

# TRANSAFRICA NEWS

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The Black American Lobby  
for  
Africa and the Caribbean

Vol 9, No. 1

Winter 1990

## PRESIDENT DOS SANTOS' VISIT CALLED OFF

Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos called off his visit to the United States a few days before he was due to arrive for a four-city tour sponsored by TransAfrica. TransAfrica believes that the cancellation was largely a result of intense pressure by the Bush administration which had become increasingly concerned by the extent of support for the visit demonstrated by civil rights and business groups.

President Dos Santos was set to arrive in New York City on Monday, February 5 to begin a highly publicized private visit to the U.S. The planned visit was part of a major initiative to force a public re-examination of American policy toward Angola. At present, the U.S. provides about eighty-million dollars to the South African-backed UNITA rebel group that is committed to the overthrow of the Dos Santos government. The U.S. and South Africa are the only two industrialized countries that do not recognize the Angolan government.

American policy towards Angola has been shielded by the Bush administration from public scrutiny. Few Americans know of the devastation caused by American supplied weapons to Angola. The fact that UNITA, headed by Jonas Savimbi, has been responsible for gross human rights abuses is also little known.

The Dos Santos visit would have provided Americans with an opportunity to hear the other side in this tragic conflict. Apparently, the Bush administration felt, as TransAfrica did, that if Americans were made aware of the reality of American policy in Angola, a great surge of popular outcry would force a cessation of assistance to the UNITA rebels.

By forcing the cancellation, the administration has done the American public and Congress a great disservice. President Dos Santos was scheduled to meet with members of Congress, business leaders, civil rights leaders such as Mrs. Coretta Scott King, and Reverend Joseph Lowery, state and local government officials such as Governor L. Douglas Wilder of Virginia, Mayors David Dinkins of New York and Maynard Jackson of Atlanta. Several public and private receptions and forums were scheduled in New York, Atlanta, Washington, D.C. and Los Angeles.

TransAfrica's executive director, Randall Robinson, who had delivered invitations from Spelman College and thirty-six members of Congress to President Dos Santos when they met in Angola last September, has criticized the administration's pressure and vowed to continue efforts to change U.S. policy toward Angola. During his September visit to Angola, Robinson saw extensive evidence of the devastation caused by U.S. military assistance to UNITA. He also met with the British ambassador and observed the comprehensive effort of the Angolan government to liberalize their economy.

Many people who are familiar with the policies of the Angolan government have expressed amazement that the Bush administration refuses to recognize it despite a consistent record of support for peace in Namibia and liberalization of the economy. It is clear that our Angolan policy has no relationship to our national interest. It is also clear that the administration will do all in its power to keep its policy from public scrutiny.



# **NELSON MANDELA RELEASED AFTER 27 YEARS**

President F. W. de Klerk, on February 2, 1990, announced his National Party reform platform to the South African Parliament and the world.

His reform platform included:

1. The unconditional release of Nelson Mandela.
2. Reduction in the period of pre-trial detention to no more than 6 months with the right to an attorney and a doctor of the detainees choice.
3. The unbanning of the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), and the South African Communist Party (SACP), and other opposition groups.

4. Partial lifting of media restrictions.

A week after this announcement, Nelson Mandela was released from Victor Verster Prison. It was an extremely joyous occasion. Celebration occurred all over the world.

Since his release, Mandela has more than fulfilled expectation. He has addressed crowds of hundreds of thousands in South Africa. His message has been one of unity, an end to the violence between black groups, and increased pressure on the South African regime.

## ***Statement by Randall Robinson upon the release of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela***

I am very happy for the Mandela family on this historic day. However, after 27 years it is difficult to give the South African government more than grudging congratulations.

Let us just hope now that Mr. Mandela has not given so much of his life in vain. We are hopeful that he will win black South Africans their rights through negotiations in the coming month.

It is important to remember that today as he leaves a small prison, Mr. Mandela enters the much larger prison of the apartheid system. Its restrictions are much more repressive than those of the society he was removed from nearly three decades ago.

With the exception of the unbanning of political organizations and a partial lifting of the state of emergency, nothing has happened yet to create full citizenship for the black majority.

President Bush seems to be carried away by the celebratory atmosphere surrounding Mr. Mandela's departure from prison. His invitation to President de Klerk to visit the White House is a tragic mistake.

No American president in the 40 years of apartheid government has ever invited the head of the South African police state to the White House. The President's gesture seriously weakens the leverage we have exerted in pressing for political reform and negotiations.

In addition, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's encouragement to European nations to reconsider sanctions and investment in South Africa is extremely ill-advised. There can be no question about the efficacy of economic pressure created by sanctions.

Despite international condemnation, until sanctions were imposed four years ago we saw no change in apartheid since it was codified in 1948.

We urge the U.S. to continue pressure in the form of sanctions until we see in South Africa a significant movement toward a one-person, one-vote democracy in a unitary state.

