UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

PRINCIPAL POLICIES AND PROBLEMS IN THE RELATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES WITH THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

745A.00/2-1750

The Consul General in Johannesburg (Redecker) to the Department of State

CONFIDENTIAL

Johannesburg, February 17, 1950.

No. 67

Subject: Serious Native Riots in Johannesburg

The most serious rioting by natives to occur in Johannesburg broke out in the native township of Newclare, Johannesburg, on the evening of February 13. It assumed considerable proportions and lasted for two nights, reaching a peak on February 14, and spreading to the adjoining township of Sophiatown. Hundreds of natives were involved in the rioting, Indian stores were wrecked, looted and set on fire, and the police were heavily stoned by natives. Large forces of strongly armed police were dispatched to the scene of the trouble, and it was necessary for the police to use pistols, rifles and even machine guns to disperse the rioters. Numbers of police were injured and some might have been killed by stones thrown by the natives but for the protection of their helmets. Police cars were considerably damaged. The natives impeded the work of firemen combating fires by uncoupling and damaging fire hoses and by other acts of violence, stoning the firemen, etc. Property damaged is estimated at around £20,000.

Altogether, the rioting was the most serious to occur in Johannesburg. It was a continuation of a wave of violence and lawlessness by natives during recent months. Serious disturbances broke out on November 11, 1949, at Randfontein, Newlands and Krugersdorp, requiring vigorous police action. Renewed rioting broke out at Newclare on January 29 last, when a large force of 500 armed police raided the township and some 600 natives were arrested.

Unlike the far more serious rioting occurring some months ago in Durban, which was directed exclusively against the large Indian population residing there, and which was stimulated by grievances and hostility of the natives towards the Indians, the riots in Johannesburg were directed against the white European police and grew from grievances of the native against the white authorities. The riots were
therefore the most serious to occur thus far against the established European authority of South Africa. The wrecking of the Indian shops was only incidental to the main issues involved.

Fortunately, the native rioters possessed few firearms, although some fired pistol shots at the police. But, in general, they used as weapons iron bars, clubs, stones and whatever missiles they could get hold of. Had the natives had firearms, the result undoubtedly would have been infinitely worse and incalculable, as the mobs were in a very angry and turbulent mood.

While the rioting had ceased almost completely by the night of February 15, when only isolated cases of disorder occurred, there are indications that they have not definitely stopped, as the basic cause of them continues and there may be further unexpected outbreaks in the future when conditions again become acute and the natives are sufficiently aroused.

The Government has become so concerned regarding the rioting that it became the subject of immediate debate in Parliament. More stringent measures have been taken for greatly increasing the forces of the police for dealing with renewed outbreaks. Even mechanized mobile units of the Union Defense Force have been made available and stationed at strategic points for instant action for meeting any further emergencies that may arise.

The disturbances were confined to the native townships of Newclare and Sophiatown, situated in the western part of the City of Johannesburg, at some distance from the main European business center and residential districts, situated chiefly in the northern and eastern parts of the large metropolis, embracing a total area of 90 square miles.

The rioting was complicated and intensified by armed European citizens living near the townships taking the law into their own hands and going to the scene of rioting to engage in armed clashes with the natives. It appears that the Europeans were actuated by feelings of fear and resentment that the police were not using sufficiently drastic measures and that the natives “should be taught a lesson”, and also that unless they assisted in restricting the fighting, it might spread to the neighborhoods where they lived. The Government issued stern orders to the Europeans to desist, giving assurance that the Government forces were adequate and would be used to the utmost to protect the lives and property of all peaceful persons, regardless of race.

The spark that set off the riots was the action of the police in arresting a native in the Newclare Township who was without an official pass. The native resisted the police, other natives came to his assistance, and in a short time the entire Township was in a tumult. The police had to withdraw and call for reinforcements, which, with the
spread of the rioting, were greatly increased. The natives barricaded
the streets and for a time the police did not venture in the danger zone.
The situation became so serious as to bring the highest national police
authorities, including General Palmer, Commandant of the South
African Police, to the scene. It is reported that even General Smuts,
head of the United Party, went to the scene to observe conditions for
himself.

