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Washington, D.C.
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STATEMENT OF
CONGRESSMAN CHARLES C. DIGGS, JR.

PRESS CONFERENCE OF THE
CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

Out of grave concern about the rapidly deteriorating situation in Southern Africa and the directions of U.S. diplomatic initiatives in the area, the Congressional Black Caucus will convene a Black leadership conference on U.S.-Africa policy on September 24-25, 1976. This meeting will assemble the leaders of the principal Black national civil rights, economic, political, educational, social and religious organizations, scholars and other informed individuals to address the explosive situation which threatens international peace and our own domestic racial harmony, and to forge a consensus on the appropriate U.S.-Africa policy.

Present U.S. policy in Southern Africa may be setting the stage for a wider, more violent armed struggle in the African subcontinent. Therefore, we oppose the forthcoming Kissinger-Vorster meeting unless certain conditions are met.

We are pleased that the Secretary finally recognized the importance of paying attention to Africa. But we do not know Dr. Kissinger's grand design for Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa, since he has not found the time to discuss his diplomatic activities with the Caucus or apparently even with his top African specialists in the Department of State. Once again Dr. Kissinger has embarked upon the kind of secret diplomacy that may involve the U.S. in unacceptable commitments that compromise U.S. interests.

If the vote in Congress to cut off funds for the covert operation in Angola carried any message, it was that the Administration cannot expect the Congress to automatically endorse covenants secretly arrived at.

Although we can only make educated guesses about the Secretary's intentions, three principal developments since the Bavaria meeting force us to speak out at this time.

1. The apparent U.S. strategy for bringing about majority rule in Namibia and Zimbabwe is bound to fail since the group waging war in Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Liberation Army (ZLA), and the only internationally-recognized representatives of the Namibian people, SWAPO, have neither been involved in these negotiations, nor approve of them.

There can only be a real and lasting independence if it comes about through the efforts of those nationalists who have worked hardest for it.

Ian Smith remains intractable. According to the Financial Times of August 6, even British officials believe that white Rhodesia has shown no sign of accepting the inevitability of majority rule, and that until there is a crack in white morale, proposals of financial guarantees to whites covering land purchases, property pensions and subsidized emigration could be counterproductive.

The "breakthrough" in Namibia is a bogus effort to buytime and defuse opposition to South Africa in the United Nations now that the Pretoria regime has failed to implement the Security Council resolution calling for it to take certain actions by August 31, 1976.

The Turnhalle statement of August 18 issued by the constitutional committee of the conference was neither approved by the conference itself, nor by the South African government, and therefore has no binding effect. This statement, which postpones independence to December 31, 1978, is silent on the form of government and makes no reference to elections, has been appropriately rejected by SWAPO, and the Council on Namibia of the United Nations.

South Africa must negotiate its withdrawal from Namibia with the U.N. or SWAPO, and take steps to bring about majority rule as outlined in Security Council Resolution 385 including the holding of territorial elections under U.N. supervision and control.

2. African front line presidents have begun to criticize the Kissinger initiatives. President Kenneth Kaunda, the African leader who has persistently advocated peaceful progress toward majority rule for 10 years until the breakdown of the Smith-Nkomo talks -- although his country has suffered most from economic sanctions against Rhodesia -- has accused "western states" of "double dealing" after the visit of Assistant Secretary of State Schauffele and Under Secretary William Rogers. He then called for an intensification of the armed struggle. Such actions would suggest that the course the Administration has outlined may have more dangerous implications than the disastrous Angola policy.

3. There has been an intolerable escalation of white violence against Blacks in Southern Africa since Bavaria.

South Africa strafed a Zambian village in a hot pursuit raid against Namibian nationalists, yet the U.S. refused to support a Security Council resolution condemning South African aggression.

Rhodesia massacred over 100 civilians, many of them women and children, in Mozambique, in hot pursuit of Zimbabwe forces. According to an on the sight investigation by a representative of the U.N. High Commission for Refugees, Ian Smith's forces attacked a refugee camp, and not a ZLA base.

