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INFLUENTIAL THINK TANKS ACTIVE ON SOUTH AFRICAN ISSUES.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.

Think Tanks have traditionally, always played a very influential role in American policy formulation, and in its decision making process. It is with this motivation in mind, that local think tanks have successfully in the past, been cultivated and influenced as vehicles to influence the Administration of the day, especially regarding issues pertaining to South Africa. The latest constitutional and other reforms occurring in South Africa, was no exception, and most local think tanks focusing on South African issues, are redirecting their current activities to focus more on these South African issues. Some of these activities would include the Aspen Institute's conference during April 1993 in Cape Town and the National Democratic Institute (NDI), who in conjunction with the Center for Development Studies at the University of Western Cape, with the International Republican Institute (IRI) and the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, are conducting an extensive voter education programme in South Africa. It could be expected that as the constitutional process nears completion, and preparations are being made for full elections to be held in South Africa, even more local think tanks would show an active interest in South Africa.

1. INTRODUCTION.

The American concept of a think tank could for the purpose of their activities pertaining to South Africa, be defined as a private, non-profit research group that operates on the margins of America's political process. Situated between academic social science and higher education, on the one hand, and government and partisan politics, on the other hand.

Despite their generic label, there are a wide variety of policy research institutions. They differ in their source of financial support, the constituencies they serve, the balance they strike between research and advocacy, the breadth of the policy questions they address, the academic eminence and practical political experience of their staffs, and their ideological orientations. More than one thousand private, non-profit think tanks now operate in the United States, approximately one hundred of them in the Washington D.C. area.

Think Tanks affiliated with the Democratic Party, have since the Clinton victory emerged in prominence, and has a shift in accent also been noted among most Think Tanks in the United States in the so-called post-Cold War era. The topics currently enjoying the most attention, especially regarding the United States' foreign policy formulation, would include:

1. The global establishment and promotion of democratically founded governmental systems, accompanied by a free market orientated economy;

2. The promotion and cultivation internationally of a human rights culture, and sensitivity for those who violate the basic principals of human rights;
3. Environmental protection; and
4. The elevation of international institutions, specifically the United Nations, in dealing with international issues.

The Washington D.C. based think tanks which are active on the South African issue are mostly orientated towards political activism, with the defining issue, being the proposed constitutional changes, emerging from the elections in April 1994.

An academically orientated think tank which does a limited amount of work on the South African issue is the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).

2. KEY THINK TANKS ACTIVE ON THE SOUTH AFRICAN ISSUE.

The Embassy in Washington, in its day-to-day use of the generic term "think tank", uses a very broad definition which is not confined to policy research institutions. The term as it is used in the mission includes pressure groups, interest groups, academic institutions, human rights organisation, etc. The following think tanks will be represented during the meeting:

2.1 THE CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT/ASPEN INSTITUTE : SOUTH AFRICAN FORUM:

The Carnegie Endowment was established in 1910 with a gift of \$10 million from Andrew Carnegie. Since 1970 it has published the quarterly journal Foreign Policy. Study groups and round-table discussions bring together current and former governmental officials to talk about U.S.-international policy, the proliferation of arms, and immigration policy. It has 20 resident and senior associates drawn from diverse professional backgrounds, including journalism, public service and academia.

At the present time the Carnegie Foundation does not have any person working on the South African issue.

2.2. THE ASPEN INSTITUTE

The primary mission of the Aspen Institute is to enhance the capacity of leaders in business, government, the non-profit sector, academia, and the media to understand and address the issues confronting the United States and the International community. To achieve this objective the Institute attempts to help leaders to deepen their thinking and broaden their

perspectives for decision-making by convening them in seminars and conferences that address topics of current interest.

With regard to South Africa, the Aspen Institute has established the Southern Africa Policy Forum. The Forum's overall purpose is to develop a highly informed bipartisan core group of Members of Congress who can take a leading role in pursuing a realistic and effective United States policy toward South Africa. To this end the Forum has (and is) arranged a number of conferences which are meant to provide senior policy makers in Congress with an opportunity to learn more about South Africa and its role in the southern African region. In this regard, the Aspen Institute hosted a conference from 5 to 9 April 1993 in Cape Town, which was entitled: "South Africa in Transition : Exploring the United States Role." The primary objective of the conference was to provide an educational forum for especially members of the United States Congress, affording them the opportunity to discuss vital issues with the key players and noted experts involved with the subject matter. At the previous conference on South Africa the Aspen Institute hosted, 17 members of Congress attended. From South African side, the State President, Foreign Minister R F Botha, and Mr Nelson Mandela addressed the conference.

The person at the Institute who works on the South Africa issue is Dr Pauline Baker, whose most recent major publication on the topic was the book "The United States and South Africa: The Reagan Years". She is also the Director of the South African Breakfast Forum, which provides a venue for the Washington D.C. based foreign policy experts on South Africa to be briefed by visiting South Africans or experts on South Africa.

With regard to South Africa, Dr Baker is one of the most influential 'think tankers' in Washington D.C. She is particularly influential in Democratic circles on the Hill, and acted as coordinator for the above mentioned conference in Cape Town.

2.3. THE CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (CSIS)

The CSIS was established in 1962 to provide "a strategic perspective to decision makers that is integrative in nature, international in scope, anticipatory in timing, and bipartisan in approach". Its programmes study functional issues such as arms control and technology, international business, energy and environmental issues, international communications, and political military issues. The CSIS also examines particular regions of the world, and it has specialists who focus on Africa, East Asia, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and the Soviet Union.

Dr Helen Kitchen, the Director of the African Studies Program at the CSIS, works on the South African issue. She has published a number of publications including the book "South Africa: In transition to what?", and she is the editor of the "CSIS Africa Notes", which is intended to be a briefing paper series for decision makers.

