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"COMMENT"

NBC - June 8, 1971
HONORABLE CHARLES C. DIGGS, JR.

There is grave disparity within our government complex as it relates to the issues of race and foreign policy. With growing interest, Black Americans and Black Africans are taking a careful look at South Africa--U.S. relations and are growing increasingly disillusioned over our involvement with that racist regime. Despite this, the U.S. continues to undergird a government system which discriminates against visiting Black Americans as well as its own native blacks.

Our government allots a sugar quota for South Africa which guarantees them huge profits from our lucrative sugar market. Under this quota, the U.S. pays South Africa twice as much for a pound of sugar than it could get in normal trade on the world market. South Africa grows richer each year from U.S. taxpayers' dollars. The U.S. government subsidy to that country is five million dollars a year --- a whopping twenty five million dollars over the past five years!

Today, the rising cost of living is taking a big chunk out of our pocketbooks. Blacks, here at home, are naturally the hardest hit, being the last hired and the first fired. Yet, American housewives are being forced to pay higher and higher prices for sugar imported from South Africa.

We are not criticizing the sugar quota concept. For the sugar quota system is generally a good policy for the United States. It assures sugar supply in periods of shortage. What we are criticizing is the favoritism being shown this rich and well developed country.

Little of the \$5 million annual subsidy to South Africa which we pay shifts down to the African labourer in the sugar industry. There wages are calculated in cents not dollars. The African field worker makes around 47 cents a day. Whites at the top are becoming wealthy in terms of political and economic power. The blacks at the bottom are powerless and poor.

I am pushing for an increased sugar quota to the countries that need assistance, the economically-hardpressed countries of Black Africa. Without a sugar market they cannot develop their country and their people cannot attain a satisfactory standard of living. The sugar output of the black African countries is rapidly and substantially increasing. An enlarged quota to these ^{underdeveloped} countries would be in the finest American tradition of international development.

I also recognize the need for our own domestic sugar growers to increase their production capability. They should be given a greater share of the U.S. market. The South African sugar quota is a blatant insult to the interest of American sugar producers. In 1965, when South Africa's production capability was low, she bought sugar from other countries at the low world market price and resold it to us for twice as much.

The present Sugar Act expires at the end of this year. A bill to extend the Sugar Act contains a provision for another sugar quota for South Africa. It now appears that the U.S. --- "Uncle Sugar", is all set to hand over another generous sugar quota to South Africa worth millions of dollars.

~~The bill comes to a vote this month. I urge you to contact your representative in Congress immediately. South Africa's sugar quota must be terminated.~~
