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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND
SEVEN HUNDRED AND NINETY-SEVENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 8 March 1988, at 3.30 p.m.

President: Mr. PEJIC

(Yugoslavia)

Members:

Algeria

Mr. DJOUDI

Argentina

Mr. PFIRTER

Brazil

Mr. NOGUEIRA-BATISTA

China

Mr. YU Mengjia

France

Mr. BLANC

Germany, Federal Republic of

Count YORK von WARTENBURG

Italy

Mr. BUCCI

Japan

Mr. KAGAMI

Nepal

Mr. RANA

Senegal

Mr. SARRE

Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics

Mr. BELONOGOV

United Kingdom of Great Britain
and Northern Ireland

Sir Crispin TICKELL

United States of America

Mr. OKUN

Zambia

Mr. ZUZE

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The meeting was called to order at 3.45 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

THE QUESTION OF SOUTH AFRICA

LETTER DATED 2 MARCH 1988 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF SIERRA LEONE TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/19567)

LETTER DATED 2 MARCH 1988 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ZAMBIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/19568)

The PRESIDENT: In accordance with the decisions taken at the previous meetings on this item, I invite the representatives of Botswana, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Guyana, India, Kuwait, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Tunisia and Zimbabwe to take the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Legwaila (Botswana), Mr. Garvalov (Bulgaria), Mr. Zapotocky (Czechoslovakia), Mr. Insanally (Guyana), Mr. Dasgupta (India), Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait), Mr. Yusof (Malaysia), Mr. Itheme (Nigeria), Mr. Shah Nawaz (Pakistan), Mr. Kargbo (Sierra Leone), Mr. Osman (Somalia), Mr. Manley (South Africa), Mr. Ghezal (Tunisia) and Mr. Mudenge (Zimbabwe) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT: The Security Council will now resume its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Sir Crispin TICKELL (United Kingdom): Sir, I scarcely need to wish you well in your office as President, because you are doing remarkably well already. But I convey my best wishes all the same, together with my thanks to your predecessor.

Like you and other members of the Council, Mr. President, I was disturbed at the tone of the speech made in the Council on 3 March by the Permanent

(Sir Crispin Tickell, United Kingdom)

Representative of South Africa and should like to endorse every word you said about this on 4 March. As a Member of the United Nations South Africa has a duty to respect its institutions, and not least the Security Council. I cannot help wondering what might be the motive for the gratuitous contempt for the Council expressed in Mr. Manley's statement. Its effects have been entirely negative. Was it a trap? Does the Council risk falling into it?

(Sir Crispin Tickell, United Kingdom)

The British Government was shocked and saddened by the action taken by the South African Government on 24 February 1988 against a large number of extra-parliamentary organizations in South Africa, including the Azanian People's Organization, the United Democratic Front, the Congress of South African Trade Unions and the Soweto Civic Association. As my Prime Minister said in the House of Commons on 25 February, the British Government condemns the latest move by President Botha to suppress free argument and debate, which will be a great setback to the possibility of peaceful negotiations. We have also condemned the decision by the South African police to prevent a petition protesting against the new measures from being delivered to the South African Parliament on 29 February, a decision which led to the arrest and detention for a short time of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Reverend Allan Boesak and many other clergymen.

The action taken by the South African Government was shortsighted and misconceived. Many of the organizations whose activities have been restricted are concerned with humanitarian aid and will be hamstrung by the new measures. The measures amount to repression of peaceful, legitimate political activity. As we have repeatedly said, the only way peaceful change can be secured in South Africa is through genuine dialogue: discussions between the South African Government and freely and fairly chosen leaders of the black community. This in turn entails the release of all political prisoners, including Nelson Mandela, and the lifting of the bans on all political organizations, including the African National Congress of South Africa and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania.

As my predecessor said when we considered the situation in South Africa in February last year, the Council must work constructively - and I emphasize constructively - for fundamental change in South Africa. The latest actions by the South African Government are a retrograde step, and it is right that this Council

(Sir Crispin Tickell, United Kingdom)

should strongly condemn them. The South African Government must understand that it will get no support from the international community for arbitrary and irresponsible conduct of this sort.

My delegation would therefore have liked the Council to send a unanimous signal to the South African Government of the need to rescind the new restrictions and to promote necessary change in South Africa itself. The effectiveness of this Council depends essentially on its unity. That means proper reflection of the sentiments known and expressed around this table. As I deeply respect the views and feelings of others so eloquently expressed during this debate, I hope that others will correspondingly respect ours.

