Papers of Ronald Reagan September 1985, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

peace.²⁹¹ Reagan's team was quick to state that the executive order was not a shift from constructive engagement. Instead, it was a continuation of a longstanding measure to pressure reform of apartheid.²⁹²

The executive order offered a moderate level of sanctions against the South African government. Included in EO 12532 was a ban on computer sales, non-health related nuclear commerce, and South African arms.²⁹³ The executive order's sanctions allowed Cabinet level officials, including the Treasury Secretary, to make exceptions to certain South African trading partners and maintain large scale economic engagements. To distance the administration from a hotly contested and coined phrase, the Reagan administration did not use the terms 'Sullivan Principles,' but "fair labor principles."²⁹⁴ This distinction in semantics had significant enforcement consequences. No longer were the Principles guiding the US Treasury and State Department's regulation of permitted US businesses working with South Africa.

By eliminating a "cumbersome new bureaucracy obstacle, the State and Treasury Departments no longer had to check corporate regulations of Sullivan Principle signatories."²⁹⁵ In hindsight, the response from the Reagan administration was not unexpected—for even while Reagan supported the Principles, the principles were seldom enforced. Further evidence that Reagan did not intent to implement massive economic pressure was that the executive order lacked any indication that future sanctions would be implemented should Pretoria fail to improve labor standards.

²⁹¹ *Idem.*

²⁹² "South Africa: Presidential Actions, Summary of Presidential Actions," September 8, 1985, South Africa Press folder, box 9.3, African Affairs Directorate, National Security Council Records, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

²⁹³ Ronald Reagan, "Executive Order 12532 of September 9, 1985; Prohibiting trade and certain other transactions involving South Africa," Code of Federal Regulations, 387.

²⁹⁴ *Idem.*

²⁹⁵ "South Africa: Presidential Actions, Differences between the Bill and EO," September 8, 1985.

The preemptive nature of the EO against mounting congressional reactions paralleled Reagan's earlier economic defense of South African engagement in the 1982 Congressional hearings. Similar to the justification for continued ARMSCOR equipment trades in 1982, Reagan officials crafted an early administrative messaging campaign on the basis of economics and anti-communists sentiments. Many reporters assumed that the executive order was an effort to save the President from "the possible embarrassment" of bending to congressional will on a foreign policy matter.²⁹⁶ Reagan's South Africa policy began and continued to be a policy justifying the United States' relationship with South Africa on the grounds of national security and economic interests of Cold War. Yet, when anti-apartheid organizations gained national attention from their own anti-apartheid economic rhetoric, US public demands for change in South Africa emerged. Once the well-established support for Reagan fell with the rapid decline of support from US corporations, the Reagan White House changed its diplomacy with South Africa and slightly shifted its economic message with EO 12532's minimal sanctions against South Africa.

Reactions to Executive Order 12532

The immediate response to EO 12532 by anti-apartheid activists with their continued pressure on Capitol Hill and South Africa's gradual reforms, fostered yet another political argument over sanctions against Pretoria. Instead of promoting large-scale sanctions that he felt would harm the people of South Africa, Reagan asserted the need for continued United States "active engagement" with Pretoria.²⁹⁷ *The Christian Science Monitor* reporter Charlotte

²⁹⁶ Bernard Weinraub, "Reagan, in Reversal, Orders Sanctions on South Africa."

²⁹⁷ Ronald Reagan, "Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session with Reporters on Signing the Executive Order Prohibiting Trade and Certain Other Transactions Involving South Africa," September 9, 1985, Public Papers of Ronald Reagan August 1985, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

Saikowski claimed that the executive order indicated the administration continuing practice of “quiet diplomacy” through constructive engagement.²⁹⁸

While Senate Majority leader Bob Dole commended the President for his actions, several moderate Republicans warned against remaining economically friendly with South Africa.²⁹⁹ Jerry Falwell, a prominent conservative Christian televangelist, engendered this shift in the majority of conservatives when he featured Senator Helms on his nightly *Falwell Live* show in defense of the executive order. Falwell and Helms reframed the sanctions argument in “communism versus freedom” terms and encouraged viewers to support Pretoria’s efforts to censor so called communist Black South Africans for the sake of South Africa’s national security. In tying all Black resistance leaders to communism, Falwell and Helms falsely painted Nobel Peace Prize recipient, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, as communism to attack the anti-apartheid movement.³⁰⁰ This red-baiting led seventeen Republicans to speak out against Falwell’s continued attempts to discredit Tutu as a communist sympathizer, incapable of negotiating with the Pretoria government.³⁰¹ These Republicans further claimed that Falwell and Helms’ rhetoric cloaked apartheid in “the robe of Christianity” as defenders against alleged communist leaders and was an abomination to Christian values of human rights.³⁰²

Members of Congress frequently used economics and morality to support their different positions on South African sanctions. Moderate Republicans and center Democrats claimed that the executive order was “chock-full of loopholes” and fell short of putting effective economic

²⁹⁸ Charlotte Saikowski, “Reagan orders sanctions on S. Africa,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, September 9, 1985, ProQuest Newspapers.

²⁹⁹ UPI, “Reagan Backs Down, Orders Limited S. Africa Sanction Measures Like Those He Had Threatened to Veto,” *The Los Angeles Times*, September 9, 1985, ProQuest Newspapers; Charlotte Saikowski, “Reagan orders sanctions on S. Africa,” September 9, 1985.

³⁰⁰ Falwell Live, “Falwell and Helms, 1985,” September 15, 1985, University of California-Berkeley Center for Right-Wing Studies, Record No. 353, Call No. 128

³⁰¹ UPI, “17 Republicans in Congress Assail Falwell Over Apartheid,” *The Los Angeles Times*, August 25, 1985.

³⁰² UPI, “17 Republicans in Congress Assail Falwell Over Apartheid.”

pressure on the apartheid regime.³⁰³ Despite the administration's effort to stall the sanctions debate on the Hill, some Congress members were unsatisfied with Reagan's preemptive response. Republican Senate Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee Richard Lugar described the executive order as only a "second-best solution" compared to bipartisan bills that implemented sanctions against Pretoria.³⁰⁴ Previous bipartisan support for sanctions in an August 1985 bill—H.R. 1460—created a House-Senate joint Conference report that called for an expansion of sanctions against South Africa.³⁰⁵

In defense of the Reagan administration, far-right conservatives in the Senate worked with Reagan staffers to limit the support for H.R. 1460. Senator Helms and Dole tabled all discussions on H.R. 1460 with a filibuster to allow Reagan to sign EO 12532 into force.³⁰⁶ Chester Crocker's later recollections confirmed that EO 12532 was a preemptive motion to limit Congressional control and input over the sanctions debate. In recognizing the growing support for H.R. 1460, Reagan's Executive Order 12532 allowed the foreign policy apparatus to select the bill's most tolerable elements while "scrap[ing] the less acceptable parts."³⁰⁷

Anti-apartheid lobbyists described Reagan's executive order as a policy out of touch with the hardships in South Africa. Citing the order as a "coup" on foreign policy, TransAfrica urged its members to continue their pressure on elected officials, local and national.³⁰⁸ Lobbyists at the Washington Office on Africa (WOA) used their close relationship

³⁰³ UPI, "Reagan Backs Down, Orders Limited S. Africa Sanction Measures Like Those He Had Threatened to Veto," September 9, 1985.

³⁰⁴ Charlotte Saikowski, "Reagan orders sanctions on S. Africa," September 9, 1985.

³⁰⁵ US Congress, House, Anti-Apartheid Action Act of 1985, H.R. 1460, 99th Cong.

³⁰⁶ US Congress, US Senate, Committee on Rules and Administration, "Selected Outstanding Senate Filibusters, 1938-2008," Limitation of Debate in the Senate of the United States and Legislative History of Paragraph 2 of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the United States Senate (Cloture Rule), 76, 2011, 112th Cong., 1st sess.

³⁰⁷ Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa*, 277.

³⁰⁸ TransAfrica, "Reagan's Executive Orders Sanctions: TransAfrica News Vol. 4, No. 1," Fall 1985, Private collection of David Wiley and Christine Root, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

with the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) and other congressional leaders to advocate for increased sanctions against South Africa.³⁰⁹ The WOA accused Reagan of usurping legislative power to create weaker sanctions against Pretoria while also using loopholes, like the Treasury's discretion on trading partners, to continue economic engagement with the country.³¹⁰ This bottom-up pressure from anti-apartheid leaders who pushed Congress to reconsider the bipartisan sanctions recommendations per H.R. 1460.

Historian Rasmus Søndergaard argues that the executive order was the White House's adapting to the "chang[ing] political reality."³¹¹ Anti-apartheid activists' efforts shaped this new political reality where the previously shrugged off economics sanctions, became the expected policy with South Africa. Following EO 12532, anti-apartheid activists continued to criticize Reagan for the weak executive action on sanctions. In attempting to limit action from Congress, the Reagan White House elevated the Pretoria sanctions debate to national attention with EO 12532. Despite the nightly coverage of the Free South Africa Movement consistent picketing of the South African embassy and consulates in the United States, in August 1985 fifty-eight percent of Americans had little to no knowledge of the apartheid situation.³¹² Soon after the announcement of EO 12532, the American people spoke about sanctions against apartheid over the dinner tables and in the workplace. American Committee on Africa's research writer, William Minter, argued that the executive order as the first time that the sanctions debate entered

³⁰⁹ Washington Office on Africa with Jean Sindab, "Weak Executive Order Demands Stronger Sanctions," October 1, 1985, Private collection of David Wiley and Christine Root, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

³¹⁰ Washington Office on Africa, "Comparison Analysis of President Reagan's Executive Order and the House/Senate Conference Committee Compromise regarding South Africa Sanctions," September 18, 1985, Miloanne Hecathorn papers, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

³¹¹ Søndergaard, *Reagan, Congress, and Human Rights*, 195.