As can be imagined, the riots have caused considerable alarm to the
white population of Johannesburg. Many citizens feel that, although
the rioting has now quieted down, there is no telling when another
spark will cause another outburst. Many thoughtful observers feel
that unless there is drastic improvement in the economic and living
conditions of the natives and removal of the causes of their unrest,
further and more serious disturbances may be in store for Johannes-
burg and South Africa. Some observers even predict that if present
trends continue, conditions will build up for a serious social upheaval
within the not distant future, which will rock all of South Africa.

While the incident of the arrest of a native set off the latest riots,
in a similar manner to preceding ones, the rioting really had its roots
in much deeper causes of a fundamental and chronic nature and was
an expression of the natives’ increasing restlessness and dissatisfaction
with their entire status, economic and living conditions, and more im-
mediately, the increasingly stringent police control measures to which
they have been subjected during the last two years.

One of the police controls which they most bitterly resent is the
system of official passes, which they must have to live, work or move
about in the city and the townships. The other chief irritant is the
liquor control exercised by frequent and intensive police raids in the
townships. Under the pass control system, any native not properly
documented is subject to arrest and expulsion from the city or comp-
pulsory labor on farms, in mines, industrial establishments, etc. The
natives object to the liquor raids on the grounds that these deprive
them of their tribal and traditional rights to make and use mild
“Kaffir” beer, and also deprives them of all privacy in their homes,
the raiding parties invading their homes at any hour of the day or
night. They also complain that the police treat them in a harsh and
even brutal manner. The police, on their side, state that the pass and
liquor control regulations are essential, as the townships are hideouts
for all manner of vagrant and criminal elements, while the native
liquor trade is also supported by criminal elements who are the chief
instigators of unrest among the natives. It is also evident that com-

unized elements are very active among the natives and take every
opportunity to intensify their feelings of injustice and frustration,
and to foment trouble between the native and ruling European population.

More fundamental than the provocative and irritating native pass and liquor control regulations is the extremely unsatisfactory living conditions of the natives in the Johannesburg native townships. To a very large extent, the natives’ living quarters consist of tin shacks, shanties, and miserable slums, deleterious alike for morals and health. Many of the streets lack lighting at night, the darkness being conducive to the commission of all manner of acts of lawlessness. Tens of thousands of natives are crowded together in slums unsuitable for human habitation. These conditions have converted parts of the townships into virtual warrens of vice and crime and law-abiding natives in the townships live in fear and terror of native gangsters and criminals. The inconvenient situation and distance of the townships, together with transport problems, with respect to their working places in the city, further contribute to the natives’ increasing dissatisfaction with having to live in the townships. The townships have contributed to the exceptionally high rate of crime of Johannesburg, which is higher than almost any other metropolis of the world. Owing to the lawless elements, persons may not safely venture forth on foot after dark in the streets in most sections of even the European part of the city, while most European houses are protected by iron bars, screens and other burglar-proof devices. It is generally conceded that the intensifying riots and high crime rate of Johannesburg can be effectively reduced and eliminated only by drastic amelioration of the basic living conditions of the natives, coupled with more judicious treatment of the natives by the police authorities. The absence of adequate recreational facilities, cinemas, places where natives can relax and gather socially, etc., in the township, further contributes to the general problem of the natives’ restlessness and discontent, finally finding expression in outbreaks of violence and lawlessness.

The riots have revived and given renewed impetus to official discussions of large-scale projects for the complete reformation of the entire living conditions of the natives in Johannesburg and removal of the existing slums and establishment of entirely new native townships outside the city limits provided with decent houses, sanitary facilities, etc. These projects for improving native housing necessarily must be on a large scale, affecting as they do not less than 20,000 native families, or around 100,000 people. The cost of the project would be prodigious, being estimated at around 10 million pounds. The obtaining of such a large amount of capital presents a serious problem as the natives generally are indigent, while the European population, already burdened with heavy taxation, would be reluctant
to contribute such a large amount of capital for dwellings for the natives. At all events, an official commission is working intensively upon the problem of native housing, a legislative bill has been drafted, and the entire project of improved housing is now supported by the realization that unless the living conditions of the natives are improved, all other measures, increased police controls, etc., will be merely palliatives for treating symptoms but not capable of effecting a permanent cure of the disease presented by the native living conditions, the malignancy of which will remain and grow. A new measure for relaxing restrictions upon native laborers performing skilled labor, all of which has been reserved exclusively for European artisans, so that natives can perform skilled labor upon purely native building projects should contribute to improving the natives' living conditions by enabling native artisans to build native houses and thus enable the natives to improve the conditions of their own people with a minimum of European assistance.

