

NEWS



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, June 3, 1986

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CONGRESSMAN CROCKETT URGES SECRETARY OF STATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO TAKE BOLD STEPS TO GET SOUTH AFRICA REGIME TO END APARTHEID

Washington, D.C. -- Congressman Geo. W. Crockett, Jr. (D-Michigan) today urged the Secretary of State's Advisory Committee on South Africa to encourage the Reagan Administration "to pursue new policy initiatives which would use our vast influence and our multi-racial society to help South Africa end its turmoil."

Mr. Crockett made his appeal in prepared remarks delivered at an open meeting held by the Advisory Committee at the Department of State. He had been invited by the Committee to discuss how the United States could be most effective in encouraging the elimination of apartheid and its effects in South Africa.

"At this moment, our quiet diplomacy in the pursuit of peaceful change in South Africa has failed," Mr. Crockett told the Committee. "What's more, it has alienated us from other African and Third World countries and is presently earning for us the hostility of Black South Africans."

Congressman Crockett outlined several actions which he said the United States could take immediately to encourage South Africa to end its repressive system of apartheid. They would:

-- have the United States begin a public dialogue with the banned African National Congress and other organizations that have the support of the Black South Africans;

-- have President Reagan publicly call for the immediate and unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and other South African political prisoners;

-- have the State Department send a Black envoy, of ambassadorial rank, to advise and assist the American Ambassador in South Africa in establishing the important communications with the Black-led organizations; and

-- have the State Department implement a political leadership program here for South African Blacks through the use of Congressional internships which would employ the expertise of all levels of government and the special experiences of the historical Black colleges and universities here.

Congressman Crockett described his proposals as administrative, and simple and direct. But he warned that they might be too late to get the Pretoria regime's attention now.

"I wish we could get the South African Government to do the right thing through diplomatic initiatives and proposals, such as I have suggested here," the Congressman said. "But I have my doubts."

"Moreover, I am convinced that if the United States is to be a positive agent for the peaceful resolution of the troubled South African situation, we must be prepared in the final analysis to take direct action through the imposition of stringent economic sanctions."

Congressman Crockett is the ranking Majority Member of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa. He recently introduced a resolution in the U.S. House of Representatives calling on the United States to urge South Africa to free Nelson Mandela and to recognize the African National Congress as a legitimate representative for the country's Black majority.