³¹² AP, "Most Americans in CBS Poll Know Little About Apartheid," *NYT*, September 1, 1985, 17.

“mainstream US politics.”³¹³ According to Crocker, this discussion on sanctions in the American home increased the pressure for both progress in South African reform and regional peace negotiations.

The anti-apartheid agenda for sanctions overcame the Reagan administration’s economic gradualism in popularity. The executive order, a moderate sanction legislation, reflected the growing demands from Congress and anti-apartheid organizations for the administration to do more to influence change in South Africa than the policy of constructive engagement. Chapter Five follows the final years of the Reagan administration and their efforts to control their relationship with South Africa—using regional peace accords and ongoing dialogue with Black leaders in South Africa as evidence towards progress. These steps toward progress were, however, done only in defense against anti-apartheid criticism and only after years of continued friendly relations with the apartheid government.

³¹³ William Minter, “The Cold War meets the wind of change,” September 30, 1985, American Committee on Africa Collection, JSTOR: Struggles for Freedom: Southern Africa. Minter reiterated this sentiment in a September 2020 interview with the author.

CHAPTER 5

DELIBERATE REFRAMING OF US POLICY ON SOUTH AFRICA, SEPTEMBER 1985-
DECEMBER 1988

Introduction

Reagan's final years in office came with various foreign and domestic policy struggles. Aside from the Divestment Movement, the Iran-Contra Affair dominated news headlines and American attention. Developing diplomatic efforts with Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union continued to improve Reagan's anti-communist image, while easing tensions with the superpower.³¹⁴ At the Washington and Moscow Summits of 1987 and 1988, Reagan and Gorbachev's efforts towards nuclear non-proliferation encouraged more cooperative de-escalation.³¹⁵ Domestically, Reagan addressed the AIDS epidemic that he largely ignored in his first term while the US stock market saw improved gains.³¹⁶ Larger international aid efforts, including HIV/AIDS relief and famine aid, raised public awareness about the African continent. Anti-apartheid activists used the language of anti-communism and support for international aid—to raise awareness about sanctions against Pretoria.

Following marginal economic pressures imposed by Reagan's Executive Order 12532, the debate over sanctions made the national headlines.³¹⁷ Reagan's administration attempted to quell public criticism with a public campaign to curate and protect the image of the US-South

³¹⁴ Additional Soviet domestic reforms in the late 1980s were also a contributing factor the easing of tensions with the United States, Gorbachev oversaw several restructurings of the government including glasnost and perestroika that encouraged US officials.

³¹⁵ William M. Knoblauch, *Nuclear Freeze in a Cold War: The Reagan Administration, Cultural Activism, and the End of Arms Race* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2017).

³¹⁶ Jennifer Brier, *Infectious Ideas: U.S. Political Responses to the AIDS Crisis* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 80. Brier stakes that the Reagan administration largely ignored the AIDS crisis to maintain their conservative coalition then framed it in the context of a public health crisis.

³¹⁷ Bernard Weinraub, "Reagan, in Reversal, Orders Sanctions on South Africa," *NYT*, September 10, 1985, A1, ProQuest Newspapers.

Africa relationship. The National Security Council (NSC) established the South African Working Group to foster collaboration between the administration, pro-democratic organizations, and conservative foundations. The South African Working Group worked to counter the “negative western media coverage” that criticized the administration.³¹⁸ Yet, the efforts of the South African Working Group failed to effectively curb anti-apartheid sentiments across the United States or to maintain limited sanctions on Capitol Hill.

Public Diplomacy Maneuvering

As Americans in the mid-1980s “discovered the existence of apartheid,” the Reagan administration prioritized public opinion over policy on the sanctions debate.³¹⁹ Reagan officials like Crocker believed that the recent American awareness of the reality of the South African humanitarian concerns was because “black opposition... found the organizational means to mobilize an effective movement of resistance” against the policy of constructive engagement.³²⁰ Crocker characterized the sanctions debate as political theater and detracted from the substantive work of the State Department. Yet State Department officials relied on news outlets to bring the policy of constructive engagement to the American people to curb the growing power of anti-apartheid organizations’ influence foreign policy criticism.

State Department officials used newspaper columns, radio stations, and television network as instruments to improve the Department’s public image. Crocker himself frequented public broadcasting shows to defend constructive engagement as a dual policy of internal change

³¹⁸ Nicholas Platt, “Southern African Public Diplomacy [Minutes of International Political Committee Meeting of September 20, 1985 Are Attached],” September 25, 1985, Digital National Security Archive (DNSA), South Africa: The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989.

³¹⁹ Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa*, 264.

³²⁰ *Idem*.

and regional peace building. In a *MacNeil/Lehrer PBS NewsHour* interview, Crocker claimed that incremental reduction of South Africa's aggression in Namibia was evidence enough of constructive engagement's success. He later defended the executive order as an important step in clarifying the administration's policy of constructive engagement without destabilizing the South Africa economy.³²¹

This public media campaign extended beyond American-based media outlets. US ambassador Herman Nickel maintained frequent public appearances on the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and gave interviews to both *Afrikaner* and *Black* newspapers as a means to influence the perception of South Africans on US policies.³²² Reflecting anti-apartheid demands for power-sharing between white and Black South Africans, Crocker urged the State Department to engage with the Black community in South Africa. The State Department allocated funding to outreach programs in existing embassies to focus on Black community development. In addition to furthering the administration's conservative principle of self-help, these outreach programs included the partnering of American firms with Black presses to promote the Sullivan Principles, assisting Black-owned South African businesses with small foreign aid packages, and expanding the State Department's privately funded Operation Crossroads Africa (OCA) scholarship program to any South African students. These outreach programs served to strengthen the United States' "credibility as a catalyst for peaceful change."³²³ These efforts attempted to reframe United States' involvement in South Africa away from the strategic resources, anti-communist justification. ORA was meant to emphasize

³²¹ "The MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour," September 9, 1985, NewsHour Productions, American Archive of Public Broadcasting (GBH and the Library of Congress), Boston, MA and Washington, DC, <http://americanarchive.org/catalog/cpb-aacip-507-4b2x34n68t>.

³²² United States Embassy, South Africa, "Implementing Enhanced Embassy Public Outreach and Political Reporting Capacity," September 30, 1985, DNSA, South Africa: The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989.

³²³ Richard Barkley, "Challenges and Risks of Public Diplomacy in SA," September 9, 1985, DNSA, South Africa: The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989.

Reagan's long-term investment in the South African people. As such, the State Department continued to promote economics as the means of monitoring change in Pretoria. The intended effect was twofold: increasing public awareness of non-sanction alternatives and improving public relations with Black South African leaders.

The officials of the NSC established the South African Working Group under National Security Decision Directive 187 in early September 1985.³²⁴ The South African Working Group included Crocker and his State Department assistants, NSC Advisor Robert McFarlane, members of USIA, as well as several US ambassadors to FLS. At the first meeting of the Working Group, held fifteen days after the executive order, they assigned various tasks and goals to its different members. White House Cabinet Secretary Al Kingon requested that all cabinet secretaries give speeches related to South African diplomacy within the next four months to ensure positive administration-wide support for continued engagement with South Africa. US Ambassador to Zimbabwe Dave Miller worked through the President's Office of Public Liaison to set up several favorable interviews with Reagan staffers over the next several months to encourage continued US economic engagement. Vice President George H. W. Bush facilitated further public support for economic engagement in several press meetings with Sullivan Principles signatory companies.³²⁵

These projects of South African Working Group indicate a massive bureaucratic effort to carefully preserve Reagan's policy gradualism reform against rising public criticism. The Working Group's comprehensive efforts worked to insulate current US policy against the

³²⁴ Ronald Reagan, "National Security Decision Directive 187: United States Policy Towards South Africa," September 7, 1985, NSDD Digitized Reference Copies, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library. The bureaucratic background of NSDD 187 came from NSDD 77 that created the broad focus Special Planning Group for public diplomacy in foreign relations in 1983 as mentioned in Chapter Three.

³²⁵ Nicholas Platt, "Southern African Public Diplomacy [Minutes of International Political Committee Meeting of September 20, 1985 Are Attached]."

political whims of popular support. One of The South African Working Group's goals was to create enough favorable media campaigns to quell the anti-apartheid perspective on the air waves. The South African Working Group best epitomizes the Reagan administration's efforts to improve the domestic messaging of constructive engagement as a viable policy over increased sanctions on Pretoria.

Meanwhile, anti-apartheid activists continued to use television and public campaigns to spread their oppositional message. The WOA echoed the sentiments of Bishop Tutu in saying that Reagan's recommendation to engage Black leaders was "too little, too late."³²⁶ By December 1985, the South African police killed over 850 township protesters.³²⁷ Television journalism brought images of apartheid rule into the homes of Americans with increasing coverage from September 1985 through 1986 as awareness of aid efforts in the African continent expanded.³²⁸ In January 1985, dozens of celebrities recorded the popular song "We are the World" as an effort to raise funds to help famine-stricken Ethiopia. Similarly, in July, the "Live Aid" fundraising concert featured headlining rock stars spreading news about the issue. With over \$100 million raised worldwide, "Live Aid" and "We are the World" gave rise to a new role of Americans who used their dollar to advocate for change in US foreign policy.³²⁹ *New York Times* journalist John Corry observed that television's increased coverage of humanitarian crises and violence on the African continent informed America's own growth in advocacy for international aid and

³²⁶ Washington Office on Africa, "Anti- Apartheid Congressional Legislative Strategy Paper," October 8, 1985, Private collection of David Wiley and Christine Root, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

³²⁷ AP, "Business Protests on Apartheid Grow," December 2, 1985, *NYT*, 22D.

