

CLASSIFIED
STARTS ON PAGE 5D

COMMENTARY

D
SECTION

ALAN KEYES

Not every crusade against evil and injustice leads to the promised land. Many instead are lost in a wilderness of violence, a vicious circle of repression, retribution, and revenge.

Will this be the fate of South Africa? Will the demands and hopes of a people long oppressed end in a quagmire of civil war — black against white, black against black, white against black against white — until equality in suffering and atrocity grimly refutes the hateful premises of racism?

In a world beset by so many ills, and host to so many deadly and intractable conflicts, it is awfully hard to see through the ugly realities of present-day South Africa to a better day.

On the one hand are people determined by any means to throw off the yoke of physical oppression and indignity imposed upon them by the heinous apartheid system.

Alan L. Keyes is assistant secretary of state, bureau of international organization affairs. This article is excerpted from an address prepared for delivery last night before the National Urban League's annual conference at San Francisco.

IS THERE A FUTURE FOR SOUTH AFRICA?

On the other are people too crudely arrogant or terrified to share power or to use it well.

Bound together now by the iron bands of a long and bitter history, they must live and let live, or kill and be killed together. The one side will never give up, for suffering only sharpens the thirst for justice. The other will not easily yield, since fear and misbegotten pride are often willing partners in self-destruction.

As these antagonists come to grips, not only South Africa but the whole southern African region will be embroiled in conflict. There are some who contemplate this prospect with grim resignation, feeling that if this is the price that must be paid to end the long nightmare of apartheid, then so be it.

Apartheid is the evil against which we fight, but we do not fight against evil for the sake of evil. We fight against evil for the sake of a present and future good.

It is not enough that we seek to destroy apartheid unless in the process we see and help to build the foundations for a South Africa that is just, democratic, and free. Yet how is it possible to see the ingredients for such a future in the present welter of stubborn discrimination, injustice, and repression?

It is unfortunate that among the chief victims of apartheid is the ability to see beyond the premises of racism that apartheid represents, to see without racial blinders the problem of governance and nation-building that confronts the South African people. Apartheid is not unjust only because it is racist. It is unjust because it manipulates racism in order to achieve the arbitrary domination of the whole society by one group or faction within it.

But if the injustice lies in factional domination, justice cannot be achieved simply by substituting the tyranny of one faction for that of

another, even if the new faction is a majority of the population. Justice, therefore, is not simple majority rule. As an American, but especially as a black American, nothing is more evident to me than this oft-neglected truth. In the history of the United States, simple majority rule meant slavery. Simple majority rule meant Jim Crow. Simple majority rule meant the unjust repression of a vulnerable minority.

Fortunately, the basic principles of the American Constitution did not sanction unlimited majority rule. They demanded respect for individual rights, whether the individuals composed a majority or a minority of the population.

What we often forget, however, is that guarantees for individual rights were not originally intended to protect the welfare of poor, vulnerable minorities. They were intended to prevent the personal and property rights of the wealthy few from being invaded and expropriated by the

the power of the majority is limited and constrained by laws and practices which protect the persons and property of minorities.

It is a future in which the archaic or artificial divisions of race and tribe are gradually replaced by the more productive and useful divisions of economic, professional, or social interests.

It is a future in which whites and blacks understand that human beings may have more in common than language or race or even the shared experience of oppression and the struggle to overcome it.

It is a future in which the long repressed but undying spirit of black Africa joins with the stubborn pride and careful industry of white Africans in the crucible of a new national identity, one that could point the way toward the brighter future of the entire continent.

Strange as it may seem, in that future land the very community that today maintains a system to repress freedom in South Africa could be the anchor and shield against repression.

In the new South Africa, the white community would retain the advantages of economic power, of technical and managerial expertise, of skills invaluable to the maintenance and progress of society. Too few to dominate, they would nonetheless be too powerful to oppress.

