

## Reagan poses 'new Africa' to counter Soviet mayhem

by Nicholas F. Benton

In one of the more brilliant speeches of his administration, President Reagan counterposed the image of an economically developed "new Africa" to the threat of Soviet disintegration and takeover of the region as the context for articulating U.S. policy toward South Africa in an address at the White House on July 22.

Predictably, the Soviets, the Queen of England, and an overwhelming bipartisan majority in the U.S. Congress wildly protested the policy. Congress threatened rapid action, claiming enough bipartisan support to override a presidential veto and repudiate the Reagan approach by imposing severe economic sanctions on the South African regime. Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman Richard Lugar (R-Ind.) and Sen. Nancy Kassenbaum (R-Kan.) led those Republicans who sided with the unanimous partisan ravings of their Democratic colleagues to call for forceful actions to undermine the President's policy.

Reagan articulated a U.S. policy toward South Africa which includes as its primary purpose a stable process of transition away from apartheid, using the incentive of region-wide economic development as the key. At the same time, it acknowledges the urgent need to defuse the Soviet strategic threat to the region. This approach stands in stark contrast to those like Bishop Tutu, who while calling Reagan's speech "nauseating," insist that making South Africa "ungovernable" is the "only solution."

Reagan challenged his critics. "Those who tell us the moral thing to do today is embargo the South African economy and write off South Africa should tell us exactly what they believe will rise in its place. What foreign power would fill the vacuum—if ties with the West are broken?"

Reagan answered this rhetorical question repeatedly in his speech: "The Soviet Union is not unaware of the stakes," he said, and described how the Soviets have made strategic advances in Angola and have armed the guerrillas of the African National Congress (ANC). Reagan affirmed, "The

South African government is under no obligation to negotiate the future of the country with any organization that proclaims a goal of creating a communist state—and uses violence and terrorist tactics to achieve it."

While this was a reference to the Soviet-backed and pro-communist influences in the ANC, the White House confirmed Secretary of State George Shultz's announcement that he would be willing to meet with ANC leaders because, they said, "there are many factions in the ANC, some of which are communist, and some of which are not."

But while warning of the strategic danger to the region, President Reagan keyed his speech to the vision of regional economic development as the pathway to stability in a manner that bore striking resemblance to the method articulated repeatedly for over the last decade by American economist and Democratic presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche.

### 'Look at a map . . .'

"Looking at a map," Reagan said, "southern Africa is a single economic unit tied together by rails and roads. . . . South Africa is the nation where the industrial revolution first came to Africa; its economy is a mighty engine that could pull southern Africa into a prosperous future. The other nations of southern Africa—from Kinshasa to the Cape—are rich in natural resources and human resources. . . . I have directed . . . a study of . . . what can be done to expand the trade, private investment, and transport prospects of southern Africa's landlocked nations."

He stressed, "This administration is not only against broad economic sanctions and against apartheid; we are for a new South Africa, a new nation where all that has been built up over generations is not destroyed, a new society where participation in the social, cultural, economic, and political life is open to all people—a new South Africa that comes home to the family of free nations where she belongs." Reagan's call for a study of transport prospects for the landlocked

nations of southern Africa referred to the "Beira corridor" project, Shultz revealed July 23 in his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Beira is a port in Mozambique that is the best natural sea access point by rail for landlocked Africa (p. 67).

Such a regional development approach not only bears similarity to LaRouche's method and that of Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres's "Middle East Marshall Plan" proposal, but it craftily poses the diplomatic and political benefits of increased economic investment—in contrast to economic penalties—as the best means to create a context for a smooth transition to "a political system that rests upon the consent of the governed—where the rights of the majorities, the minorities, and individuals are protected by law" in South Africa itself, Reagan said.

This was the framework Reagan established to make his argument against "punitive sanctions." White House spokesman Larry Speakes clarified the term—distinguishing "targeted sanctions," such as those the President announced against South Africa a year ago—from "punitive sanctions," which he defined as those which have the effect of hurting those they are supposedly designed to help (namely, the black population of South Africa, through hurting the economy, and thereby, black employment).