³²⁸ In several mid-1980s, public campaigns and fundraising concerts to aid in the famines of Ethiopia and the AIDS crisis across the continent also aided bringing news of the African continent to the American people.

³²⁹ Samuel G. Freedman, "Live Aid and the Woodstock Nation," July 18, 1985, *NYT*, 19C; Alex de Waal, "The Humanitarian Carnival: A Celebrity Vogue," *World Affairs* 171, no. 2 (Fall 2008): 43-55. Many organizers of the "Live Aid" concert referred to it as Woodstock II for rock artist's new take on music as an avenue of activism and international aid fundraising.

reform.³³⁰ This growth of advocacy matched the local efforts of Divestment Movement chapters which pressured the US home offices of companies operating in South Africa to divest.

The Reagan staffers' efforts to curb divestment talk and support US business in South Africa also included encouraging the conservative practices from private businesses. In late 1985, nearly eighty US corporations, including General Motors, Fluor Corporation, and Mobil Corporation formed the United States Corporate Council on South Africa.³³¹ As an independent business organization, the US Corporate Council on South Africa's hoped to promote the Sullivan Principles as the only economically viable reform of apartheid. However, private memos between Chester Crocker and George Shultz speak of the administration's encouragement to form of the US Corporate Council. The US Corporate Council worked to ensure private business support of Reagan's minimal sanctions with South Africa and corporate resistance to divestment.³³² In *Selling Apartheid: South Africa's Global Propaganda War*, journalist Ron Nixon argued that the NSC urged Sullivan Principles signatories, like those of the US Corporate Council, to resist divestment talks.³³³

Several anti-apartheid leaders criticized the Corporate Council's delayed and weak position in Pretoria. Jennifer Davis, the Executive Director for the ACOA, said that "there's a crisis in South Africa, and there isn't any time left for [these companies] to carry out their very carefully paced programs" of reform.³³⁴ TransAfrica director Randall Robinson, in a special interview with *The Black Scholar*, recalled the local efforts for divestment in cities and states. Robinson credited local efforts as evidence of an inevitable change where "pressure [was

³³⁰ John Corry, "TV's Coverage of South Africa," November 5, 1985, *NYT*, 22C.

³³¹ Barnaby J. Feder, "New Group Voices Opposition," December 2, 1985, *NYT*, 8D.

³³² Ron Nixon, *Selling Apartheid: South Africa's Global Propaganda War* (London, United Kingdom: Pluto Press, 2016), 129.

³³³ Ron Nixon, *Selling Apartheid: South Africa's Global Propaganda War*.

³³⁴ Nicholas D. Kristof, "U.S. Companies Bid to End Apartheid," September 22, 1985, *NYT*, 20.

applied] on those corporations [still involved with South Africa] to accelerate their departure.”³³⁵

With the new focus of US sanctions on “the specific objectives and at what pace,” Robinson outlined the next steps for the anti-apartheid activists was implementing more economic pressure on Pretoria.³³⁶

News coverage inundated the US population with image of violence against resistance groups in South African townships. The South African Institute of Race Relations conducted a study in 1985 and claimed that violence in South Africa was in response to the “unprecedented levels of intensity” from Black resistance.³³⁷ This heightened resistance in South Africa was part of the larger plan by Black South Africans to organize massive resistance within the townships and overwhelm the security apparatus. By doing so, Black South Africans would “the townships ungovernable... and apartheid unworkable everywhere.”³³⁸ Exiled African National Congress President Oliver Tambo outlined this Black resistance goal to show Americans and the rest of Pretoria’s allies the inherent violence of the apartheid system.

The increased media attention on the unrest coupled with the local activities of anti-apartheid activists criticizing Reagan were ultimately successful at rising American awareness to the problems in being in supporting a regime. In a November 1985 CBS poll, 44% of respondents called for the Reagan administration to do more besides Executive Order 12532. Another 45% of those surveyed called for US corporations to leave South Africa, up ten percent from an earlier summer survey.³³⁹ Recognizing the growing support for harsher punishment against South Africa, a number of conservative congresspeople turned against the President to

³³⁵ Clarence Lusane, “An Interview with Randall Robinson: State of the U.S. Anti-Apartheid Movement,” *The Black Scholar*, 16, no. 16 (November/December 1985): 42.

³³⁶ Anthony Lake and Samuel R. Berger, “Leaning Harder on Pretoria,” November 1, 1985, *NYT*, 35A.

³³⁷ South African Institute of Race Relations, “Race Relations Survey 1985,” January 1986, DISA, JSTOR Struggles for Freedom: Southern Africa.

³³⁸ AP, “Apartheid Foe Says Protest in White Areas in Inevitable,” September 7, 1985, *NYT*, 6.

³³⁹ AP, “44% in Survey Want U.S. to Pressure Pretoria,” November 18, 1985, *NYT*, 3.

maintain their constituents' support. This opened the door for moderate Republicans to work with the Democrats on the Hill on sanctions against South Africa.

Revitalization of Anti-Communist Policy Defense

In conjunction with domestic media campaigns, the State Department and the National Security Council reengaged with the Frontline States (FLS) to improve US diplomatic appearances and mend their relationship. While Crocker and Shultz felt more confident in this secondary focus of constructive engagement, they continued to promote economic-based diplomacy for peaceful transitions. First in this regional peacebuilding approach, Crocker focused on the transportation industry, as FLS relied heavily on South African infrastructure for rail support and goods shipments.³⁴⁰ The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), for example, worked alongside United States Information Agency to allocate \$15 million to improve the rail and road infrastructure and to develop alternative transportation routes away from townships with prevalent Black South African unrest.³⁴¹ This strategically placed aid paralleled the Reagan Doctrine's empowerment of anti-communist fighters under the guise of facilitating humanitarian reform; it ultimately limited the ability of Black resistance leaders to organize unrest campaigns with the FLS. By minimizing potential unrest, Pretoria could reduce its presence in the townships and prevent a certain amount of negative media coverage of the state-perpetrated violence.

The conservative's successful repeal of the Clark amendment in October 1985 further emboldened this façade of humanitarian policies. State Department memos expressed hope that

³⁴⁰ United States Department of State, "South Africa Public Diplomacy," November 2, 1985, DNSA, South Africa: The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989.

³⁴¹ *Idem.*; United States Department of State, "Sustaining a Public Diplomacy Program on South Africa," November 1985, DNSA: South Africa: The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989.

the Clark amendment repeal would facilitate a “pro-Western armed resistance,” in Angola with supporting covert military operations by National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) forces.³⁴² The Reagan administration then used the repeal of the Clark amendment to further its regional peacebuilding approach on the grounds of anti-communist support. With the repeal, Reagan could then allow financial support to anti-communist fighters, like UNITA, while maintaining economic engagement with UNITA’s primary support—Pretoria. CIA analysts predicted that the repeal of the Clark amendment opened favorable avenues of regional negotiations for Reagan’s team. These avenues included financially supporting Jonas Savimbi and UNITA and supplying US weaponry to UNITA against the communist-allied People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) in territory skirmishes.³⁴³ State Department officials continued to advocate for regionalism with South Africa and anti-communist allies as a means to limit the communist influence in the region.

The larger context of the repeal of the Clark amendment was the attempt to fit southern Africa into the Reagan Doctrine. The Reagan Doctrine outlined Reagan’s commitment to reinvigorate US involvement in anti-communist fighting worldwide.³⁴⁴ In Reagan’s 1985 State of the Union address, he declared that the US was willing to provide overt and covert aid to rollback communist influence across the world.³⁴⁵ Congress’ repeal of the Clark amendment according to Republican Minnesota Representative Vin Weber, instilled the “Reagan doctrine in the Congress.”³⁴⁶ Despite South Africa’s own controversial human rights record, the anti-

³⁴² United States Department of State, " U.S. African Policy: The Opportunity and Need for a Pro-Western Strategy [U.S. Objectives--Proposal for a New Approach; Southern Africa]," January 1986; AP, "Reagan Says U.S. Favors Covert Aid to Angola Rebels," November 23, 1985, *NYT*, 1.

³⁴³ Central Intelligence Agency, Directorate of Intelligence, "Angola: Impact of Clark Amendment," July 19, 1985.

³⁴⁴ Charles Krauthammer, "The Reagan Doctrine," April 1, 1985, *TIME Magazine*, Wayback Machine.

³⁴⁵ Ronald Reagan, "Address Before the Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union-February 1985," February 6, 1985, Public Papers of Ronald Reagan February 1985, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

³⁴⁶ Steven V. Roberts, "House Approves Foreign Aid Bill Opposing Marxists Around the World," July 12, 1985, *NYT*, 1A.

communist ally and its allied-UNITA forces received military aid and support to fight against communist forces. This reframed US' role in southern Africa in simplistic terms of anti-communism rather than the intricacies of constructive engagement's management of internal reform and multiple parties in negotiations.

