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Sanctions assessments

JOHANNESBURG: Seven prominent Americans and a Nigerian — all exponents of sanctions against South Africa — differed in their assessments of whether sanctions constitute a means to peaceful change and reform in the country.

Interviewed last night on SABC-TV's Network, five believed they would not, while two believed they would.

The former American ambassador to South Africa, Mr Herman Nickel, said he disagreed with people such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu who claimed that sanctions were the "last peaceful option". Sanctions would "polarise" the situation in South Africa, and the effects would be "quite the opposite".

A former secretary in the State Department, Dr Alan Keys, said sanctions would "destroy the peaceful tools available to pursue the agenda of democracy and justice in South Africa." If they were removed, there would be no recourse "except to a violent struggle".

BLACKS IN SA OPPOSED TO SANCTIONS

An African specialist at the Hoover Institution, Dr Peter Duignan, said radicals in the US were no longer interested merely in the elimination of apartheid — because this had largely been done.

He said the issue now was "one-man-one-vote — majoritarian rule." Sanctions were making South Africans "pull together", and the US was losing influence over the

country.

A Heritage Foundation Africa specialist, Mr William Pascoe, said surveys conducted in South Africa, plus his personal experiences in this country, clearly showed that the majority of black people in SA were opposed to sanctions.

However, the left wing in the US had been "framing" the debate, and the mainstream media refused to publicise any suggestions that black people in SA did not actually want sanctions.

ONE-SIDED ARGUMENT

A Republican senator, Malcolm Wallop, agreed that the American public was being provided with a "wholly one-sided argument", and the media would not entertain any view from South Africa that opposed sanctions — "particularly if it is black".

Sanctions would destroy the economies of this country's neighbours and the "multiple billions of dollars" that would be required then to compensate those black states which could not be sustained by the United States — or elsewhere.

The chairman of the UN Special Committee against Apartheid, Gen Joseph Garba, of Nigeria, said he agreed with the scenario that sanctions

would lead to unemployment, dissatisfaction and eventually violence.

WAR SITUATION IN SA

However, he said, "we believe there is a war situation in South Africa and with empirical experience in war people have to suffer. In war people have to die."

He pointed out that in recent months all the frontline states had supported sanctions.

Conceding that workers from neighbouring states would have to leave South Africa as a result, he said governments of the frontline states would have to explain to workers that "there is a war situation and they must be prepared to make sacrifices."

RHODESIAN SITUATION

The executive director of TransAfrica, Randal Robinson, compared South Africa with the Rhodesian situation, and said sanctions would have to be "irresistable".

He said: "The combinations of the sanctions plus the consequences of war at home left the white community in Rhodesia with little other choice but to negotiate."

His attitudes on the issue were shaped in consultation with organisations and individuals such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Dr Boesak, the ANC, the UDF and Cosatu.

"It is not my assessment. It is their assessment and an assessment that I respect and defer to." — Sapa