

South African Rebels Cool to Peace Plan

By Michael Parks
Los Angeles Times Service

LUSAKA, Zambia — The African National Congress is being encouraged to abandon its guerrilla war against minority white rule in South Africa. A new international proposal would legalize the organization and free its imprisoned leaders, including Nelson Mandela.

The proposal, drafted by a special Commonwealth mission, is aimed at opening the first direct negotiations between the government in Pretoria and the African National Congress on the political future of South Africa and thus ending the escalating violence there.

The Commonwealth group, made up of "eminent persons" from seven Commonwealth countries, is scheduled to return to South Africa on Tuesday to seek Pretoria's acceptance of the proposal. Most South African political commentators say that the group will get at least a qualified yes.

When formally proposed, the Commonwealth peace plan is likely to win wide international support, Western and African diplomats in Lusaka say, for it appears to offer the best chance that South Africa has yet had to end the violence.

But the African National Congress, the principal guerrilla group fighting the South African government, has serious misgivings about the Commonwealth plan, its officials say. They say the plan would lock the organization into fruitless negotiations.

Although the group has long demanded the release of Mr. Mandela and other political prisoners and its own legalization, it has many questions about the proposed negotiations, particularly their intended goal.

Moreover, its senior officials say that a premature cease-fire, ending their guerrilla war and the insurgency in South Africa's black ghettos, would deprive the African National Congress of most of its leverage in the proposed negotiations and lead to compromises that its supporters would reject.

"A trap," one senior member remarked, reflecting the general but still unofficial view at the group's headquarters in Lusaka. "We are not going to give up the armed struggle on the basis of promises, especially when we are making significant progress. Taken as it is, this proposal could be the death of the ANC."

Oliver Tambo, the organization's president, has expressed consider-

able skepticism about the plan, particularly about negotiations that would reform rather than end apartheid, South Africa's system of racial discrimination.

Another official suggested, as Mr. Tambo did in an interview last month, that negotiations could be started without a cease-fire and that if real progress were made, a truce could then be agreed upon.

Yet to reject the Commonwealth proposal could make the African National Congress appear to be unreasonable and cost it vital support abroad and among the white moderates it is wooing in South Africa, and even among moderate blacks there.

Zambia's president, Kenneth Kaunda, long one of the organization's staunchest supporters, has

already urged it to take up the Commonwealth proposal as "the last hope" the region has of avoiding a civil war in South Africa.

When Mr. Tambo replied that he would not negotiate with President Pieter W. Botha of South Africa under the present circumstances, the state-run Times of Zambia declared in a page one editorial, "He is entitled to his stand, but where does that leave our leaders' often repeated efforts to, first of all, get the two sides together? The situation is getting desperate for everyone, and something must be done to stem the crisis."

Picking its way carefully through this political minefield, the African National Congress has not rejected the Commonwealth proposal, hoping that its criticism will be heard

before the plan is formally presented.

As outlined by Sir Shridath S. Ramphal, the Commonwealth secretary-general, the plan provides for a mutual cease-fire by the government and guerrilla forces followed by talks on the country's political future.

To create the climate for such negotiations, the government would release political prisoners and legalize the African National Congress, which it banned in 1961. The organization, in return, would pledge its full efforts to end the violence that has engulfed South Africa's black townships for most of the past two years.

The plan resembles in many re-

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spects a proposal that, according to South African government sources, Pretoria put to the African National Congress informally a year ago but that the group rejected then.

Both the guerrillas and the government have already raised questions about the terms of the ceasefire proposed by the Commonwealth group, about the organization's ability to halt the township unrest and about the organization, scope and goals of the proposed negotiations.

The South African government also has said it would reserve the right to take whatever action is necessary to restore order if unrest should continue or spread after legalization of the organization and the release of political prisoners.

■ Tutu Assails Press

Bishop Desmond M. Tutu of South Africa accused his country's press Monday of deluding the people by hiding the truth, Reuters reported from Vienna.

Addressing the annual conference of the International Press Institute, Bishop Tutu said, "Most white newspapers have done a grave disservice to the people of South Africa in not helping to prepare whites for the inevitable — a more equitable, a more just, a more democratic and nonracial setup."

The Anglican leader said that most South African papers had "sold their souls in exchange for immediate realizable advantages, mainly financial ones, which go hand in glove with popularity in the white community."

This is why Swissair offers three

ANC squad snatch hospital captive

From David Beresford,
in Johannesburg

The outlawed African National Congress has pulled off one of its most daring operations in South Africa, snatching a captured comrade under armed guard in a Natal hospital.

One man, believed to have been a visitor to the hospital, was killed in cross-fire between the gunmen and police. The two police guards were wounded during the shoot-out.

The ANC unit, armed with rifles, entered the Edendale hospital in Pietermaritzburg on Sunday night disguised as doctors, carrying their weapons under white coats. They produced the guns and opened fire as they approached the intensive care unit where their 22-year-old colleague was being held.

The patient was on intravenous drips, which were pulled out of him as he was dragged out of his bed by his rescuers. He was put on a trolley and pushed to a waiting car, in which he and the gunmen made their getaway.

The rescued man was in a serious condition after undergoing two operations. He had been shot in the stomach last week while trying to escape after police found weapons in the boot of a car in which he was travelling with a colleague in Edendale. The colleague was shot dead in the incident.

News of the rescue was greeted by a statement from South Africa's Minister of Law and Order, Mr Louis le Grange, saying that it was "yet more proof of the determination and callousness of the ANC gangsters, who have no respect for human life and who kill in cold blood. No respectable government can negotiate with such a terrorist organisation about reform."