However, southern Africa did not clearly fit the Reagan doctrine mold. South Africa was a capitalist state but a humanitarian pariah. Crocker himself admitted that the region did not fit the easy model that Secretary Shultz advocated for in the summer of 1985 where "it must always be clear whose side [the United States] is on."³⁴⁷ The Reagan administration still imposed some form of sanctions against South Africa while the United States' aided Pretoria-allied forces in Angola. In allying with South Africa and UNITA, the State Department isolated Angolan and Namibian parties in the regional negotiations. Yet, rejecting South Africa might also isolate UNITA group operating in Angola as the only anti-communist forces. For that reason, the Reagan administration could not escape addressing its relationship with South Africa—even in the regionalism approach.

1986: The "Path of Peaceful, Constructive Change"

In early January 1986, Reagan urged South African President Botha to reform for the sake of ensuring continued regional de-escalation of tensions. Reagan suggested that Botha seized the "political initiative" so that his administration and the American business community could "play a more constructive role."³⁴⁸ Reagan wrote to Botha stating that he was looking forward to providing US aid in "propelling [his] country forward on the path of peaceful,

³⁴⁷ Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa*, 291.

³⁴⁸ Ronald Reagan, "South Africa: President Reagan letter to President P.W. Botha (presses case for reform) [declassified 1999]," January 4, 1986, the Margaret Thatcher Foundation, Reagan Archive, <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/111664>.

constructive change,” in January 1986.³⁴⁹ However, the White House and the majority of Congress diverged on what constituted as change. Representative Ronald Dellums, as major leader in the Congressional Black Caucus, and moderate Republican Senate leadership of Nancy Kassebaum and Richard Lugar led the way for more aggressive sanctions in 1986 with the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act.

Following the announcement of Executive Order 12532, Democrats investigated the impact of increased sanctions on South Africa with a renewed interest on reconsidering legislation related to the tabled H.R. 1460. House Democrats held hearings on the impact of divestment to investigate the potential results from increased economic pressure.³⁵⁰ In these hearings, the new executive director of the Washington Office, Jean Sindab, spoke at length about divestment’s negligible impact on the US economy. Using the example of the city government of Washington D.C.’s recent divestment of pension funds from their South African holdings, Sindab emphasized divestment’s “no measurable impact” on D.C. city employees or the maintenance of the city’s pension system. Sindab’s example furthered TransAfrica’s message that divesting did not harm the individual American wanting to pressure change in South Africa through economic means.³⁵¹

Yet if divestment had a minimal impact on the US economy, it was a powerful tool against the apartheid system. A testimony from Audrey Smock of the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility highlighted that the divestment of US Corporate Council members

³⁴⁹ Ronald Reagan, “South Africa: President Reagan letter to President P.W. Botha (presses case for reform) [declassified 1999].”

³⁵⁰ US Congress, House, Committee on Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs, Subcommittee on Domestic Monetary Policy, “Impact of Withdrawal and Divestment from South Africa on the United States Economy,” September 26, 1985, 99th Cong., 1st sess., 1985.

³⁵¹ *Idem.*

from South Africa would create a massive “economic vulnerability,” in the apartheid system.³⁵² The US Corporate Council’s full withdrawal could leave Pretoria without the economic means to continue state violence.

The Congressional review did not end with these September 1985 testimonies. In 1986, Representative Ronald Dellums (CA) paved the way for a congressional reform to constructive engagement. A longstanding supporter of the anti-apartheid movement, Dellums capitalized on the increased public demands in and outside of Washington to go further than Reagan’s executive order. In a House debate in May 1986, Dellums proposed an amendment that would prohibit US companies from trading with the South African government. Dellums’ amendment passed by a voice vote and the revised House legislation—what became the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act— was passed in June 1986. There was, however, little expectation that Senate would pass the bill.³⁵³

Escalation of violence in South Africa and the pressure from the White House did, however, encourage moderate Republicans to carefully reevaluate the possibility of further sanctions in the next legislative term. Over the legislative break, South Africa further tightened its security apparatus as June 1986 marked the tenth anniversary of the Soweto Uprisings. To limit the ceremonies marking the anniversary, South African President Botha declared a national state of emergency and arrested over 1,000 people protesting the restrictions. This was done under the guise of quelling communist resistance, but Botha even admitted that Pretoria was well aware that the “stricter security action [would] elicit strong criticism and even punitive measures

³⁵² US House, Committee on Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs, Subcommittee on Domestic Monetary Policy, “Impact of Withdrawal and Divestment from South Africa on the United States Economy.”

³⁵³ Ronald Dellums, interview by Harry Kreisler, September 12, 2000, UC Berkeley’s Conversations with History Series, California.

from the outside world.”³⁵⁴ While Crocker defended the Reagan administration’s active involvement “across the political spectrum in South Africa during this difficult period,” the administration did not implement further sanctions against Pretoria.³⁵⁵ In response, House of Representatives African Subcommittee Chairman Howard Wolpe (D-MI) asserted that Crocker’s efforts to engage with South Africa continually failed to abide state-sanctioned violence and political bans.³⁵⁶ The increased violence and subsequent Congressional criticism set back the efforts by the South African Working Group of the NSC, whose members had planned on “building and mobilizing a group of informed, moderate supporters of [the] administration’s policy.”³⁵⁷

US State Department officials suggested a speech from Reagan to publicly reassure European allies, FLS, and Congress that progress in both regional peace negotiations and apartheid reform continued. The speech strategically came prior the Senate’s September meeting on sanctions. Just like EO 12532, Reagan staffers wanted to control the message that increased sanctions were an ill-advised tool that only “add[ed] to the trauma and exacerbate polarization in South Africa and the region” and to admit that the executive order was ineffective.³⁵⁸ However, unlike EO 12532, Reagan’s July 1986 speech did little to reduce the “emotional clamor” on the Hill and the call for increased sanctions.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁴ Alan Cowell, “State of Emergency Imposed throughout South Africa; More than 1,000 Rounded Up,” June 13, 1986, *NYT*, 1A.

³⁵⁵ US Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Africa, “Developments in South Africa: United States Policy Responses,” March 12, 1986, 99th Cong., 2nd sess., 1986, 82.

³⁵⁶ *Idem.*, 99.

³⁵⁷ Nicholas Platt, “Memorandum for Vadm. John M. Poindexter the White House; The South African Public Diplomacy Program,” May 30, 1986, South Africa Public Diplomacy 11/8/1985-6/10/1986 folder, box 16.9, African Affairs Directorate, National Security Council Records, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

³⁵⁸ United States Department of State, “The President’s Speech on South Africa,” July 17, 1986, South Africa Presidential Correspondence 6/23/1986-10/1/1986 folder, box 16.8, African Affairs Directorate, National Security Council Records, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

³⁵⁹ Steven V. Roberts, “Congress; Morals, Politics, South Africa,” July 27, 1986, *NYT*, 12.

Further evidence of the administration's attempt to improve public appearance of reform came in leadership changes. In the same speech, Reagan announced that the first Black American ambassador to the Republic—North Carolina businessman Edward Perkins—would replace Herman Nickel. Reagan stated the change in ambassador “symbolize[d the] American commitments to the black people of South Africa and encourage[d] black-white negotiation.”³⁶⁰ Steven Roberts of the *New York Times* claimed that Perkins' appointment served to win Senate support against sanctions legislation.³⁶¹

With Reagan's refusal to impose more sanctions during the unrest of the summer of 1986, Crocker claimed that President, the “great communicator,” had become “the great polarizer.”³⁶² *New York Times* reporter Bernard Weinraub observed that “no other speech in the Reagan Presidency [had] stirred as much internal opposition and bipartisan criticism.”³⁶³ Congresspeople sensed that Reagan's speech failed to adequately address the continued violence in South Africa or effectively pressuring Pretoria for power-sharing reforms. The conservative opposition to Reagan's inactions came primarily from Republican Senators Chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Africa Nancy Kassebaum (R-KS) and Majority Leader Bob Dole (R-KS) and Richard Lugar (R-IN), whose states frequently hosted anti-apartheid activist divestment efforts.

Anti-apartheid organizations worked alongside the Senate's consideration of H.R. 4868 with a summer of mass activism hoping to secure enough votes to pass the bill. The ACOA created a National Anti-Apartheid Strategy in early June to place resources and organizers at key

³⁶⁰ Bernard Weinraub, “The Speech that Launched a Thousand Critics,” July 28, 1986, *NYT*, 12; “The Black Envoy Ploy,” July 17, 1986, *Washington Post*.

³⁶¹ Steven V. Roberts, “Reagan Names a Black Diplomat US Ambassador to South Africa,” October 1, 1986, *NYT*, 6A.

³⁶² Chester Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa*, 323.

³⁶³ Bernard Weinraub, “The Speech that Launched a Thousand Critics.”

battleground states and pressure its senators.³⁶⁴ Through mailing and phone-in campaigns, the ACOA members called moderate Republicans and Democratic senators to support Dellums' H.R. 4868.³⁶⁵ In Kansas, ACOA member Prexy Nesbitt and trade unionist Nomonde Ngubo led the way to pressure Kassebaum in supporting H.R. 4868. As Chairwoman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Africa, Kassebaum's vote in support of the bill would encourage moderate Republicans to support the legislation as well. Over the summer, Nesbitt visited more than forty different Kansas venues and met with organizers at churches, campuses, and public spaces to build "constituent support and relationships of pressure" on their senators—Kassebaum and Dole.³⁶⁶ Pressure on the Hill was obvious as local constituencies mobilized across the country for sanctions. Television stations offered near constant news coverage on sanctions legislation with Reagan official "defending and explaining US policy five times in ten days," to fight the local efforts by anti-apartheid activists.³⁶⁷

In September 1986, alongside public pressures in key states, the Senate continued to investigate the feasibility of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid. During Nesbitt and Ngubo's Kansas tour, the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Richard Lugar held hearings on sanctions legislation. Robinson drew the Senate's attention to the seventy-seven percent of urban-dwelling Black South Africans who supported comprehensive sanctions—refuting the longstanding message of the administration that claimed that urban Black workers

³⁶⁴ Joshua Nessen, "National Anti-Apartheid Strategy Meeting," June 1, 1986, American Committee on Africa collections, JSTOR Struggles for Freedom: Southern Africa.