SYDNEY B. REDECKER

611.45A/2-2150

The Department of State to the Embassy of the Union of South Africa

CONFIDENTIAL

AIDE-MÉMOIRE

In his conversation with His Excellency the Ambassador of South Africa on Friday afternoon February 17, Assistant Secretary of State Hickerson made the following points with respect to the problem of Southwest Africa. The conversation should be construed as an entirely friendly one motivated solely by the desire of the United States to be as helpful as possible to the Union of South Africa in this matter. As the Ambassador knows, the United States has long felt South Africa has pursued an incorrect and injudicious course but we have pursued the policy of endeavoring to be helpful to the Union in the sense of moderating extreme criticisms. The United States has also felt that time is needed for South Africa to work out her difficulties on this problem and this was the primary motivation of the posi-

1 With the exception of Southwest Africa, all territories held under mandate from the former League of Nations either had become independent or had been placed under the United Nations trusteeship system. South Africa had refused to submit a trusteeship agreement for Southwest Africa to the UN, and in July 1949 South Africa informed the UN Secretary-General that it would not submit any further reports to the UN on Southwest Africa.
tion the United States Delegation took at the last Assembly in supporting strongly the request for an advisory opinion of the Court. The United States felt this procedure would gain needed time and in that respect would help South Africa. The Union Government should not, however, feel that the position was assumed merely to help her. The United States felt in view of the importance of gaining time that it was the correct position.

Mr. Hickerson then said that the United States hoped that the Union would take advantage of the time gained to develop some formula which could be accepted internationally and which will be a step forward towards the solution of the Southwest African problem. Mr. Hickerson said that he recalled what the Ambassador had said to him in New York that in the Union there was the problem of persuading people on the merits of the United Nations rather than the reverse but that he wished to cite the importance of the Union doing something on this problem which will permit her to emerge from behind the international cloud where she now finds herself. Mr. Hickerson stressed the contribution which South Africa can and should be making to the United Nations. By way of illustration he referred to our support of South Africa for membership on the Eritrean Commission stating that we had done this not only because we felt that South Africa can make a contribution to the work of this Commission but that we had wanted to afford her an opportunity to participate as it should in some United Nations body. Mr. Hickerson urged and reiterated the point of view that the Union Government should attempt to get itself into a frame of mind which would permit some constructive action on Southwest Africa, certainly promptly following the rendering of the Court opinion if not before. Mr. Hickerson mentioned the resumption of the filing of reports as an example of constructive action. Mr. Hickerson pointed out that the opportunity of time may not recur. He also pointed out that in view of the new and powerful forces now emerging in the world that the United States itself would find it increasingly difficult in the future to take positions on this problem helpful to the Union.

Mr. Hickerson also referred to the Court's consideration of the request for an advisory opinion and the unfortunate international reaction to the attitude towards the Court which has been adopted by the satellite countries in the Human Rights case. He expressed the hope that any brief which the Union might file would be moderate in tone and not question the jurisdiction of the Court in this matter.

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*On December 6, 1949, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution requesting the International Court of Justice to render an advisory opinion on the international status of Southwest Africa.*
In concluding Mr. Hickerson reiterated our friendship for the Union and our hope that the Union will get itself into a position so that she can play the international role which she is capable of and which she should play.\(^3\)

WASHINGTON, February 20, 1950.

\(^3\)Regarding further developments in the Southwest Africa question, see the editorial note, p. 1828.

110.15 MC/3-2150

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chargé in South Africa (Connelly)\(^2\)

CONFIDENTIAL

CAPE TOWN, March 6, 1950.

Subject: General.

Participants: Prime Minister Dr. D. F. Malan
Assistant Secretary of State George C. McGhee
B. C. Connelly, American Embassy

Mr. McGhee expressed his appreciation of the Government’s invitation to visit Cape Town and said he had always looked forward to visiting the Union. He explained that while the Union did not fall within his own particular area, which was the Near East, South Asia, and Africa, north of the Union, he would be very glad to report back to his associates in Washington anything that the Prime Minister might wish to say.

