

OPENING REMARKS

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WORKSHOP ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

SEPTEMBER 23, 1981

I WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME EACH OF YOU TO WASHINGTON, AND ESPECIALLY TO THIS WORKSHOP ON THE INPUT WE, AS BLACKS, CAN MAKE TO THE FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT.

THE NEED FOR BLACK PARTICIPATION IN THIS PROCESS IS WITHOUT QUESTION. THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION HAS TAKEN POSITIONS IN THE PAST NINE MONTHS THAT ARE INIMICAL TO THE INTERESTS OF BLACKS AND OTHER NON-WHITES AROUND THE WORLD. THEY HAVE SIGNALLED A CHANGE OF DIRECTION IN U.S. POLICY TOWARDS SOUTH AFRICA AND ITS RACIST APARTHEID SYSTEM; THEY HAVE SUBJUGATED THE NEEDS OF THIRD WORLD NATIONS TO THE PROFITS OF AMERICAN BUSINESSES; THEY HAVE FAILED TO TAKE A STRONG POSITION AGAINST ISRAELI TERRORISTS USING AMERICAN WEAPONS FOR INCURSIONS IN IRAQ, OR TO SEEK A JUST AND LASTING PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST: THEY HAVE ENMESHED AMERICAN TROOPS IN THE CIVIL CONFLICT IN EL SALVADOR; AND THEY HAVE ESTABLISHED A PATTERN OF GROSS DISCRIMINATION IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF FOREIGN ECONOMIC AID TO NEEDY AFRICAN, CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN NATIONS.

IF WE HAVE ANY HOPE OF A CHANGE IN THESE POLICIES, IT MUST BE A HOPE BASED ON OUR OWN COMMITMENT AND ENERGIES TO BECOME PERSONALLY INVOLVED IN HOW THE DECISIONS ARE MADE. BLACKS MUST BECOME INVOLVED IN THE FOREIGN POLICY PROCESS

IF WE EXPECT U.S. POLICIES TO BE JUST.

DURING THE FOUR YEARS OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION, THE INVOLVEMENT OF AMERICAN BLACKS IN THE FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF AMERICAN POLICY REACHED A NEW LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE AND PROMINENCE. WITH THE APPOINTMENT OF ANDY YOUNG AS U.S. AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AND TERRY TODMAN AS THE FIRST BLACK AMERICAN TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR A GEOGRAPHIC BUREAU AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT, AND JOHN REINHARDT AS DIRECTOR OF THE U.S. INFORMATION AND CULTURAL AGENCY, THE APPOINTMENT OF A BLACK AMERICAN ON THE PRESTIGIOUS WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL STAFF, AND THE APPOINTMENT OF SEVERAL BLACKS TO AMBASSADORSHIPS IN IMPORTANT POSTS OUTSIDE AFRICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION ASSURED BLACKS IN THIS COUNTRY THAT THEY WOULD HAVE A VOICE IN THE DIRECTION OF AMERICAN POLICY TOWARDS THE THIRD WORLD, AND IN GENERAL U.S. FOREIGN POLICY.

UNDER THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION, MINORITY REPRESENTATION ALSO INCREASED IN THE CAREER FOREIGN SERVICE, AND IN THE COMMUNITY OF INFLUENTIAL PERSONS WHOSE EXPERTISE MAKES THIS GOVERNMENT RUN.

WE NOW SEE WHAT A DIFFERENCE SUCH A INPUT MAKES. ANDY YOUNG WAS AN ACTIVE AND EFFECTIVE SPOKESMAN FOR BLACK AND THIRD WORLD OPINIONS, ^{WHILE} JEANNE KIRKPATRICK MEETS WITH THE SOUTH AFRICANS. ANDY YOUNG HELPED LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR ZIMBAWE'S INDEPENDENCE UNDER PRIME MINISTER ROBERT MUGABE;

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AND DON MCHENRY, ANDY'S DEPUTY AND LATER SUCCESSOR, WAS THE ARCHITECT OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S EFFORT TO SOLVE THE STILL LINGERING NAMIBIAN PROBLEM. THE REAGAN TEAM HAS YET TO TAKE A STRONG STAND ON EITHER OF THESE ISSUES.

AND EVEN WHILE NEWLY-ELECTED FRENCH PRESIDENT MITTERAND STRIVES TO MEET ALL AFRICAN HEADS OF STATE BEFORE THE END OF THIS YEAR, PRESIDENT REAGAN WAS "TOO BUSY" TO GRANT A SIMPLE COURTESY VISIT TO THE NIGERIAN VICE PRESIDENT ON HIS VISIT TO WASHINGTON A FEW DAYS AGO.