³⁶⁵ Jennifer Davis with the American Committee on Africa, "Sanctions Against South Africa," July 3, 1986, Africa Action Archive, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

³⁶⁶ Ellen Schechet, "Apartheid Opponents Speak Out in Wichita," July 26, 1986, *The Wichita Eagle*, 18; Prexy Nesbitt, interview by author, phone, July 27, 2020; interview corroborated with Nesbitt's earlier 2009 interview with Erin McCarthy at Columbia College Digital Collections, Chicago Anti-Apartheid Movement collection: https://digitalcommons.colum.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1001&context=cadc_caam_oralhistories.

³⁶⁷ Chester Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa*, 305.

did not support sanctions.³⁶⁸ Following Senator Joseph Biden's (D-DE) critique of Reagan's weak statement on increased state sanction violence, Shultz resorted to the familiar anti-communist rhetoric of supporting the Afrikaners government's right to limit ANC communist fighters in their borders and ignoring the largely unprovoked attacks on non-ANC affiliate Black South Africans.³⁶⁹ Yet it is only after a ten-day visit to the African continent in early September, including a visit of the FLS, Mozambique, and Botswana, that Chairwoman of the Senate African subcommittee, Nancy Kassebaum "abandoned her support" of constructive engagement—effectively abandoning Crocker.³⁷⁰ The final vote on the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act came on September 12th; the legislation passed by 308-77 in the House and 84-14 in Senate. The Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act was then sent to Reagan to decide on whether to sign the legislation and allow Congress to dictate the economic terms of engagement with South Africa, or to veto it in hope that moderate Republicans would not succumb to anti-apartheid activist pressure and override the veto.

The State Department advocated for Reagan to veto H.R. 4868. Crocker recommended another executive order that would include some of the sanctions put forth by the Act in particular a ban on iron and steel imports from Pretoria.³⁷¹ Another potential executive order, like that of EO 12532, would allow Reagan's State Department to dictate the terms of US engagement in South Africa—not Congress.

Reagan vetoed H.R. 4868 and immediately the White House was ill-prepared to maintain his veto. Several conflicting lobbying strategies created a disorganized effort from the Reagan

³⁶⁸ US Congress, US Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, "Situation in South Africa," July 22, 23, 24, and 29, 1986, 99th Cong., 2nd sess., 1986, 208.

³⁶⁹ US Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, "Situation in South Africa," 94-96.

³⁷⁰ Angelia Herrin, "Apartheid Real Issue, Kassebaum Says," September 16, 1986, *The Wichita Eagle*, 7.

³⁷¹ Chester Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa*, 329.

White House to maintain the veto. Far-right advocates like Central Intelligence Agency Director William Casey and Communications Director Pat Buchanan met with far-right senators to promote their claims that increased sanctions would limit the effectiveness of the United States' Cold War policies worldwide. Potentially losing an ally in southern Africa could be considered by international leaders as a failure of US rollback policies against communism.³⁷² Reagan, in a similar fashion, issued a statement with his veto stating that the House was attempting to engage in "economic warfare against the people of South Africa."³⁷³ Reagan staffers launched a media campaigns to avoid a congressional veto override. Within the NSC, the South Africa Working Group attempted to build a defense of Reagan's veto and statement with continued newspaper articles and public appearances. Director of White House Public Liaison Marl Maseng asked for lobbying support from the Working Group in working with the National Endowment for the Preservation of Liberty. The White House Public Liaison additionally bought ad space in *The Washington Times* supporting Reagan's veto.³⁷⁴ This internal disorder split the Republican party position on sanctions with South Africa.

While Congress continued the debate Reagan's veto in September 1986, anti-apartheid activists in Congress and outside worked to secure the two-thirds require to override Reagan's veto. Dellums told to his Republican colleague, Mark Soljander (MI), that even the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act's overwhelming House democratic support "placed pressure on the United States Senate" in the lead up to the 1986 midterm elections. This pressure,

³⁷² Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa*, 322; Sam Kleiner, "Apartheid Amnesia," July 19, 2013, *Foreign Policy*.

³⁷³ Ronald Reagan, "Message to the House of Representatives Returning Without Approval a Bill Concerning Apartheid in South Africa," September 26, 1986, Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, 1986, Book II, p. 1278-80.

³⁷⁴ Carl "Spitz" Channell, "[Ideas for Public Relations Effort Opposing Sanctions against South Africa]," September 23, 1986, DNSA, South Africa: The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989. The National Endowment for the Preservation of Liberty's President, Carl Channell, is better known for his role in the Iran-Contra Affair for using the non-profit to funnel over \$2 million to Nicaraguan rebels: AP, "The Iran-Contra Convictions," February 2, 1990, *The Washington Post*.

Dellums later reflected, forced moderate Republicans to be on the public record about sanctions against apartheid.³⁷⁵ Archbishop Tutu, from the confines of his house arrest in Cape Town, released the following statement targeting the United States President:

The man who has applied sanctions against Poland, Nicaragua and Libya at the drop of a hat refuses steadfastly to take any effective action against one of the most vicious policies the world has known... Apartheid will be dismantled and its victims will remember those who helped to destroy this evil system. And President Reagan will be judged harshly by history.³⁷⁶

Reagan's last-ditch attempt came four days after Tutu's statement with two brief and identical letters to Republican Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole and Democratic Speaker of the House Thomas O'Neill. In them, Reagan repeated his earlier statement on a new executive order and promised a multiyear aid program to the region to avoid economic sanctions.³⁷⁷ Nonetheless, the House voted overwhelming to override Reagan's veto, 313-83, and sent the bill to the Senate for a final vote as the 1986 midterm elections neared.³⁷⁸

The Senate remained the final legislative body in the decision on sanctions. In a speech at the University of Arkansas, Senate Foreign Relations Chairman Richard Lugar said that Congress' failure to override Reagan's veto "would be seen as support for the South African government's policies."³⁷⁹ Reagan was not the only political leader attempting to influence decision-making in the Senate. South African foreign minister Pik Botha called North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms, a notable ally in opposing sanctions, and two senators Chuck Grassley (R-

³⁷⁵ Ronald Dellums, interview by Harry Kreisler, September 12, 2000, UC Berkeley's Conversations with History Series, California.

³⁷⁶ AP, "Tutu Says History Will Judge Reagan Veto," September 28, 1986, *NYT*, 15.

³⁷⁷ Ronald Reagan, "Letter to the Speaker of the House and the Senate Majority Leader on the Economic Sanctions Against South Africa," September 29, 1986, Public Papers of Ronald Reagan September 1986, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

³⁷⁸ Steven V. Roberts, "House, 313 to 83, Affirms Sanctions on South Africa," September 30, 1986, *NYT*, 1A.

³⁷⁹ AP, "Speaker addresses economic sanctions against South Africa," September 30, 1986, *The Baxter Bulletin* (AK), 5.

IA) and Democrat Edward Zorinsky (D-NE), two days prior to the Senate vote.³⁸⁰ As prominent Midwesterner Senators, Grassley and Zorinsky played an important role as more moderate Senators whose vote influenced others on the fringe. Pik Botha threatened to end South African purchases of US grain shipments—primarily supplied by midwestern states—if the veto was not sustained.³⁸¹ Following the phone call that Lugar equated to “bribery and intimidation,” both Grassley and Zorinsky sided with seventy-six other senators to override the veto on Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act, with a 78-21 vote.³⁸² ACOA members, upon reflecting on the passing of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act, observed that “by the end of the summer, the intense nationwide lobbying campaign [had] generated an atmosphere in which a vote against sanctions was a vote for apartheid.”³⁸³ Only for the second time in US history had Congress overridden a presidential veto on foreign policy matters. The other veto overrode the Vietnam-era War Powers Act of 1973 which severely limited the President’s ability to initiate military action abroad.³⁸⁴

Law Professor Winston Nagan called passing of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act a sign that the critics of Reagan saw constructive engagement as “more or less a label designed to package and sell the legitimacy of white supremacy.”³⁸⁵ Beyond the political embarrassment of the veto override, the American voters further checked Reagan’s policies at the ballot box as news of the Iran-Contra scandal broke only days before the midterms. The 1986 congressional

³⁸⁰ Edward Walsh, “Sanctions Imposed on S. Africa As Senate Overrides Veto, 78-21,” October 3, 1986, *The Washington Post*.

³⁸¹ AP, “South African Foreign Minister threatens to end grain purchases,” October 2, 1986, *The Baxter Bulletin* (AK), 2.

³⁸² Edward Walsh, “Sanctions Imposed on S. Africa As Senate Overrides Veto, 78-21.”

³⁸³ American Committee on Africa, “Congress Rebukes Reagan: Action ACOA News,” Fall 1986, Africa Action Archive, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

³⁸⁴ Andrew Glass, “House overrides Reagan apartheid veto, Sept. 29, 1986,” September 20, 2017, *Politico*.