The shoot-out and rescue came a few hours before the white opposition parliamentarian, Mrs Helen Suzman, had a two-hour meeting with the gaoled ANC Leader, Nelson Mandela, in Pollsmoor prison, Cape Town.

She emerged from the meeting yesterday morning to say that Mr Mandela was determined to create a climate for negotiation in South Africa and was the country's last hope for a peaceful settlement.

Mrs Suzman, who last saw the ANC leader three years ago, said she had been amazed by how well informed he was about current affairs after 24 years in gaol. He was determined to accept nothing less than unconditional release.

She said: "He is committed to help create a climate for negotiation and assured us that the ANC shared this commitment. The Government can satisfy itself about the sincerity of this commitment by unbanning the ANC and

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ANC hospital snatch *W/S/80*

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releasing Mr Mandela and his fellow prisoners. We firmly believe this would put South Africa on the road to a peaceful solution," she added.

Mrs Suzman said that he appeared to be in good health and had no complaints about his treatment, other than that he was having some difficulty getting correspondence in and out of the prison.

An Afrikaner and fellow MP in the Progressive Federal Party who accompanied Mrs Suzman, Mr Tiaan van der Merwe, said that he had found Mr Mandela "a very imposing man." He said he had left the prison feeling much more optimistic about the future. "Mr Mandela can play a key role in establishing a new South Africa which whites need not fear," he said.

Botha 'plan to lift ban on the ANC'

1/5/80

From David Beresford
and Patrick Laurence
in Johannesburg

The South African Government is reported to have launched a key initiative under which the ban on the African National Congress would be lifted and its leader, Mr Nelson Mandela, released from gaol in return for an end to hostilities.

Widespread press speculation about negotiations between the Government and the ANC was fuelled by the disclosure yesterday that President P.W. Botha and his Foreign Minister, Mr Pik Botha, had sent a message to the Tokyo summit pleading for recognition of the steps already taken by Pretoria to dismantle apartheid.

A meeting on Monday between Mr Mandela and the white liberal MP, Mrs Helen Suzman, has been seen as another sign that peace talks may be imminent.

However, her optimistic assessment that his release could lead to a peaceful resolution of the conflict in the country was met with derision from ministers. The Minister of Justice, Mr Kobie Coetsee, said that her conviction that the ANC leader was a man committed to creating a climate for negotiations was contradicted by Mrs Winnie Mandela's statements urging blacks to fight for their liberation and by acts of violence by Mandela supporters.

Diplomats also said that optimism should be tempered with

caution — advice justified by the cool response which Mrs Suzman's statement on her visit drew from Mr Botha. He told the influential Afrikaans daily, *Beeld*: "Mr Nelson Mandela knows what channels to use if he wants to send messages to me."

He repeated that Mr Mandela must renounce violence as a condition for his release.

A great deal of the optimism — even reflected in the pro-Government *Beeld* — revolves around a peace plan prepared by the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group. The first step of this is to persuade Mr Botha to release Mr Mandela and to lift the ANC ban in return for persuading the ANC to abandon its guerrilla war. A second step is to begin direct or indirect negotiations between the Government and the ANC.

Meanwhile, a monitoring source said yesterday that deaths in police custody and detentions of activists had soared since the lifting of the state of emergency in March. The Detainees' Parent Support Committee said five blacks died in custody in April, at least three of them anti-apartheid campaigners.

That compared with 12 such deaths in all of 1985, and 79 since the Government authorised detention without charge in 1963. The committee confirmed 377 detentions in the first four months of the year, more than double the figure of 161 in the same period last year.

Only Talk on South Africa

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Secretary of State George Shultz seems to understand that the hour is late for peaceful change in South Africa. For a year he has been denouncing apartheid as "evil" and "repugnant." Now he adds a passionate warning that it imposes an intolerable "moral, strategic, economic and political" burden on Western interests.

The secretary's passion is a welcome antidote to the apologies with which the administration used to greet Pretoria's half-hearted gestures of reform. Mr. Shultz says apartheid "must go soon" and now is very clear about what he wants in its place: a "democracy that knows no color," that offers equal protection to blacks and whites and that is negotiated between them.

But the secretary does not stop there. America's duty is to remain "constructively engaged," he says. Serious sanctions or disinvestment would cause "economic destruction" and only make a bad situation worse. What does that mean? It can mean only that, in Mr. Shultz's view, white supremacists in Pretoria are ready and able to preserve their political monopoly even at the cost of their prosperity. And if that is so, how does he propose to uphold the great moral and strategic interests he sees at risk?

Like most thoughtful people, he is not sure. He thinks economic disintegration

would invite violent revolution — and a radical, equally oppressive black regime. He wants the whites to share power with blacks while there is still time, yet seems daily less persuaded that they will do so.

It is a dilemma, but not as paralyzing as Mr. Shultz implies. If Pretoria will not give black leaders the stature they deserve, the United States could confer it, by recognizing their political organizations and openly supporting their political striving.

That course is now urged by the very business leaders Mr. Shultz wants to keep constructively engaged in South Africa. The heads of the main U.S. companies there, supported by many South African businesses, are asking for legalization of the African National Congress and negotiation with its jailed and exiled leaders. The regime contends that most of them favor violence and a Communist government, but that is not the judgment of knowledgeable capitalists. Inexplicably, Mr. Shultz and his diplomats won't even talk to these black leaders to draw their own conclusion.

Mr. Shultz is right to be alarmed, but words will not suffice where even economic pressure seems inadequate. To show effective sympathy for South Africa's blacks, he has to constructively engage them.

— THE NEW YORK TIMES.