The draft resolution before us contains a particular use of language, especially in calling for the imposition of sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter, which we cannot accept and are compelled to vote against. We do not believe that such mandatory economic sanctions can help bring about the peaceful end of apartheid. They would worsen rather than improve the prospects for peaceful change. They would stiffen those who resist change in South Africa and make internal reconciliation and lasting regional stability even more difficult to achieve. It must be for each country to take what action it considers most likely to contribute towards the end of apartheid. My Government continues to pursue an active policy of pressure and persuasion, as well as assistance to the victims of apartheid, designed to achieve practical and positive results. As a part of that policy, we have already adopted the great majority of the measures called for in this draft resolution as political signals to the South African Government of our concern.

We have left the South African authorities in no doubt of our views on recent developments. These have been conveyed to them both bilaterally and through the

(Sir Crispin Tickell, United Kingdom)

statement issued by the 12 members of the European Community to which the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany referred in his speech. My Government will continue to insist on the total abolition of the repulsive and detestable system of apartheid and its replacement by a non-racial representative system of Government. We shall continue scrupulously to apply the restrictive measures we have ourselves introduced. There will be no relaxation in our representations against human-rights abuses and our pressure and persuasion on the South African Government for political change. We shall continue to support those in South Africa, both black and white, who are working for peaceful change. We shall continue our practical and financial assistance to the neighbouring countries. President Botha should remember that throughout history no one has been able to destroy freedom of thought. It bounds back on those who even try to do so.

I remember an occasion three years ago when I had to pass through South Africa on my way to Swaziland. Like so many others, I saw apartheid for myself as something cruel, perverse, irrational and offensive to human dignity. It is all those things. But I also saw it as something else. It was, to use a word unfamiliar in this debate, absurd. How do we deal with the absurd? Surely, through the healing power of persuasion, to help South Africans come to terms with the reality of the need for change. Not by mandatory sanctions, not by demonstration of disunity in the Security Council, but by help for the victims of apartheid and by steady pressure and persuasion of the hearts and minds of the people of South Africa, white as well as black, so that all can see the need for a non-racial representative system of government which is fair and acceptable to South Africa as a whole.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for the kind words of encouragement he addressed to me.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Yugoslavia.

The situation in South Africa is deteriorating, and the danger of a general confrontation looms ever larger with every passing day. The policy of apartheid and racial discrimination has transformed South Africa into an anachronism propped up by State terrorism and racism. Human rights and human dignity are non-existent there. Oppression, terror and exploitation are the order of the day, bringing in their wake an unbearable plight and suffering to the black population. The racist régime has now set out to settle the score with all opponents of apartheid, showing no sign of readiness to engage in dialogue and work towards a peaceful and just solution.

(The President)

In yet another vain attempt to suppress people's resistance and eliminate each and every opposition to apartheid, the régime in Pretoria has imposed new repressive measures. It banned all political activities and work of 17 democratic popular organizations, including the United Democratic Front and the Congress of South African Trade Unions. It broke up peaceful demonstrations of church leaders by force, arresting about 150 demonstrators, among them Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Reverend Allan Boesak. It is seeking to introduce a legal bill prohibiting foreign assistance to all political groups and individuals struggling against apartheid.

It is no mere accident that these measures are designed to harm the organizations and individuals engaged in peaceful resistance to apartheid. By conscious effort, the régime has deliberately burned the bridges leading to peaceful change, thus leaving the deprived black population with no alternative but to take up arms. This is cause for great concern since it is leading South Africa to bloodshed and destruction.

History has shown that terror cannot root out the yearning for freedom and a people's aspiration to realize its legitimate right to self-determination and human dignity. As the Reverend Allan Boesak, a founder of the United Democratic Front, now banned from political activity, said, "You can ban an organization, but you cannot ban the idea that it stands for."

The courageous struggle of the people of South Africa has already eroded the foundations of apartheid, and not much time will elapse before the system and policy of apartheid are brought to their shameful end. However, the question is: what price is the people of South Africa to pay to achieve its freedom and human rights?