³⁸⁵ Winston P. Nagan, “An Appraisal of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986,” *Journal of Law and Philosophy* 5, no. 2 (1987): 330.

midterms resulted in the Democrats gaining the majority in the Senate and keeping control of the House.³⁸⁶

With a Democrat-controlled Congress, the Reagan Africa team was further forced to shift its foreign policy with South Africa. Chester Crocker expressed his own frustration—calling the veto override an “Iran-Contra in microcosm,”—where the debate over sanctions detracted from the supposed original two-pronged goal of constructive engagement of regional peace and internal reform.³⁸⁷ Reagan, however, attempted to maintain control over US policy by stating that while his administration would implement the new law, the law would “not solve the serious problems that plague[d]” South Africa.³⁸⁸ Because of anti-apartheid pressure on Congress and the White House, the dual policy of constructive engagement was now changing.

Selectively Implementing the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act

Congress’s new regulations, however, did not equate to overnight policy changes by the Reagan administration. Following the passage of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act, the State, Treasury, and Commerce departments implemented sanctions as they saw fit.³⁸⁹ A secret memo from Nicholas Platt of the NSC to the Commerce Department encouraged all executive departments to stall the implementation of Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act. Platt stated that the delay would be the result of regulating business trading of strategic minerals “essential for

³⁸⁶ E. J. Dionne, Jr. “Elections; Democrats Gain Control of Senate, Drawing votes of Reagan’s Backers,” November 5, 1986, *NYT*, 1A.

³⁸⁷ Chester Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa*, 330.

³⁸⁸ Ronald Reagan, “Statement on the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986,” October 2, 1986, Public Papers of Ronald Reagan October 1986, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

³⁸⁹ Ronald Reagan, “Executive Order 12571—Implementation of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act,” October 27, 1986, Public Papers of Ronald Reagan October 1986, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

the economy and defense of the United States.”³⁹⁰ This gave Reagan the flexibility to implement the Act within his parameters and under his control.

The Treasury Department’s first deliberate delay in implementing the sanctions was in the case of the uranium trade.³⁹¹ This was in direct response to the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act’s section 309 that outright prohibited any importation of uranium from South Africa.³⁹² The Treasury Department interpreted the regulation as only banning the importation of raw uranium, and not of other, still usable, uranium compounds. This meant the Treasury Department did not include other usable uranium oxides, like uranium hexafluoride—necessary for the creation of uranium-235 in fueling nuclear power plants—on the prohibited imports regulations. This allowed the US to maintain a uranium trading relationship with South Africa—despite the prohibition per the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid—and to contribute to the large mining industry in South Africa that disproportionately underpaid Black workers.³⁹³

In response, Democratic leaders like Howard Wolpe, Ron Dellums, and Ted Kennedy on the Hill wrote that the language in section 309 included all forms of South African uranium, as approved by their Republican counterparts.³⁹⁴ This infraction on the uranium ban continued through 1987. The WOA accused the Reagan administration of subverting Congress’s authority

³⁹⁰ Nicholas Platt, “Strategic Minerals and the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986,” October 31, 1986, DNSA, South Africa: The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989.

³⁹¹ United States Department of State, “South African Sanctions [Regarding the Implementation of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986],” October 15, 1986, DNSA, South Africa: The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989.

³⁹² U.S. Congress, House, *Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986*, HR 4868, 99th Cong., 2nd sess.

³⁹³ “United States: Department of the Treasury Regulations Implementing U.S. Anti-Apartheid Policy,” *International Legal Materials* 26, no. 1 (1987): 125.

³⁹⁴ Howard Wolpe, Mickey Leland, Bill Richardson, Ron Dellums, Edward J. Markey, Jeff Bingaman, Edward Kennedy, “[Letter to the President on Section 309 of the Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986, Banning All South African Uranium from Entering the United States],” October 31, 1986, DNSA, South Africa: The Making of US Foreign Policy, 1962-1989.

and of “weakening some of the stronger provisions of the bill.”³⁹⁵ Another Democrat, Bill Richardson from New Mexico, called the Treasury Department’s actions as a “game of loophole hide and seek.”³⁹⁶ This selective uranium ban contradicted to the larger Cold War dialogue between the United States and Soviet Union, as both superpowers worked on the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty discussions to cease the production of conventional ground launched nuclear missiles.³⁹⁷ Reagan staffers justified continuing to import uranium hexafluoride as necessary to maintain current nuclear reactors within the United States.³⁹⁸

Dellums, with the aid of the anti-apartheid organization Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, lead the litigation over Reagan’s slow enforcement of section 309 to its full extent. In 1987, the Lawyers’ Committee filed several injunctions against the Treasury Department and Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to block the uranium imports to no avail. The NRC and Treasury Department denied the requests, claiming that uranium played an essential role in national security.³⁹⁹ Dellums and several other anti-apartheid supporters—including Randall Robinson of TransAfrica—argued that the NRC’s failure to implement a complete uranium prohibition “blunted the effectiveness of the Anti-Apartheid Act.”⁴⁰⁰ In his opinion on *Dellums v. U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission* (1988), circuit judge Laurence Silberman stated that the courts could not rule on “congressional predictions as to the

³⁹⁵ Washington Office on Africa, “Talking Points on the Importance of Economic Sanctions Now,” February 27, 1987, Private collection of David Wiley and Christine Root, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

³⁹⁶ Nathaniel Shepard, “S. Africa Sanctions Slowed by Squabbles,” March 29, 1987, *The Chicago Tribune*.

³⁹⁷ Barbara Farnham, “Reagan and the Gorbachev Revolution: Perceiving the End of the Threat,” *Political Science Quarterly* 116, no. 2 (Summer 2001): 225-252.

³⁹⁸ Nathaniel Shepard, “S. Africa Sanctions Slowed by Squabbles; United States General Accounting Office, “South Africa: Status Report on Implementation of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986,” October 1987, GAO/NSAID-88-44.

³⁹⁹ Southern Africa Project, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, “South Africa 1986: A Permanent State of Emergency, 1986 Southern Africa Project Annual Report,” 1987, Private collection of David Wiley and Christine Root, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

⁴⁰⁰ *Dellums v. U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission*, 863 F.2d 968 (D.C. Cir. 1988) 274 U.S. App. D.C. 279.

effectiveness of the legislation”—thus allowing Reagan to continue his selective implementation.⁴⁰¹ By October 1987, the Department of Energy reported that twenty-eight percent of the United States’ uranium hexafluoride supply came from South African or from occupied-Namibian mines.⁴⁰² The sheer defiance of Reagan’s Treasury department to fully implement a complete uranium prohibition provided one example of the larger unwillingness of the administration to shift their policy towards South Africa.

Salvaging an Appearance of Change and Avoiding Public Surrender

The State Department and NSC recalibrated the US policy to engage with Black resistance leaders and FLS representatives to pressure Pretoria in participating in regional peacebuilding. Despite this engagement with Black leaders, the administration attempted to maintain a conservative-led reform in the region. Several Reagan supporters and officials, in the first-year review of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act, claimed that the Act was ineffective because it weakened US influence over the region and stifled regional peace negotiations. William Pascoe from the conservative leaning think tank Heritage Foundation reported to Congress that “when dealing with the Afrikaners, the carrot works better than the stick,” while providing no substantial evidence or statistical data to support his claims.⁴⁰³ Crocker used more overt language on reporting the effectiveness of Act to Congress. He criticized Congress for bending to popular demands from the “broadest and loudest” in the public debate on sanctions in 1986. Crocker asserted that the public debate and critics of the Reagan administration severely

⁴⁰¹ *Dellums v. U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission*.

⁴⁰² United States General Accounting Office, “South Africa: Status Report on Implementation of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986.”

⁴⁰³ William Pascoe, “U.S. Sanctions on Africa: The Results are in,” June 5, 1987, *The Heritage Foundation*.

undercut US foreign policy and its “influence over South African government.”⁴⁰⁴ Despite the supposed lack of influence, Crocker then carefully outlined that South Africa’s response to the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act—foreign press expulsion, increased security in Black townships, and stalled negotiations for the release of Nelson Mandela—made it difficult for the State Department to maintain open channels between the Black leadership and the apartheid government. After all, the United States wanted to be “builders, not destroyers,” of potential reforms in South Africa.⁴⁰⁵ This newfound encouragement of Black-Afrikaner dialogue was a calculated position and hastened policy creation by the Reagan administration following the National Party’s refusal to meet with Reagan officials.

Afrikaner officials distanced themselves from the United States which further hurt Reagan’s public image on US foreign policy. For instance, Pik Botha and Chester Crocker did not meet for over two years despite multiple efforts by Crocker. By then, public pressure on both Crocker and the Botha regime was apparent. Neil Lewis’ June 1987 *New York Times* column denounced Crocker’s constructive engagement as a complete failure in reforming apartheid or in bringing peace to Namibia and the Angolan border.⁴⁰⁶ The continued scrutiny over constructive engagement forced Crocker to explore different diplomatic tactics in response to South Africa’s increased political arrests, including that of Nobel Peace Prize recipient Archbishop Desmond Tutu in March 1987.⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁴ US Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittees on International Economic Policy and Trade, and Africa, “Oversight of the Administration’s Implementation of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 (Public Law 99-440) and an Assessment of Recent South African Political and Economic Developments,” June 16, 1987, 100th Cong., 1st sess., 77.

⁴⁰⁵ *Idem.*, 78.

⁴⁰⁶ Neil Lewis, “Washington Talk: Working Profile, Chester Crocker: Inside, Making Policy on Africa,” June 9, 1987, *NYT*, 26A.

⁴⁰⁷ Jennifer Davis, “Pretoria’s Moves Challenges the U.S.,” March 2, 1988, *NYT*, 23A.