Reagan began his speech by siding unequivocally with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in her tangle with Queen Elizabeth (see p. 32). "The prime minister of Great Britain has denounced punitive sanctions as 'immoral' and 'utterly repugnant.' Let me tell you why we believe Mrs. Thatcher is right," Reagan said. To Thatcher, an economic breakoff with South Africa will immediately cost over 200,000 jobs in her country, which already suffers official 14% unemployment—an important added incentive in her staunch position against sanctions.

Under pressure from every quarter, the administration position on sanctions had not changed as the week ended following the historic speech, despite media signals to the contrary. In the face of the violent congressional reaction, the major media began reading into remarks by presidential press secretary Speakes during a two-day Reagan trip to Texas, Florida, and South Carolina immediately after the speech, that the President had already started to reconsider his position, and, because of all the negative reaction, would be willing to compromise on sanctions with the Congress.

When asked by *EIR* upon his return to Washington July 25 if this is what he had meant to say, Speakes said emphatically, "No." He said that the "targeted" (as opposed to "punitive") sanctions imposed on South Africa by Reagan almost a year ago are due to expire in early September, and that there is an ongoing process in the administration of evaluating whether or not to renew them or add to them. As to the willingness of the administration to bend on "punitive sanctions," Speakes insisted that nothing had changed.

The issue provoked a rare public attack on the State De-

partment by Speakes during the regular White House press briefing the same day. When told by a UPI reporter that his (Speakes's) characterization of the sanctions issue was "out of line, according to what people at the State Department say," Speakes snapped back, "I get my word from the Oval Office, and if what the State Department is saying is different, then they had better get back in line!"

The conflict between the White House, especially its National Security staff, and the State Department has seldom been more apparent than on the South Africa issue. While claiming to be defending the Reagan position during over three hours of testimony before the Senate committee July 23, Shultz never once brought up the issue of the Soviet strategic threat to the region, but focused his remarks on how "the law of the market place" is already delivering the negative message to the South African regime through a decline in investment.

### All the Queen's men

Nonetheless, Shultz drew the bipartisan fire of the Foreign Relations Committee, led by the transparently staged nationally televised outburst by Sen. Joseph Biden (D-Del.), who was being coached by Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) before lighting into his shouting match with Shultz. Biden, who fashioned himself as a veteran of the U.S. civil rights struggle, said he felt Bishop Tutu's characterization of Reagan's speech as "nauseating" and invective that everyone in the U.S. "can go to hell," was "actually quite restrained."

Sen. Paul Sarbanes (D-Md.) expressed his grave concern that the South African issue would "break up the Commonwealth," and said on a national TV show that the fault with the Reagan policy is that it "depends upon imputing good will to the Botha regime, which I do not think is justified." Therefore, Sarbanes admitted that only a total change of government is acceptable to his faction—even though this will ensure a descent into chaos in the region. Meanwhile, U.S. AFL-CIO head Lane Kirkland, in his own statement against Reagan and in favor of sanctions, claimed that he was speaking on behalf of labor leaders in South Africa, although when he was there he refused to meet with Chief Buthelezi, the head of the largest labor organization in the country, who opposes economic sanctions.

Honors for a new height of stupidity on the issue go to Rep. Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.). Because she is now running for U.S. Senate in Maryland, she was subjected to a snap quiz by a local TV station on July 24, in which she answered only 1.5 out of five easy questions on foreign policy correctly. She identified Dr. Jonas Savimbi, the head of the anti-Soviet UNITA freedom fighters in Angola, as the head of the South African pro-Soviet ANC, which she claims to support. Rep. Michael Barnes (D-Md.) also failed the question, as did Maryland Gov. Harry Hughes. Even the *Washington Post*, which is sympathetic to all these Democrats, could not avoid keeping this national disgrace off its front page.