Along with other non-aligned countries, Yugoslavia has always striven for the full eradication of apartheid and the establishment of a non-racial, democratic

(The President)

society in a united South Africa through negotiations between the régime in Pretoria and the genuine representatives of the deprived black population. The necessary pre-conditions for these negotiations are the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners; the lifting of the ban on the activities of the African National Congress, the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, the United Democratic Front, the Congress of South African Trade Unions and other political parties and democratic organizations; the termination of the state of emergency; the withdrawal of the military from the black townships; the safe return of political refugees and freedom fighters; and the lifting of censorship and the respect for freedom of the press.

As has transpired from the debate at these meetings of the Security Council, this negotiating platform is supported by many other countries. There is no longer any justification for us here in the Security Council to shun our responsibility to take effective and firm action that will bring an end to the criminal policy of Pretoria.

The ways and means to do this are there. What is needed is joint and united action by all members of this Council. The arguments being put forward against the introduction of mandatory sanctions and in favour of so-called gradual reform of the system of apartheid have long since worn thin. They have ceased to sound convincing even to public opinion in the countries whose Governments have most consistently defended them. Apartheid is a crime against humanity, we stated many times in this House, and a serious threat to international peace and security. It cannot be changed by reforms; it must be eradicated. Hence the obligation of the international community to stand united in its action to eliminate apartheid by all means at its disposal.

I should like to point out once again Yugoslavia's principled position that imposition of comprehensive mandatory sanctions against the racist régime in

(The President)

Pretoria is, unfortunately I must say, the only remaining peaceful means to eliminate apartheid and bring about peace in southern Africa. This position is maintained by the majority of other States as well. To promote human rights, justice and lasting peace is the position embraced by neighbouring countries also, even though they themselves are to be seriously hurt by the sanctions.

In addition to introducing the sanctions, the international community should render concrete and effective assistance to the legitimate struggle of the people of South Africa, in particular to the liberation movements recognized by the Organization of African Unity.

Within the limits of its possibilities, Yugoslavia will continue to support and assist the struggle of the peoples of South Africa and Namibia and their liberation movements until the complete elimination of apartheid. As a member of the Committee of the AFRICA Fund of the non-aligned countries, Yugoslavia will actively participate in mobilizing international assistance to the victims of the racist régime: the liberation movements and the front-line States.

I now resume my function as President of the Council.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall first call on those members of the Council who wish to make a statement before the voting.

Count YORK von WARTENBURG (Federal Republic of Germany): Last Friday I had the opportunity to set forth the position of the Federal Government towards the most recent repressive measures taken by the South African Government. My delegation has made it clear that we vigorously condemn the most recent attempts by the South African Government to put a de facto ban on 17 organizations and on

(Count York von Wartenburg,
Federal Republic of Germany)

the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). We also stressed the fact that in case of an escalation of violence responsibility for that development will rest basically with the Government of South Africa. Moreover, the Federal Government will continually do its utmost to convince the South African Government to abolish apartheid and enter into a dialogue involving all relevant groups in South Africa.

My Government wishes to stress that it shares the assessment of the situation in South Africa underlying the draft resolution before us and that we therefore could agree to most of its paragraphs. We also agree on the main goal, that is, the abolition of apartheid by peaceful means. We feel that in this critical situation the South African Government must be made aware that its recent measures of oppression are considered intolerable by the international community. In this sense we had hoped for a text to be presented to the Council the unanimous adoption of which would have been assured from the outset.

In June 1986 the Heads of State or Government of the member countries of the European Community decided that in their striving for peaceful change in South Africa positive measures should constitute the main piece of the joint European policy. But in order to send a clear signal to the South African Government, the Foreign Ministers of the Twelve also adopted certain restrictive measures against South Africa. We joined in that decision and we are carrying it out.

We appreciate the fact that the measures contained in operative paragraph 4 of the draft resolution before us correspond to a large extent to those taken by the European Community. We also welcome that these measures are meant to remain in force only for a period of 12 months.

(Count York von Wartenburg,
Federal Republic of Germany)

My Government, however, continues to believe that in principle political problems cannot be resolved by mandatory economic sanctions.

In these circumstances, my Government has decided to abstain on this draft resolution.

The South African Government should understand this vote as a message and as a clear signal that my Government's patience is not inexhaustible. Together with our partners we shall resolutely continue to work with all our strength for the realization of human rights in South Africa.

Mr. OKUN (United States of America): Mr. President, I know that your broad vision, diplomatic skill and wide experience will be of immense benefit to the Security Council this month. As the representative of a country with which my own has enjoyed excellent relations for many years, you can surely count upon the co-operation of my delegation.