The Prime Minister stated that South Africa had very friendly relations with the United States. Whereas in the past events occurring in the United States had been of worldwide interest and influence, today the Union was in a somewhat similar position with respect to the African continent. In the event of an East–West conflict, the Union would be able to provide supplies for vessels and furnish other assistance. Whether the Union would be in a position to send troops outside

\(^2\)After serving as chairman of the West and East African Regional Conference of U.S. Diplomatic and Consular Officers, held at Lourenço Marques, Mozambique, February 27–March 2, 1950 (for information, see p. 1514), Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, African, and South Asian Affairs George C. McGhee visited a number of African and Near Eastern countries before returning to Washington. Regarding his African journey, see the editorial note, p. 1512. During his visit to South Africa, March 4–9, Assistant Secretary McGhee conferred with a number of high-ranking South African officials including Field Marshal Jan Christian Smuts, Prime Minister Daniel F. Malan, External Affairs Secretary D. D. Forsyth, Minister for Economic Affairs Eric H. Louw, Minister of Finance N. C. Havenga, Minister of Native Affairs E. G. Jansen, and Minister of Interior T. B. Dönges. Memoranda of McGhee’s various conversations were transmitted to the Department of State as enclosures to despatch 54, March 21, from Cape Town. The source text was transmitted to the Department as enclosure 2 to despatch 54.
of its own boundaries was, of course, dependent upon the requirements for maintaining order within the Union and on attending circumstances.

**North Atlantic Pact.**

Dr. Malan referred to the Union’s desire, voiced both in Parliament and in the press, to join the North Atlantic Pact. He observed that he was sure his Government’s views on this matter have been made known to the United States and the British. Mr. McGhee pointed out that the NAP was but one regional pact and did not exclude the possibility of other similar arrangements for other areas. He replied in the negative to the Prime Minister’s questions as to whether a Far Eastern Pact was contemplated at this time. Mr. McGhee explained that the actions to be taken under the NAP were still not completed. For example, it was not yet known how much the European nations could contribute to the common program, and for that reason the extent of the United States’ commitments could not yet be determined. The Prime Minister acknowledged that the NAP specifically applied to the North Atlantic area, and Mr. McGhee remarked that the Turks were also very much interested in a similar pact.2

**Communism.**

The Prime Minister said that while Communism had not yet had any appreciable effect in the Union, the Government was endeavoring to take steps which would at least prevent it making any headway, particularly among the natives who were susceptible to Communist propaganda. He said that he believed the Soviet Consulate General in Pretoria, which was vastly overstuffed by Russians who kept exclusively to themselves, was the training school for Communist agitators who were then sent out to work among the natives, both in the Union and in neighboring areas such as South West Africa and the Congo Basin. In reply to Mr. McGhee’s question, Dr. Malan said that it was rather difficult to keep tabs on these Soviet activities.

**Apartheid.**

The Prime Minister referred to the fact that the Europeans in the Union were outnumbered 4 to 1 by the non-Europeans and that in order to ensure white survival, segregation measures were an absolute necessity. The Government was endeavoring to separate the whites and non-whites into individual residential areas. This did not mean removing all the non-whites from the urban areas and sending them back to the native reserves but rather to put each race together in its

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2 For documentation on the participation by the United States in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the question of Turkey’s adherence to NATO, see vol. iii, pp. 1 ff.
own area or areas. If the native could live exclusively among his own kind, there was a good chance that he would be able to live in accordance with his own tribal customs. Dr. Malan stressed that his policy was to treat the native “with justice”. He added that all whites in the Union were in favor of white supremacy and that recently it had been noted in Parliament that more and more members of the Opposition in fact agreed with the Government’s policy in respect to the natives. In reply to Mr. McGhee’s question, Dr. Malan said that his Government’s apartheid program was making progress.

Mining Credits.

The Prime Minister stated that the Union did not need United States Government credits to assist in the development of the Union’s mineral resources, particularly in the new fields in the Orange Free State. Private capital required for these purposes was adequate, both from local sources and from abroad. Dr. Malan did express a desire for further investment in the Union by private American concerns.

No Specific Problems Between the US and the Union.