The NSC observed the growing tide of anti-apartheid sentiment within both South Africa and the US and sought ways to subtly shift its policy. This NSC policy focused on more palatable strategies, including expanding US engagement with the Black South African leadership. The National Security Decision Directive 273 issued in May 1987 capitalized on the new opportunities derived from the sanctions. By using the Anti-Apartheid Act to convey a new “affirmation of American commitment to South Africa’s disenfranchised citizens,” the NSC advocated for FLS to ease its’ own sanctions against the South African government in effort to restart regional negotiations.⁴⁰⁸ The NSC’s new policy expanded the number of approved anti-apartheid South African leaders, including the ANC’s Oliver Tambo, to meet with State Department officials and help reinvigorate diplomatic communications beyond the National Party.⁴⁰⁹ Further engagement with Black leadership came with Crocker’s deputy assistant, Chas Freeman, Jr. urging of scholarship funds from Congress for Black South African students to “help them develop the skills to fight apartheid peacefully,” within the apartheid system.⁴¹⁰

State Department’s Under Secretary for Political Affairs Michael Armacost described Secretary Shultz’s earlier January meeting with exiled Africa National Congress President Oliver Tambo as the opening of a dialogue between the United States and Black South Africans.⁴¹¹ Shultz was equally outspoken about the need with for the ANC to cut ties with the Communist

⁴⁰⁸ Ronald Reagan, “National Security Decision Directive 273: United States Policy Towards South Africa,” May 7, 1987, NSDD Digitized Reference Copies, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

⁴⁰⁹ *Idem.*

⁴¹⁰ Chas Freeman, Jr. “Statement of Chas W. Freeman, Jr. before the Subcommittee on Africa Committee on Foreign Affairs U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C., March 22, 1988,” March 19, 1988, South African Legislation Sanctions 3/21/1988- 3/31/1988 folder, box 16.7, African Affairs Directorate, National Security Council Records, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

⁴¹¹ Michael Armacost, “The U.S. and South Africa: A Current Appraisal,” June 15, 1987, *United States Department of State Bureau of Public Affairs*, Current Policy No. 979, South Africa Public Diplomacy 2/2/1987-6/15/1987 folder, box 16.9, African Affairs Directorate, National Security Council Records, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

Party to further deescalate regional tensions.”⁴¹² This meeting reflected a larger trend in Cold War diplomacy as Reagan and Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev engaged in nuclear de-escalation and arms control negotiations.⁴¹³ In both the Washington and Moscow Summits, Reagan and Gorbachev discussed southern Africa and the curbing of Soviet monetary support for People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA).⁴¹⁴ This gradual easing of tension with the Soviets reflected Reagan officials' willingness to meet with the ANC, an organization still economically supported by the Soviets. Reagan officials with ANC members, per anonymous State Department officials, was meant to “defuse criticism of American policy by Black leaders” within the United States.⁴¹⁵ Crocker recalled the importance of the Shultz-Tambo meeting in overcoming the “saga of 1986,” and the sanctions debate.⁴¹⁶

The administration's continued appeal for Nelson Mandela's release also spoke to the growing acceptance of Black leadership in South Africa as Mandela was the most predominant political prisoner under the apartheid system. On July 18, 1988, the day of Mandela's 70th birthday, Reagan's Assistant to the President for Press Relations, Marlin Fitzwater, called for his release. Fitzwater argued that this gesture would create an environment favorable to further negotiations for democracy in South Africa.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹² Michael Armacost, “The U.S. and South Africa: A Current Appraisal.”

⁴¹³ Mark L. Haas, “The United States and the End of the Cold War: Reactions to Shifts in Soviet Power, Policies, or Domestic Politics?” *International Organization* 61, no. 1 (Winter 2007): 145-179; Barbara Farnham, “Reagan and the Gorbachev Revolution: Perceiving the End of the Threat.”

⁴¹⁴ Chester Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa*, 360-1.

⁴¹⁵ David K. Shipler, “Shultz Meets with Leader of Rebels in South Africa,” January 29, 1987, *NYT*, 3A; Gary Thatcher, “Tambo says Shultz meeting proves ANC must be reckoned with. But critics say meeting sends wrong message on terrorism,” January 29, 1987, *The Christian Science Monitor*.

⁴¹⁶ Chester Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa*, 344.

⁴¹⁷ Marlin Fitzwater, “Statement by Assistant to the President for Press Relations Fitzwater on the Imprisonment of Nelson Mandela in South Africa,” July 18, 1988, Public Papers of Ronald Reagan July 1988, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

Frantic to preserve some credibility of constructive engagement, Crocker met again with Savimbi's UNITA officials to reaffirm a positive relationship with the South African-supported militia group. Crocker's meeting with the Soviet-supported MPLA and FLS representatives allowed his team to bridge between opposing parties on regional peace. The MPLA and FLS meeting in Brazzaville, Congo April 1987 provided a crucial foundation for what became known as the Tripartite Agreement. In Brazzaville, Crocker and newly appointed NSC African director, Hank Cohen, met with Angola's MPLA Interior Minister Manuel A. "Kito" Rodrigues for the first time in fourteen months. Rodrigues agreed to persuade MPLA forces to re-engage with the US and change their troop placement on the Angola-South Africa border in exchange for Pretoria's willingness to meet over the course of several planning meetings.

From April 1987 to December 1988, Crocker and the rest of the Reagan administration remained focused on quickening the timetable to resolve the Angolan-South African tension and Namibian. Crocker organized meetings between the two parties—MPLA and UNITA—and gradually brought in more external parties, including the Organization of African Unity, the Soviet Union, Cuba, and South Africa.⁴¹⁸ Despite maintaining the policy of linkage, where South African troop withdrawal from Namibia depended on Cuban withdrawal from Angola, far-right congresspeople frequently criticized the State Department's tactics. Jesse Helms argued that Crocker was a "tepid, tardy supporter" who was not doing enough to support UNITA fighting campaigns following the appeal of the Clark amendment.⁴¹⁹ Similarly, Democrats criticized Reagan's Africa team for their late re-engagement with FLS leaders.

⁴¹⁸ Chester Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa*, 342-5.

⁴¹⁹ Robert Pear, "U.S. Redoubles Effort for an Angolan Settlement," April 15, 1988, *NYT*, 8A.

Crocker worked with both sides of the negotiating table to simply maintain a cross-communication during the final months of the administration.⁴²⁰ From May through early December 1988, Crocker traveled to meet with Soviet Foreign Minister Anatoly Adamishin, Pik Botha, and UNITA and MPLA leaders in different European cities and FLS capitals.⁴²¹ The May meeting with Adamishin set up the final stages of negotiations between all parties. The ensuing US press coverage suddenly favored the public plans for peace and credited Crocker as its architect. Reporters like *New York Times* John Battersby called for optimism in September 1988 as peace talks “advanced significantly.”⁴²² South Africans re-engaged in regional talks solely from a self-interest motivation. The continued sanctions against Pretoria had severely weakened the domestic reputation of the National Party in upcoming elections against liberal white South African parties.⁴²³ Afrikaner diplomats like Pik Botha spoke to President P. W. Botha on the benefit of meeting with Angolan and Cuban representatives to secure legitimacy as a regional power.⁴²⁴ The National Party believed that by re-engaging in regional talks they could preserve their control in Parliament. In late December 1988, Crocker brought together South Africa, Cuba, and Angola to sign the Tripartite Agreement that outlined timetables for South Africa’s troop withdrawal from Namibia and allow for independent elections by 1989. A separate bilateral agreement between Cuba and Angola, signed at the same time, arranged for Cuban troop withdrawal and served as a confidence-building measure for South Africa in the Tripartite

⁴²⁰ Crocker later recalled how quickly the African Affairs Department busted the annual travel budget by midsummer 1988 in *High Noon in Southern Africa*, 392 following these frequent meetings,

⁴²¹ Chester Crocker, “Memorandum of Conversation with Anatoly Adamishin,” May 29, 1988, US-Soviet Cooperative Diplomacy Declassified: Anatoly Adamishin on Afghanistan, Southern Africa, Human Rights, National Security Archive; Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa*, 393-395. These frequent international meeting is similar to that of Henry Kissinger’s shuttle diplomacy. As a student of Kissinger, Crocker was influenced by his mentor’s diplomacy strategies of organized international meetings with specific parties on pre-planned conditions.

⁴²² John Battersby, “Optimism Voiced on Southern African Talks,” September 10, 1988, *NYT*, 1.

⁴²³ Timothy D. Sisk, “White Politics in South Africa: Polarization under Pressure,” *Africa Today* 36, no. 1, 1989: 29-39.

⁴²⁴ Chester Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa*, 393.

Agreement.⁴²⁵ The ongoing media coverage of the event praised Crocker for his ability to broker the linkage policy between conflicting states and his fresh approach to engaging with South Africa in the first place.⁴²⁶ Michael McFaul of Stanford University's Center for International Security and Arms Control credited Crocker's new thinking and style of diplomacy for the Tripartite Agreement.⁴²⁷ From there, the Reagan administration was well-placed to claim victory in southern Africa as Vice President George H. W. Bush secured the Presidency in the 1988 election.⁴²⁸

The State Department's deliberate refocusing on regionalism over internal reform played a significant role in crafting a positive image of Reagan's relationship with South Africa in the late stages of his presidency. Crocker successfully overcame the foreign policy embarrassment after the veto override of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act. Mainstream network and press coverage portrayed Crocker's role in finally resolving a peaceful enforcement of United Nations Resolution 435, as his "Holy Grail" of diplomacy.⁴²⁹

Anti-apartheid activists' response to the Tripartite Agreement largely fell outside the US media coverage. Both the WOA and Africa Fund urged mailing list members to continue to challenge Reagan's policies of South Africa. Despite its participation in the Tripartite Agreement, South Africa still politically imprisoned thousands and refused to extend political

⁴²⁵ United Nations, "Agreement among the People's Republic of Angola, the Republic of Cuba, and the Republic of South Africa (Tripartite Agreement)," December 22, 1988, United Nations Peacemaker Archives.