THE PAST PROMINENCE OF BLACK AMERICANS IN THE FOREIGN POLICY PROCESS HAS ONLY HELPED TO CREATE AN ILLUSION OF OUR INFLUENCE, IMPORTANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE IN THE INSTITUTIONALIZED FOREIGN POLICY PROCESS IN THIS COUNTRY.

IN FACT, THE OPPOSITE IS TRUE TODAY.

TODAY BLACKS ARE PROBABLY MORE POORLY REPRESENTED IN THE DAY-TO-DAY DECISION MAKING PROCESS ON FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES -- INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF GOVERNMENT -- THAN IN ANY OTHER PROFESSIONAL FIELD IN THIS COUNTRY.

FEW - IF ANY - BLACKS ARE, OR HAVE BEEN, ACCEPTED INTO THE PERMANENT FOREIGN POLICY INSTITUTIONS WHICH HELP TO SHAPE THE INTERNATIONAL POSITIONS OF THIS COUNTRY. FEW - IF ANY - BLACKS ARE INVOLVED IN THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS CAREER SERVICES THAT HELP TO FORMULATE AND IMPLEMENT POLICY DECISIONS. FEW - IF ANY - BLACKS ARE MEMBERS OR PARTNERS IN THE MAJOR LEGAL FIRMS OR INTERNATIONAL BANKS FROM WHICH SECRETARIES OF STATE AND SENIOR DIPLOMATS ARE DRAWN. AND FEW - IF ANY - BLACKS ARE PART OF

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THE FOREIGN POLICY "OLD BOYS NETWORK" THAT EXISTS IN WASHINGTON, NEW YORK AND BOSTON.

IN SHORT, FEW BLACKS ARE A PERMANENT PART OF THE CORE OF FOREIGN POLICY DECISION-MAKERS WHICH WILL AFFECT OUR LIVES AND THOSE OF OUR GREAT-GRANDCHILDREN.

--THERE ARE NO BLACK FOREIGN SERVICE CAREER OFFICERS IN SENIOR POLICY-MAKING POSITIONS IN THE REAGAN DEPARTMENT OF STATE.

--THERE ARE NO BLACK ASSISTANT SECRETARIES OR UNDER SECRETARIES OF STATE.

--AND OUT OF SOME 144 AMERICAN AMBASSADORS AROUND THE WORLD, ONLY FOUR ARE BLACK.

--MOREOVER, LESS THAN EIGHT PERCENT OF THE CAREER FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICERS ARE BLACK, WITH MOST STUCK IN DEADEND, NON-POLICY-MAKING JOBS.

IN PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS CONCERNED WITH INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, THE PICTURE IS JUST AS BLEAK.

THE TWO MOST PROMINENT OF THESE FOUNDATIONS - THE COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS AND THE CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE - ARE GOOD EXAMPLES.

THE COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS, WITH A SELECT MEMBERSHIP OF SOME 2000 INDIVIDUALS, PUBLISHES FOREIGN AFFAIRS MAGAZINE, REGARDED IN THIS COUNTRY AND ABROAD AS THE MOST PRESTIGIOUS JOURNAL ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN THE WORLD. THE COUNCIL ITSELF IS REGARDED AS THE MOST INFLUENTIAL GROUP OF FOREIGN POLICY REPRESENTATIVES IN THIS COUNTRY. AND IF YOU WERE TO ASK WHETHER ANY BLACKS ARE ON THE COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS, I

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WOULD HAVE TO SAY FRIGHTFULLY FEW. AND EVEN FEWER ARE IN PROMINENT POSITIONS WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION OR RECIPIENTS OF ITS GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS.

THE CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT HAS A SIMILAR DEARTH OF BLACK PARTICIPATION. ALTHOUGH IT DOES NOT HAVE AN ESTABLISHED MEMBERSHIP LIST, ITS PUBLICATION, FOREIGN POLICY MAGAZINE, ENJOYS A REPUTATION NEARLY AS GREAT AS THAT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. BUT IF ONE WERE TO GO TO THE OFFICES OF THE CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT IN WASHINGTON, I AM AFRAID YOU WOULD NOT FIND ANY BLACKS AMONG THE ACADEMIC EXPERTS AND SCHOLARS WHO ARE SHAPING OUR FOREIGN POLICY AND WHO WILL BE OUR FUTURE FOREIGN POLICY LEADERS.