*Subsequent to Mandela's release, the African National Congress announced that several of its exiled leadership would be sent home to open an office under the guidance of Walter Sisulu. The Congress is in the process of forming a delegation that will begin negotiations with the South African government.*



## CHAPTER NEWS

TransAfrica's Annual Chapter meeting was hosted by the Detroit, Michigan chapter on October 28, 1989. Thanks go out to chapter President, Margaret Baylor, and Vice-president Akua Budu-Watkins for planning the meeting.

Please mark your calendars with the dates of the 1990 TransAfrica Annual Chapter meeting: October 27-28, 1990. Our hosts will be the Chicago chapter.

The Cincinnati, Ohio chapter is presently working with its local city council to implement a divestment measure which will force the city's pension fund to divest itself of stocks in companies doing business in South Africa.

•••• Thank You ••••

TransAfrica sends its warmest thanks to the **Washington D.C. Chapter of Links, Inc.** for their donation of Chain Break by Louis Maqhubela.

## For Your Information

### TransAfrica Weekend

Foreign Policy Conference  
Friday, June 1, 1990  
United States Congress  
Cannon House Office Building  
Theme: "*Changing Globe: Implications for U.S. Relations with the Black World*"

\*Registration must be made before May 21, 1990 in order to receive 25% off te conference and luncheon tickets.

Annual Dinner  
Saturday, June 2, 1990  
Washington Hilton Hotel,  
International Ballroom

### "SOUTH AFRICA NOW"

Executive Director, Randall Robinson can be seen giving weekly commentary on recent events in Southern Africa, and how the United States can make a difference in the region.

Address your contributions to:  
"South Africa Now"  
361 West Broadway  
New York, New York 10013  
(212) 941-0255

### -- CURRICULUM GUIDE -- APARTHEID IS WRONG

This publication should be a required purchase of every school system in the country. It is an educational guide that informs children about the horrors of life under apartheid. All inquires should be addressed to:

Educators Against Apartheid  
164-04 Goethals Avenue  
Jamaica, New York 11432

### FOREIGN AID IN FY 1990 P.L. 101-167

The appropriations for the 1990 foreign aid bill were as follows:

\$515 million in developmental assistance to Sub-saharan Africa	\$60 million in economic support
\$ 50 million to SADCC	\$12 million in military aid
	\$78.7 million in developmental assistance to the Caribbean

We must begin our efforts now for equitable treatment of Africa and the Caribbean in FY 1991 appropriations, contact:

David Obey (D-WI)  
Chairman, Foreign Operations,  
Export Financing  
2217 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515-4907

Patrick Leahy (D-VT)  
Chairman,  
Senate Foreign Operations  
SR-433 Russell SOB  
Washington, D.C. 20510-4502

## Namibia Road to Independence

The election for the Namibian Constituent Assembly charged with drafting the independence constitution of the new nation was completed with no major incidences of violence or ballot tampering. The United Nations quickly moved to declare the process 'free and fair', and thereby set Africa's last colony one step closer to independence. Many Namibians walked for days to reach the voting polls, only to be turned away at times; but they persisted and the overwhelming majority of them took part in the process.

SWAPO came away with a majority of the votes, 57%. This translated into 41 seats in the Constituent Assembly. The DTA, or Democratic Turnhalle Alliance, SWAPO's primary opponent, received the next highest percentage of 28% or 21 seats. Namibia's Constituent Assembly proceeded rapidly with the goal of declaring Namibia independent as soon as possible, so as to rid the country of South African domination.

The international community will be able to witness the culmination of the Namibian struggle on March 21, 1990 when control of Namibia will be transferred from the South African government to the elected representatives of the Namibian people. At that time, the newly elected president Sam Nujoma, will take office.

Issues of concern for the new nation will be trade relations with South Africa, the independence of Walvis Bay--Namibia's only developed deep water port, and foreign aid. At this writing, the United States allocation is \$500,000.

## **SANCTIONS**

### **H.R. 21/S. 507. Anti-Apartheid Act Amendments of 1989**

The sanctions legislation remains in the House and Senate Foreign Affairs and Foreign Relations Committees. Our strategy has not changed - please call and write your representatives in the House and Senate asking that they support these measures.

## **FINANCIAL SANCTIONS**

### **H.R. 3458. Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986, Amendment**

This measure would amend the 1986 Comprehensive Act to prohibit United States banks from providing certain financial services to South African banks and to the Government of South Africa. The House Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the House Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs are considering the amendment.

Please call and write your representatives to urge their support of this measure.

## **ANGOLA**

### **H.C.R. 203. Resolution Concerning Relations Between the United States and the Government of Angola**

This measure calls for the creation of a United States liaison office in Angola. It is before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Presently, HCR 203 has over 100 cosponsors-- Democrats and Republicans. Contact your representatives to ask that they support this resolution.

### **S.R. 196. Resolution Regarding the Peace Process in Angola**

This measure calls for the United States to extend support to Jonas Savimbi, and the rebel movement, UNITA. We must **mobilize against** this resolution. It is imperative that your Senators be lobbied to change their attitudes on Angola. Call their offices and tell them that this measure would not be **beneficial** to the mutual interests of the United States and Angola. Urge them to recognize the government of Angola and to stop providing more than \$50 million in military aid to UNITA.

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