I wish also to express gratitude for the kind remarks that you and other members of the Security Council have made with regard to Ambassador Walters's presidency last month.

The system of apartheid in South Africa must be eradicated. Its continued existence 43 years after the signing of the United Nations Charter constantly reminds us that the ideal of racial equality embodied in the Charter has not yet been realized.

The Government and people of the United States have assumed that all Members of this Organization, by ratifying the Charter, committed themselves to securing for all humankind a life of dignity and freedom without racial oppression. The tragic and unacceptable events of the last few weeks in South Africa prove that the rulers of that nation are not interested in racial equality. Rather they seem to

(Mr. Okun, United States)

be interested only in the survival of their medieval system of apartheid. By the steps they took on 24 February they have outlawed the activities of individuals and organizations representing a wide cross-section of the black community and many in the white community as well. These individuals and groups are precisely those working for a peaceful transition to a political, economic and social system in South Africa based on democratic principles and racial equality.

In its announcement of 24 February the Government of South Africa appears to be saying that it will not tolerate peaceful, non-violent opposition to apartheid. Is it sending a message to the opponents of apartheid that they may no longer express dissenting opinions, and that violence is the only recourse left to them? My Government fears the reprehensible actions of the South African Government have dealt a severe blow to efforts to move South Africa peacefully to a society which practices racial equality. The Government of South Africa has indeed taken a giant step backwards. Instead of peaceful and constructive dialogue, this Draconian action by the South African Government can lead only to a destructive monologue.

The United States still believes, however, that there is a way out of the vicious cycle of repression and violence that threatens to overwhelm South Africa. As Secretary of State Shultz said last year, the United States favours

"a new constitutional order for a united South Africa establishing equal political, economic and social rights for all South Africans without regard to race, language, national origin or religion."

This means the total abolition of apartheid. This means respect, in fact as well as on paper, for freedom of the press, religion, speech and an independent judiciary. This means protection of the right to own private property. It is still possible to achieve these goals, but time may be running out.

(Mr. Okun, United States)

Despite the tragic setback represented by the 24 February announcement of the South African Government, the United States will continue to encourage those within South Africa who are working peacefully towards the abolition of apartheid and replacement of the present system by a truly democratic form of government. In doing so, the United States will continue to rely on carefully calibrated and targeted diplomatic and economic measures.

As a logical outcome of the debate in the Security Council over the last few days, my delegation was prepared to work with other members of the Council to fashion a draft resolution that could have won unanimous support. Such a resolution would have sent a clear message to the Government of South Africa that the international community unequivocally condemned its latest attempt to crush legitimate dissent and was determined to promote the abolition of apartheid. We were prepared to join with others in condemning South Africa's actions and believed that a paper circulated informally to members last week would have the desired effect. We conveyed this message to those responsible for drafting the paper. Unfortunately the drafters of the present draft resolution, justifiably angered by the purposely provocative and inflammatory speech of the Permanent Representative of South Africa last Thursday, chose to respond to that provocation by proposing a draft resolution that my Government cannot accept.

My Government does not believe that the draft resolution now before the Council will contribute to the goal of a rapid and peaceful end to apartheid. In the judgement of my Government, mandatory sanctions will not strengthen those individuals and organizations seeking a non-violent end to apartheid, but will serve only to weaken them. The United States is convinced that mandatory sanctions would fail to demolish the edifice of apartheid. They would, rather, undermine

(Mr. Okun, United States)

further the black struggle for justice and make it more difficult, if not impossible, to achieve internal reconciliation and regional economic development.

Simply put, mandatory sanctions would not have the desired effect. Economic pressure of that magnitude would have the least impact on the South African Government and would mainly harm the very people it was ostensibly intended to help - that is, South Africa's oppressed black majority. Moreover such sanctions would also inflict grave damage on all of the economies of the southern African region.

Because of the inclusion in this draft resolution of a call for mandatory sanctions, my delegation must regretfully vote against it. It is ironic that this draft resolution would further isolate South Africa and would therefore only serve the interests of those in that country who seek to perpetuate apartheid.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United States for his kind words addressed to me.

I shall now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/19585.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour: Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, China, Italy, Nepal,
Senegal, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Yugoslavia,
Zambia

Against: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland,
United States of America

Abstaining: France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Japan

The PRESIDENT: There were 10 votes in favour, 2 against and 3 abstentions. The draft resolution has not been adopted owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council.

There are no further speakers for this meeting. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.