

Forum

More Truth Revealed in South Africa

Everyday inside the racist regime of South Africa, more and more evidence emerges about the systematic death-choke that apartheid maintains against the people of South Africa. Now F.W. de Klerk has been forced to admit and confirm that South Africa's military has an ongoing "covert third force" that has engaged in political assassination and terrorism against the African National Congress and other anti-apartheid supporters.

In fact, both black and white South Africans have been murdered by this "government apparatus" of apartheid. We believe that President de Klerk knew about these illegal and barbaric actions of the "third force" long before the public disclosures of the past few days. The old saying, "The truth buried always eventually comes to light," is quite applicable to this last difficult stage of the historic struggle to dismantle the brutal institutionalized system of racism known as apartheid.



CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

By BENJAMIN F. CHAVIS, JR.

As we have previously argued, much of the dramatic increase in the fratricidal warfare between the African National Congress and Chief Buthelezi's Inkatha group has been orchestrated by forces within the military and government. These latest revelations of the extent to which repressive forces in South Africa have gone to destabilize the situation inside the nation, are also indicative of how the military-intelligence sector of the government sought to "destabilize" other nations in southern Africa.

Angola, Namibia, Mozambique and Zambia is particular, have all felt the terror of South Africa's efforts to stay in power by acts of low intensity military strikes as part of an overall strategy of regional destabilization. We note, as we have in the past, that U.S. foreign policy toward South Africa during the last twelve years actually served to prolong South Africa's viability as a strong "strategic ally" both in political and military terms. The sad results is that millions of Africans have been killed with not even a hint from Washington, that the lives of the people who live in the region of southern Africa should have been protected a long time ago from this atrocity against humanity.

Without naming the accused officers, Mr. de Klerk announced that 23 military officers are being "suspended or dismissed" because of their involvement with covert terrorist military operations in South Africa. Six of the 23 were ranked as full generals. Although President de Klerk asserted that he was "shocked and disappointed," it is not exactly clear whether his disappointment was because of what the

accused had done or the fact that what they had done has now become public.

For the first time the President of South Africa was forced to admit, "The findings will lead to the conclusion that some of the activities have led to the death of people...Collaborators of the south African Defense Forces have been involved, and in some cases are still involved, in illegal and/or unauthorized activities, and malpractice." Will those guilty of these crimes be prosecuted? Or better, the question is will the government of South Africa prosecute itself for violently violating the human rights of the peoples of southern Africa?

During the remaining rounds of negotia-

tions to establish a transitional government, we believe the current command structure of the South African Defense Forces needs to be completely recognized by placing representatives of the ANC and other civilians in charge of the armed forces during this critical transitional stage. A failure to dislodge and purge the right-wing elements from the military will result in the escalation of political violence in South Africa.

The African National Congress issued a statement in response to the disclosures by de Klerk. The ANC stated, "The steps announced by President de Klerk are a step in the right direction, but are not nearly enough. The current revelations are clearly only the tip of the iceberg." We agree with the ANC and we further call for a full disclosure of all joint intelligence operations conducted by the South African Defense Intelligence with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) during the last twelve years.

The people of South Africa and the people of the United States have a right to know what were the joint agreements on intelligence gathering between the United States and South Africa. "Constructive engagement" strategies of the Reagan-Bush era have been very destructive to southern Africa.

The issue of changing U.S. foreign policy initiative toward Africa in general and southern Africa in particular will present a significant challenge to the incoming Clinton Administration.

The time for a progressive policy change is long overdue. As more of the truth creeps out of South Africa, the end of apartheid is at least in sight.

American Dream: The Real Bottom Line

I was very honored when President-elect Clinton invited me to address his Economic Summit in Little Rock on December 14, 1992. I wanted to share with you a summary of that address as a reminder that, while we have much to celebrate, we still have a tremendous amount of work to do.

Mr. President-Elect, I want to thank you very much for recognizing that children are a bottom-line economic issue, and that preventive investment in all of our children is only a moral imperative, but essential to saving our national economic skin; and that children are the key to our future productivity and work force development.

As communism is collapsing all around the world, the "American dream" is collapsing all around America for millions of families youth and children in all races and classes. We are in danger of becoming two nations—one of first world privilege, and another of third world deprivation—struggling against increasing odds to coexist peacefully as a beleaguered middle barely holds on.

While the middle class lost ground over the last decade and-a-half, the already poor became poorer and more desperate, hungry, homeless and hopeless. Today every seventh American is poor, as is every sixth family with a child under 18. Every fifth child is poor and every fourth pre-schooler is poor. And one of every three Black and brown children in America is poor.

There are more poor children in America today than in any year since 1965, despite the net 88 percent growth in our gross national product (GNP) during this period. And contrary to popular myth, the majority of poor children are not Black, not on welfare and don't live in inner cities. They live in working families and in nearly one quarter of the 11.7 million children who fell into poverty lived in two-parent white families.

I think it's a great human and moral tragedy that thousands of children and adults are starving to death in war-torn poor Somalia,

with an estimated GNP of \$1.6 billion. But it is a human and moral travesty that 14.3 million children are poor in the richest land on earth, that an estimated five million children go hungry sometime during the month, and eight million lack health care in a country that has a GNP of \$5.9 trillion.

We need to ask ourselves whether this is the best that America can do and why there are more poor children in rich America than there are citizens in famine-stricken Somalia; more poor children in Los Angeles and New York City than in the so-called developing nation of Botswana. It is particularly hard for young families with children, white and Black, in all parts of the country. They have seen their incomes plummet by 32 percent since 1973, though they are working harder.

We must begin to invest in our children, with particular attention to young fam-

ilies. I hope that every American led by you—this new administration that brings us such hope—and by our new Congress, will personally and collectively struggle to reclaim our nation's soul and give our children back their hope, their sense of security, their belief in America's fairness, and their ability to dream about and work toward a future that is attainable and real.

And let me suggest two things that I know this great country can do in 1993 under your leadership. The first is to make sure that every one of our children is born healthy and is immunized against preventable diseases. The other thing that I know you have committed to doing is to see that every child gets ready for school. And a down payment on that is to see that every one of our children gets a head start by fully finding Head Start, making it full day, full year, taking it down to earlier ages. Republicans and Democrats—says they are for Head Start. We know it works. Now is the time to just do it.

CHILD WATCH

By MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

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BY G.B. TRUDEAU

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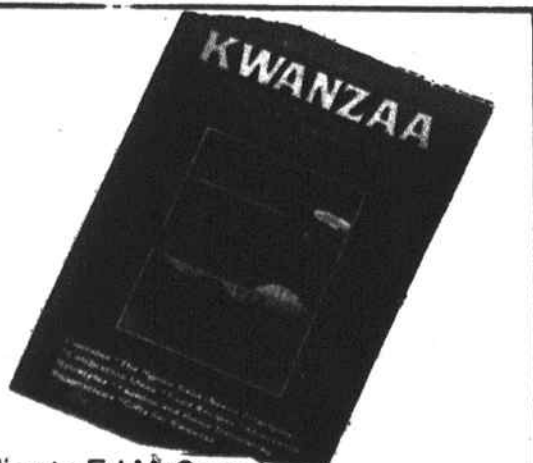
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