Individuals and groups that would otherwise be exposed to the arbitrary abuse of power could, by forging alliances with whites, successfully thwart efforts to rule by fear or brute force.

see KEYES, page 2D

The pattern of arbitrary rule by one man or one party that prevails in so many other parts of Africa and the world could be successfully foisted if the whites could be brought to play a constructive role in the political system.

The key to this success, however, will be to avoid any system of reserved voting or representation for whites. Such a system would merely perpetuate the false white political enclave created by apartheid. It would isolate the whites from the rest of the political system, depriving them of the critical balancing influence they otherwise will have.

I believe that a just constitution for South Africa will protect property but accord no privileges to race. It will allow a certain influence to economic interests, but without recognizing such interests as the privileged possession of any race or ethnic group. By respecting the balance of public and private forces within the society, it will guarantee that all have the instruments with which to protect their interests, while none has the power to destroy or dominate the interests of the rest.

Taking advantage of geographic as well as economic divisions, it will aim to prevent tyranny but to compel shifting patterns of cooperation along non-racial, non-tribal lines. It will aim to preserve the existence of a thriving private sector in South Africa. This sector will serve as both a refuge and a base for Afrikaners no longer able to enjoy the privileges of the present racially exclusive welfare state. It also will avoid reliance upon government power as the engine of progressive social and economic change.

Without the racist blinders of apartheid, such a future for South Africa is easy to imagine.

Justice in South Africa cannot wait until the campaign against apartheid is over. Laying its foundation must be an integral part of that campaign. In a campaign of destruction, bombs and bullets might suffice. But in the effort to construct

a just society, we must seek to transform the pillars and walls of oppression into the bricks and mortar of a new mansion of freedom.

If we wish to foster such a process of transformation, the first step is to realize that it is a process that must involve all the people of South Africa. The common error that is made on all sides in the current discussion of the South African tragedy is the assumption that the white government and the white community are the arbiters of the country's future.

Whether the goal is pressure or engagement, the primary object of every existing approach is to influence a change of heart among South Africa's whites. The non-white population is perceived either as victim or threat, the target of repression or source of angry violence.

The tragic irony of apartheid lies precisely in this insidious triumph of its racist prescriptions.

When shall we come to see in the angry faces of striking students not only the desperate hatred of oppression, but the desperate passion for learning and truth?

When shall we come to know in the grim determination of striking workers not just the burning reaction to repression, but the deep will to labor with dignity, rise with merit, and pass on to a future generation a legacy of achievement?

When shall we be able to see beyond the "necklaces" and battling shantytown gangs to perceive the unquenchable spirit that can light a hearth-fire in the deepest poverty, maintain the bonds of family through long years of separation, keep home and even hope alive despite every brutal blow of degradation? When shall we see beyond the categories of victimization to the strong, resilient human beings whose passion, will, and spirit are the constructive flame in which the better future of South Africa can be forged and tempered?

Despite every effort of the apartheid system, these people have already been the makers of a profound revolution in South Africa's life. Blacks compose over 75 percent of South Africa's labor force, and without them hardly a crop would grow, hardly a drill or screw would

turn. They are the indispensable builders of present-day South Africa, the positive power of its economic life.

The very economic arena in which blacks were unjustly deprived of arable land, discriminated against in wages, unjustly denied promotion for their skill and merit, nevertheless provided the framework for developing the most potent form of power now in the hands of South Africa's blacks.

It is not their power to destroy that offers the most potent threat to the apartheid system, but the indispensable necessity to South Africa's existence of their power to labor and build. Blacks do not have this power because South Africa's white government permits them to enjoy it: they have it because neither the government nor the country could long survive without it.

Those who talk of power sharing in South Africa as if it were a future goal have been duped into forgetting that, despite every effort of repression, it is a present reality. The question is not whether whites and blacks will share power, but rather how blacks, effectively using the power they have, can work toward the justice they have been denied.