The CSIS's staff does not include scholars, but it also has many fellows who have spent their careers in government, or as advisors and consultants to policy makers. As such Dr Chester Crocker, the former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, was the Director of the African Studies Program at the CSIS before being appointed to that post by President Reagan.

2.4 BROOKINGS INSTITUTE

The Brookings Institution is a private non-profit organization devoted to research, education, and publication in economics, government, foreign policy, and the social sciences generally. Its principal purpose is to bring knowledge to bear on the current and emerging public policy problems facing the American people. In its research, Brookings functions as an independent analyst and critic, committed to publishing its findings for the information on the public. In its conferences and other activities, it serves as a bridge between scholarship and public policy, bringing new knowledge to the attention of decision makers and affording scholars a better insight into public policy issues. Its activities are carried out through three research programs (Economic Studies, Foreign Policy Studies, and Governmental Studies), a Center for Public Policy Education, a Publications program, and a Social Computation Center.

The Institution traces its beginnings to 1916 with the founding of the Institute for Government Research, the first private organization devoted to public policy issues at the national level. In 1922 and 1924, the Institute was joined by two supporting sister organizations, the Institute of Economics and the Robert Brookings Graduate School. In 1927, these three groups were consolidated into one institution, named in honour of Robert Somers Brookings (1850-1932), a St Louis businessman whose leadership shaped the earlier organizations.

Brookings is financed largely by endowment and by the support of philanthropic foundations, corporations, and private individuals. Its funds are devoted to carrying out its own research and educational activities. It also undertakes some unclassified government contract studies, reserving the right to publish its findings.

A Board of Trustees is responsible for general supervision of the Institution, approval of fields of investigation, and

safeguard the independence of the Institution's work. The President is the chief administrative officer, responsible for formulating the coordinating policies, recommending projects, approving publications, and selecting staff.

2.5 THE UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE.

The United States Institute of Peace is an independent, non-partisan, federal institution created and funded by Congress to strengthen the nation's capacity to promote the peaceful resolution of international conflict. Established in 1984, the Institute has its origins in the tradition of American statesmanship, which seeks to limit international violence and to achieve a just peace based on freedom and human dignity. The Institution meets its congressional mandate to expand available knowledge about ways to achieve a more peaceful world through an array of programs including grant-making, a three-tiered fellowship program, research and studies projects, development of library resources, and a variety of citizen education activities. The Institution is governed by a fifteen-member Board of Directors, including four members ex officio from the executive branch of the federal government and eleven individuals appointed from outside federal service by the President of the United States and confirmed by the Senate.

2.6 JOINT CENTER FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STUDIES.

The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies contributes to the national interest by helping black Americans participate fully and effectively in the political and economic life of society in the United States.

A non-partisan, non-profit institution founded in 1970, the Joint Center uses research and information dissemination to accomplish three objectives: to improve the socio-economic status of black Americans; to increase their influence in the political and public policy arenas; and to facilitate the building of coalitions across racial lines.

2.7 THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN INSTITUTE (AAI).

In the early 1950's, African-American leaders from Howard University in Washington DC and Lincoln University in Pennsylvania gathered to seek ways to help African students further their education and develop for an emerging independent continent. Their efforts led to the establishment of the African-American Institute (AAI) in 1953 as a multi-racial, multi-ethnic not-for-profit institution.

In forty years since, AAI has brought some 3,000 Africans to the United States for graduate degree programs. Alumni of these programmes are now presidents, prime ministers,

ministers, scientists, and educators. More than 20,000 Africans have taken shorter courses in the U.S. under AAI's auspices. The Institute's priority interest in human resources development has encouraged the promotion of good governance and enhanced quality of life through democratisation and economic development.

The intervening years also have seen a parade of African leaders by AAI to Americans who often knew little about the rich and diverse continent from which these leaders came. AAI is distinguished for having brought American and African-American decision-makers together in diverse fora to focus on policy issues and to better inform and engage the American public in dialogue about Africa.

Now is the fortieth year, with an annual budget of nearly \$30 million, AAI has grown from strength to strength, pioneering ways to for concerned Africans and Americans to enhance Africa's role on the world stage. As AAI evolved with Africa, adapting its work to meet changing needs, its commitment to Africa and to a candid exchange among Africans and Americans of every perspective has neither changed nor wavered. AAI celebrates with pride its first forty years and invites its friends to sustain their generous support and partnership for the next forty.

2.8 THE PROGRESSIVE POLICY INSTITUTE.

The Progressive Policy Institute (PPI) is a new center for innovation in public policy. It seeks to adapt America's progressive tradition of individual liberty, equal opportunity, and civic enterprise to the challenges of the post-industrial era. The Institute works to fashion a new public philosophy that transcends the limits of the conventional, Left-Right debate.

PPI advocates growth-orientated economic policies intended to reverse America's competitive slide and foster a more inclusive, democratic capitalism; social policies that move beyond maintaining the poor to enabling them to free themselves from poverty and dependence; and a foreign policy based on protecting and promoting free institutions. The Institute also explores four issues that loom large on the public agenda of the 1990s: crime, health care, educational excellence, and environmental safety.

The PPI also is dedicated to stimulating public entrepreneurship and wider civic participation in meeting society's common needs. The Institute promotes voluntary national service and other ideas intended to adapt America's public institutions to new challenges and to restore the balance between the right and responsibilities of citizenship.

The Progress Policy Institute is a project of the Democratic

Leadership Council.

THE DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP COUNCIL.

Mr Al From is president and executive director of the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), a policy group of elected Democrats from every state in the nation. As founder of the DLC and its think tank, the Progressive Policy Institute, Mr From leads a dynamic movement that is challenging America's political orthodoxies and redefining the Democratic Party.