⁴²⁶ Christopher Wren, "The Crocker Formula for African Diplomacy," December 19, 1986, *NYT*, 28A

⁴²⁷ Michael McFaul, "Rethinking the 'Reagan Doctrine' in Angola," *International Security* 14, no. (Winter 1989): 99-135.

⁴²⁸ Thomson, "Incomplete Engagement," 100-1.

⁴²⁹ John M. Goshko, "For Crocker, Accord was Long Time Coming; Embattled Assistant Secretary known for 'Constructive Engagement' Begins to Heart Praise," December 14, 1988, *The Washington Post*, 28 A, ProQuest News & Newspapers.

representation to Black South Africans.⁴³⁰ Only a single *New York Times* editorial shared the anti-apartheid sentiment and called attention to the unfinished second-prong of constructive engagement: internal apartheid reform. In the editorial, the writer notes Crocker's well-deserved accomplishments in regionalism for bringing South Africa to the negotiation table with Angola and Cuba. However, they also highlight that "the Reagan Administration has failed to alleviate the poisons of apartheid."⁴³¹ As the primary task of constructive engagement, facilitating democratic change in South Africa was still an unfinished task for the United States.

Over the final three years of the administration, Reagan officials took deliberate steps to influence the public's opinion on South Africa. Dedicated bureaucratic staffers within the NSC and State Department worked with public organizations to build favorability on the Hill and combat the rising growth of the anti-apartheid movement. Yet the administration never once recognized the power of the anti-apartheid movement to pressure Reagan's change in policies towards regionalism. Even Crocker's own recollection of the motivations on Executive Order 12532 and resulting focus towards regionalism gave little credence to *who* pressured the policy shift. Crocker's only overt reference to the anti-apartheid organizers was with the Free South Africa Movement in November 1984 and the "degree of partisan poison injected into the debate."⁴³²

⁴³⁰ Washington Office on Africa, "Namibian Independence? Action Alert," January 30, 1989, Washington Office on Africa collection, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections; The Africa Fund, "Freedom for Namibia: The UN Plan and the Journey," February 1989, George M. Houser collection, AAA, Michigan State University Libraries and Special Collections.

⁴³¹ "Crocker's Triumph; Reagan's Loss," December 15, 1988, *NYT*, 38A

⁴³² Chester Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa*, 257.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

What began as a US Cold War alliance vested solely in the anti-communist rhetoric and loose criticism of the apartheid system transformed into a carefully negotiated regional peacebuilding and economic sanctions against the apartheid state. Reagan officials took credit for resolving regional peace negotiations and improving the everyday life of Black South Africans over the course of eight years. Ronald Reagan left office with the political roadmap to transition South Africa to democracy in the 1990s.⁴³³ Yet anti-apartheid activists' pressure to apply economic sanctions decisively influenced the reform of US policies towards Pretoria. This thesis focused on the extent to which Reagan officials maintained their gradualist policy of constructive engagement over addressing the economic policy demands by Congress and nontraditional foreign policy actors.

This thesis explored the subtle effect that nontraditional foreign policy actors had in influencing the creation, implementation, and revisions of Reagan's foreign policy regarding South Africa and the southern African region. Media personalities, political leaders in Congress, and anti-apartheid activists worldwide played a critical role in molding the perception of the United States-South African relationship. Reagan's relationship with South Africa was a complex, multifaceted dynamic where the public played a direct role in policy construction and execution. This increased US public attention informed how the Reagan administration engaged with South Africa.

Anti-apartheid activists initially struggled to change the Reagan administration's policies. Chapter Two, covering the 1980 election and early months of Reagan's first term, focused

⁴³³ William Minter, *King Solomon Mines Revisited: Western Interests and the Burdened History of Southern Africa* (New York: Basic Books, 1986): 310.

primarily on the early anti-apartheid efforts to stop the resurgence of anti-communist conservatism in foreign policy thinking. The subsequent chapters then discuss how public influences—especially anti-apartheid groups—over Reagan’s policies towards South Africa both educated the American public on the issue of apartheid and mobilized strategic campaigns in Congress, in localities, and in the press to criticize the policy of constructive engagement.

Chapter Three, from October 1981 through 1983, analyzed how Reagan cultivated open, economically-friendly relations with South Africa. Reagan’s control over the South African policy was justified through strategic minerals and resources sales of an anti-communist ally. Chapter Four examined how rising anti-apartheid activism brought increasing public awareness of South African state violence to cultivate criticism against the constructive engagement as a failing policy of the Reagan administration. Anti-apartheid activists curated the public perception based on both humanitarian and economic concerns to build support for sanctions and divestment. The Reagan administration crafted EO 12532’s weaker sanctions against South Africa to combat the growing criticism by anti-apartheid activists both in the media and on Capitol Hill and limit any possible reviews toward the evidence of constructive engagement shortcomings

Chapter Five’s coverage of the the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act debates and the quickened resolve for the Tripartite Agreement relies on the final three years of Reagan’s tenure as attempts to salvage the public perception of their relationship with South Africa while minimizing the impact of anti-apartheid activists on policy shifts. Throughout the eight years of Reagan’s tenure, his staffers and Department officials took careful considerations on how the US positioned itself on apartheid reform through the language of gradualism and weaker economic pressures.

The extent of nontraditional foreign policy actors' influence over an administration's policy remains an important study in the field of foreign relations.⁴³⁴ In the current era of US involvement in other strategically significant areas of the world, non-governmental organizations and popular movements produce international discourse over questions of equity. The Summer 2020 Black Lives Matter international protests—following the deaths of George Floyd, Breanna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery—are the most recent example of US popular movements on international issues of race equity and the justice system.⁴³⁵ Several anti-apartheid activists, observing the Summer 2020 protests, spoke to the power of social media and viral videos as crucial components to rising public awareness and gathering support for their agenda, similar to that of the US news coverage of the township unrest and unprovoked violence on Black South Africans.⁴³⁶ While the anti-apartheid movement achieved its primary goal of bringing an end to apartheid, many organizers, like ACOA researcher William Minter, lamented the loss of media and national attention towards their larger goals of addressing African inequity following the release of Nelson Mandela.⁴³⁷ As a result, these discussions over equity remain and the 1980s anti-apartheid movement's influence provides a crucial case study into the power of nontraditional foreign policy actors as agents of change. Pressuring a US President to apply sanctions on strategic ally like South Africa and securing a presidential veto override are foreign

⁴³⁴ Benjamin E. Goldsmith and Yusaku Horiuchi, "In Search of Soft Power: Does Foreign Public Opinion Matter for US Foreign Policy?" *World Politics* 64, no. 3 (July 2012): 555-585; Craig Hayden, "Logics of narrative and networks in US public diplomacy: Communication power and US strategic engagement," *The Journal of International Communication* 19, no. 2 (2013). Goldsmith and Horiuchi provide a focus on outside of the US political groups that coordinate with US-based groups whereas Hayden pays particular attention to US-based advocacy groups on both foreign and domestic policies.

⁴³⁵ Mary Dudziak, "George Floyd Moves the World: The Legacy of Racial Protest in America and the Imperative of Reform," July 11, 2020, *Foreign Affairs*; Robert Greene II, "We Are Living in a Red Spring," May 31, 2020, *The Jacobin Magazine*.

⁴³⁶ Elizabeth "Betsy" Schmidt, interview by author, phone, July 22, 2020; Prexy Nesbitt, interview by author, phone, July 27, 2020.

⁴³⁷ William Minter, interview by author, phone, September 10, 2020.

policy achievements that few nontraditional foreign policy actors have achieved. Anti-apartheid organizations and activists used collective messaging and pressure through media, protest, and congressional lobbying to criticize and shift Ronald Reagan's foreign policy of constructive engagement. From the 1980 campaign through the Tripartite Agreement of December 1988, the active battle over the US-South African relationship and its public perception between Reagan staffers and its opponents. Reagan never admitted to the role of non-traditional foreign policy actors had in the evolution of his South African policy.

Further study into the role of nontraditional foreign policy actors in different foreign policy areas would allow scholars to understand how Reagan addressed different interest groups. Recent work on churches and religious organizations push this field in a new direction. The study of religious influences over Reagan's foreign policy facilitates a larger conversation about humanitarian concerns in foreign policy and how different organizations address them.⁴³⁸ Additional studies on how strategic relationships with foreign powers were relayed to the US public and how their framing differs when discussing US allies versus less friendly nations could be of equal value to the field. This thesis analyzed how from 1980 through 1988 several anti-apartheid organizations, leaders, and politicians used the public arena to debate US policies to advance their agenda. In an age where public debates take place in both physical and virtual spaces, studying the history of how different groups use these platforms is ultimately the key to grappling with the current influences on US foreign policy.

⁴³⁸ Lauren Turek's *To Bring the Good News to All Nations: Evangelical Influence on Human Rights and U.S. Foreign Relations* (2020) provides a recent example on the role of evangelical Christian organizations in foreign policy matters while advocating for the Religious Rights' positions abroad.

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