Seen in this light, the question for Americans and for others in the international community is not with what well-intentioned gestures we can show our hatred of apartheid and our sympathy with the suffering of its black victims, but rather how, with concrete action, we can support the expansion and use of their constructive power.

Will we serve the latter through a campaign which, in order to bring pressure to bear on the white South African government, sacrifices the modern economy?

Will we serve that purpose by withdrawing our effective presence from South Africa, leaving a weakened black community alone with an armed oppressor, facing the desperate choice of combat or surrender?

The proponents of punitive economic sanctions claim that such sanctions are the last means of avoiding an all-out civil war. I believe that, on the contrary, by depriving South African blacks of their most

potent non-violent tool for change, these sanctions will in fact make such a war inevitable.

Given the future for which we hope, given the positive goal of justice for which we strive, we should oppose such sanctions, not because they will hurt South Africa's blacks, but because they are not the most effective way to help them.

Our goal should be to help South African blacks transform the economic revolution that could not have occurred without them into the political revolution that is their moral right. To achieve this goal, we must not dismantle or withdraw from our role in South Africa's economy. We must seek broadly and effectively to develop and use that role in ways that explicitly enhance the actual power of South Africa's unjustly oppressed black majority.

Our effort should not be undertaken in the token spirit of reformers, but in the spirit of peaceful revolutionaries.

It is no accident that the South African business sector has gradually come to be among the most outspoken opponents of apartheid repression. It is no accident that South Africa's modern eco-

International pressure should be used to discourage violence on all sides This, not the destruction of the economic engines of change, should be America's immediate aim, and the aim of all people of goodwill in the world at large.

nomic sector has yielded ever stronger anti-apartheid labor unions and associations which continue to grow despite repeated assaults upon their leadership by the South African government.

Those who read history with some insight will realize that in the face of such dynamic and widespread economic forces, the only way the South African government can long hope to preserve apartheid is by destroying the modern capitalist economy.

Thus do the proponents of punitive, destructive sanctions against the South African economy become the unwitting allies of apartheid's preservation.

This does not mean, of course, that left on their own such economic forces will simply overwhelm the apartheid system. Even were this possible, it might take several generations. What is needed is a conscious effort to harness and accelerate the effects of the financial and organizational forces of the modern private sector. We must continue and intensify the sharing and use of power in the economic sense as a base and instrument for change in the political arena.

This can be accomplished in three broad areas:

- Within the modern corporations and enterprises themselves, and in their relations with the black community.

- Through massive support for the increasingly effective South African labor movement.

- Through a program of expanded capital ownership that seeks to facilitate ownership by black South African workers of shares in firms doing business in South Africa.

In line with the spirit of quiet revolution, efforts in these areas must go beyond reformist schemes to improve the conditions of life for blacks.

The aim should be effectively to incorporate the black community within the power structure of the economic sector, and to use some portion of the resources of that sector to support black efforts to build and sustain effective bases of economic, social, and political organization.

The American corporations in South Africa, as well as those of other foreign states, are the best available positive leverage the inter-

national community has in that situation. If we throw this leverage away in order to create pressure, we will deprive ourselves of the ability to create change, and to build the future now.

This is not to say that these corporations or the private economic sector are the only potential instruments of change in South Africa, but they are the ones over which we, as outsiders, can have the greatest influence, and through which we can hope to achieve the most immediate and direct effects.

I do not mean to suggest, either, that using America's position in South Africa in the way I have outlined will bring immediate, fundamental political change, though I believe it is the best way to make maximum positive use of America's limited but important influence in bringing about the conditions for that change.

In the final analysis, basic political change in South Africa will come about only as the result of negotiations among all South Africans of goodwill — black and white.

Violent repression and the violence it foments are the chief enemies of South Africa's present and future hopes. If international pressure serves a useful purpose in this situation, then it should be as a means of discouraging violence on all sides, beginning with the repressive violence of the South African state. This, not the destruction of the economic engines of change, should be America's immediate aim, and the aim of all people of goodwill in the world at large.