Finally, not only have South African police brutally killed hundreds of Black youth in South Africa's Black townships, but now there is evidence that they instigated inter-African strife between Zulu migrant workers and other African residents in Soweto.

Has the trauma of Viet Nam so numbed our sense of outrage and moral indignation that we can no longer condemn such wanton violations of human rights and standards of human decency? We cannot guarantee that Black Americans, and other Americans of good will, will condone white slaughter of Africans while the Administration continues to collaborate with the racist South Africa.

South Africa holds the key to the attainment of majority rule in Southern Africa. The accelerating pace of events there argues against the continued postponement of the inevitable U.S. confrontation with South Africa, if our nation is to be true to its principles of democracy and justice.

The sole purpose of the Zurich meeting ought to be the arrangement of Secretary Kissinger's visit to South Africa in order to communicate to all segments of the population America's commitment to the dismantling of the separate development policy and a rapid transition to majority rule. Secretary Kissinger must be prepared to take full responsibility for his actions and not set up a situation whereby, if the African front line presidents concur in his going to South Africa, they can be blamed for his failure to achieve positive results.

Dr. Kissinger should meet with South African cabinet officers, party officials, parliamentarians, religious leaders, homeland chiefs, leaders of the Indian, coloured and Jewish community, urban Black leaders and particularly African political detainees to announce the end

of all U.S. - South African cooperation in all sectors until separate development is abolished.

American corporations should recognize that South Africa is facing the most serious economic crisis in its history and take appropriate action. Following the 17.9 percent devaluation of its currency last September, the Pretoria regime may be forced to devalue further, largely because of the decline in gold prices. South Africa's foreign reserves have been dwindling at the rate of about \$25 million a week since March 17, and it suffers from high two digit inflation. The recent three day strike, which demonstrated how Black walkouts can affect the economy, combined with the sustained Black demonstrations, raise serious questions about the investment climate.

In his speech before the Opportunities Industrialization Centers in Philadelphia yesterday, Secretary of State Kissinger said,

Time has been running out fast for negotiated solutions -- the only alternative to mounting warfare which could embitter and burden the region for generations to come.

We suggest that time has already run out. In his statement on Issues and Answers last Sunday, Ambassador P. K. Botha stated, in response to a question about whether South Africa would discuss separate development policies in its forthcoming meeting with African leaders,

We believe and we say so openly that we do not want to share political power. We have not made a secret of it, for 300 years we have not done it.... If we have one man, one vote now it's the end of us (whites), it's suicide.

This unequivocal statement confirms that South Africa has no intention whatsoever of making any fundamental changes in its society.

The Afrikaners are as intractable as white Rhodesians, and in this situation one should not talk about guarantees for minority rights, unless it is clear that this means the protection against violation of the human rights of all people, and not the preservation of white privilege.

The time has come to choose. The U.S. cannot continue to align itself with the racist regime in Pretoria that wants only to buy time, and give the impression that America needs South Africa. South Africa has not succeeded in bringing Ian Smith around, and it has not implemented sanctions against Rhodesia. Most importantly, Prime Minister Vorster wants to prevent U.S. support for any enforcement action against South Africa recommended by the Security Council because of its failure to implement Security Council Resolution 385 on Namibia.

The Secretary must end his deferential treatment of South Africa. In his Philadelphia speech, he calls for majority rule in Namibia and Rhodesia, but not in South Africa. He further states, "Black nationalist groups competing for power must bridge their differences", while he only "urges South Africa to take account of the conscience of humanity."

Although the Secretary continues to assert that the Pretoria Administration, unlike the Ian Smith regime, is not an illegal government, we contend that it is a government that commits unlawful acts which violate all of the democratic principles and traditions Americans honor. Continued collaboration with South Africa in the absence of a firm commitment and concrete steps to end separate development only aligns this nation with the forces of racism and reaction in Africa and sets the stage for the Soviets, the Chinese and the Cubans to be viewed as the progressive states in that part of the world.