UNTIL BLACKS CAN BECOME A PART OF THESE FORMAL AND INFORMAL FOREIGN POLICY NETWORKS AND INSTITUTIONS, OUR CAPACITY TO INFLUENCE DECISIONS AND TO HAVE A PERMANENT VOICE IN U.S. INTERNATIONAL POLICY WILL BE SEVERELY LIMITED.

ONE OF THE FEW PLACES THAT BLACKS HAVE HAD A GENUINE INSTITUTIONAL POWER AND INFLUENCE OVER FOREIGN POLICY IS THROUGH THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS. THERE ARE NOW 18 MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS, EACH OF WHOM IS CONCERNED ABOUT FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES IN GENERAL AND AFRICAN AND CARIBBEAN ISSUES, ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AND IMMIGRATION POLICIES IN PARTICULAR.

AS BLACK AMERICANS, AND AS REPRESENTATIVES OF MILLIONS OF OTHER BLACK AMERICANS, WE HAVE A STRONG AND ABIDING INTEREST

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IN THE CONDUCT OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY.

THE INVOLVEMENT OF WHICH I, AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CAUCUS, SPEAK IS BUILT ON A TRADITION OF INVOLVEMENT BY BLACKS WHICH CAN BE TRACED WITH PRIDE AND DIGNITY OVER THE ENTIRE BREADTH OF OUR NATION'S HISTORY.

-- IN THE 1840'S AND 1850'S, FREDERICK DOUGLASS, THE NOTED ABOLITIONIST, FOUGHT FOR AMERICAN RECOGNITION OF LIBERIA AND HAITI AND WAS LATER APPOINTED AMERICA'S ENVOY TO HAITI;

-- AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY AND THROUGHOUT THE PERIOD FOLLOWING WORLD WAR I, WILLIAM E.B. DUBOIS HELPED ORGANIZE THE FIRST PAN-AFRICANIST CONGRESS WHICH FOUGHT FOR EARLY DECOLONIZATION OF BLACK NATIONS UNDER GERMAN CONTROL;

-- IN 1948, DR. RALPH BUNCHE, AS THE UNITED NATIONS UNDERSECRETARY FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS, HELPED TO NEGOTIATE AN END TO THE FIRST ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT AND IN THE PROCESS BECAME THE FIRST BLACK AMERICAN TO WIN THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE;

-- AND, OF COURSE, MOST RECENTLY WE HAVE HAD THE MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS OF ANDY YOUNG, DON MCHENRY AND OTHERS.

WE HAVE PLAYED A ROLE IN THE FOREIGN POLICY PROCESS AND WE CAN CONTINUE TO PLAY A ROLE IN THIS AREA IN THE FUTURE.

BUT IF WE ARE TO DO MORE IT WILL MEAN THAT ALL OUR ORGANIZATIONS, PARTICULARLY THOSE THAT HAVE TRADITIONALLY CONCENTRATED ON DOMESTIC ISSUES, WILL HAVE TO TAKE A SIGNIFICANTLY GREATER INTEREST IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

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IT WILL MEAN THAT EACH OF US, AND THE COMMUNITIES AND INSTITUTIONS WE REPRESENT, WILL HAVE TO BECOME ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN THE FORMULATION OF FOREIGN POLICY AGENDAS. IT WILL REQUIRE US TO ARTICULATE A GREATER CONCERN ABOUT AFRICAN AND CARIBBEAN ISSUES, AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, AND DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMS, AND PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS TO THE CONFLICTS OF THE WORLD.

WE CANNOT SIT BACK AND RELY ON OTHERS TO BEGIN THIS INVOLVEMENT. THE LEADERSHIP MUST COME FROM US.

WE MUST ENCOURAGE YOUNG PEOPLE TO PURSUE FOREIGN POLICY CAREERS AND OBJECTIVES.

WE MUST WORK TO ASSURE MINORITY REPRESENTATION IN THE POLICY LEVELS AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND THE WHITE HOUSE.

WE MUST MAKE PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS ACCOUNTABLE TO THE MINORITY POPULATIONS BY INCLUDING BLACKS AND OTHERS IN THEIR BOARD ROOMS AND EDITORIAL STAFFS.

WE MUST WORK TO INCREASE OUR STRENGTH IN CONGRESS.

AND WE MUST WORK TO ENSURE THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE UNDERSTAND THE ISSUES THAT LIE BEFORE THE WORLD TODAY.

ALL OF THIS CAN BE ACHIEVED, IF WE USE THE TALENTS AND RESOURCES GATHERED HERE THIS WEEKEND.

LET US BEGIN.