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February 12, 1986

Dear Colleague:

As you know, rumors have been circulating over the past several days that the Government of South Africa may be disposed to release Nelson Mandela, the leader of the African National Congress jailed for more than twenty years.

While the rumors offer a glimmer of hope, they do not accomplish the task at hand -- namely, to release Mr. Mandela and begin serious negotiations with all segments of South African society to ensure the dismantling of the repressive system of apartheid in that country.

On Wednesday, February 5, 1986, I introduced with 21 cosponsors House Res. 373, calling on President Reagan to urge the Government of South Africa to indicate its willingness to begin meaningful political negotiations with the country's Black community.

The resolution asks that the Pretoria Government be urged to signal its readiness to begin such talks:

-- by unconditionally releasing Nelson Mandela, regarded by many as the most respected symbol of resistance against apartheid; and

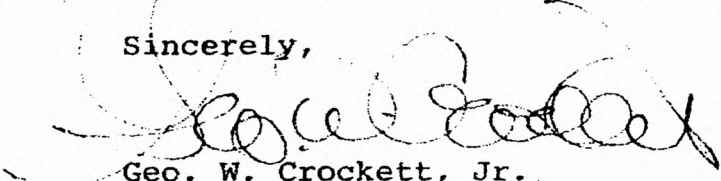
-- by recognizing Mr. Mandela's organization, the banned African National Congress, as a legitimate representative of the country's Black majority.

The Reagan Administration has expressed its support for Mr. Mandela's release; the attached news article indicates its recognition of the need for the South African Government to meet with representatives of the African National Congress.

Aware of your concern for human and civil rights throughout the world, we are asking you to join us as a cosponsor of this resolution to encourage South Africa to end apartheid and to work for justice and peaceful change for all South Africans.

If you wish to join us in this important effort, please contact Debbie Evans or Joan Willoughby of my staff at extension 52261.

Sincerely,


Geo. W. Crockett, Jr.
Member of Congress

Reprinted from an article in The New York Times

October 4, 1985

SHULTZ SUGGESTS SOUTH AFRICA FREE NELSON MANDELA

Apartheid Foe's Release Could
Signal Willingness to Seek
Compromise, He Says

By BERNARD GWERTZMAN

Special to The New York Times

Secretary of State George P. Shultz said yesterday that the South African Government could "signal" its willingness to search for a political compromise with the black majority by freeing Nelson Mandela, the prominent black political prisoner, and agreeing to negotiations with him and the outlawed African National Congress.

"That would be a huge event for the South African Government to do," Mr. Shultz said, "and that would be traumatic for them."

Mr. Shultz, speaking in an interview at The New York Times, elaborated on his comments Wednesday night that apartheid was "doomed" and that the South African Government should move promptly to negotiate with the black majority before it was toppled by a "violent revolution."

Apartheid 'Can't Last'

"Apartheid is through," he said yesterday. "It is not only wrong in our view, but at least in my judgment it is over. It can't last."

"I think that there comes a time," he

said, "when people stop arguing about whether something is a good idea or not and accept the fact that that's irrelevant. It doesn't matter whether you think apartheid is a good idea or not, it's going to disappear."

"Now the question is how do you manage the transition," he said. "That's the problem psychologically we would like the South Africans to address because if they address it even now, there is a real chance of doing so, through a process of discussion and negotiation. If it isn't addressed, we can have a cycle of continued violence and at least one can readily imagine this blowing up into a really violent upheaval."

Mr. Shultz, who made his comments to reporters, editors and executives of The Times, including the paper's publisher, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, was asked what the South African authorities could do to indicate their willingness to have a peaceful transition. Mr. Shultz replied that there were many possibilities.

He suggested that "it could be in the form of releasing people from prison and saying that they are willing to deal with them, as in the case of Mandela."

"We have said that Mandela should be released and that they should deal with the African National Congress," he said. Mr. Mandela, who has been imprisoned since 1962, was president of the A.N.C., a black nationalist group that has been barred from South Africa.

Mr. Shultz had previously called for Mr. Mandela's release in Congressional testimony on Sept. 18 and other officials have suggested that the South Africans free him as a conciliatory gesture.

Conditional Release Rejected

President P. W. Botha of South Africa last year offered to release Mr. Mandela if he would renounce violence, but he refused the offer and has insisted on an unconditional release.