Mr. McGhee, in stating that one of the attributes of friendship was the ability to speak frankly, asked if there were any particular problems between the US and South Africa. The Prime Minister agreed that frankness was one of the prerogatives of friendship but made no reference to any specific problems. Mr. McGhee, in thanking the Prime Minister for his courtesy in seeing him, stated that we viewed with tolerance the steps which the Government was taking to handle its problems and wished Doctor Malan success in their solution.

United States Ambassador to the Union.

Just before the lunch given by the Prime Minister for Mr. McGhee, Dr. Malan asked Mr. Connelly if there was any news of the appointment of a new US Ambassador, and commented “Isn’t it rather unusual that it takes such a long time?” Mr. Connelly said that there had been no word as yet, that he was expecting it any day, and that, of course, it took some time to complete these appointments as they were matters involving both the White House and the State Department and the new appointee had to obtain the approval of the United State Senate.³

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³On March 31, Under Secretary of State James C. Webb recommended to President Truman the appointment of John G. Erhardt, then serving as Minister in Austria, to become Ambassador in South Africa to succeed Ambassador Norla Winship who resigned in November 1949. Erhardt’s proposed appointment was approved by the President on April 11, the South African Government gave its agreement on April 22, and Erhardt was confirmed by the Senate on May 17. Erhardt left Vienna on June 26 and assumed charge of the Embassy in Pretoria on September 27. See Connelly’s memorandum of conversation of September 27, p. 1880.
SECRET

Capetown, March 7, 1950.

Participants: D. D. Forsyth, Union Secretary for External Affairs; Honorable George C. McGhee, Assistant Secretary of State for NEA; Bernard C. Connelly, American Embassy, Cape Town.

Mr. McGhee, after expressing his pleasure at being in Cape Town, explained that the Union was not in his area so far as his work in the Department was concerned, but that he would be very pleased to tell his associates of any comments Mr. Forsyth might wish to make. Mr. Forsyth said that he realized that South Africa did not fall within Mr. McGhee's jurisdiction but remarked that since Mr. McGhee was so close to the Union they wanted him to visit Cape Town and meet Government officials.

Relations with the US.—Mr. Forsyth stated that South Africa's relations with the US were "of the very best." He added, however, that the US and South Africa did not always see eye to eye on certain matters and spoke of what he termed the "jiggling" attitude by the US. (Here he obviously had in mind the cases of South West Africa, Michael Scott ² and the Ex-Im Bank loan application. ³) Mr. Forsyth observed that much of the outside world did not have a clear understanding of the various problems besetting the Union. With respect to US trade relations Mr. Forsyth reiterated Mr. Louw's ⁴ remark that South Africa found that it had not understood the purpose of the EX-IM Bank and could not agree to the conditions attached to the loan. He likewise stated that the Union needed overseas capital for its development and hoped that private American capital would be invested in the Orange Free State gold mines and other projects.

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¹ The source text was transmitted as enclosure 7 to despatch 54, March 21, from Capetown. Regarding the circumstances of this and related meetings, held by South African officials with Assistant Secretary McGhee, see footnote 1, supra.
² Rev. Michael Scott, Anglican clergyman, who appeared before the United Nations Trusteeship Council in 1949 to testify on behalf of native tribes in Southwest Africa and against the South African administration in that territory.
³ In 1949 South Africa sought unsuccessfully to obtain an Export-Import Bank loan of $100 million. In the loan negotiations, the South African Government objected to the gold deposit requirements for that portion of the loan taken by private banks and appeared to be of the opinion that because South Africa had an excellent credit record the Bank should act favorably on the application without going into the purposes for which the loan was to be used. (Department of State Policy Statement on the Union of South Africa, March 28, 1951: 611.45A/3-2851)
⁴ Regarding Economic Affairs Minister Louw's conversation with McGhee, see footnote 1, supra.
Mr. Forsyth mentioned in an offhand way that he believed there was some uneasiness throughout the world in regard to US aims, saying that the US was interested in every part of the world and was pouring money in everywhere. He asked “For what purpose is this being done?” Mr. McGhee asked if Mr. Forsyth really felt anyone believed the US had imperialistic ambitions, which our whole history had proved to be the contrary. Mr. Forsyth replied in the negative, but nonetheless still left the impression of possible doubt abroad as to our goal.

United Nations.—South Africa, Mr. Forsyth said, feels very strongly that if UN continues its present course of interfering into the domestic affairs of member nations the UN will fail. Some of its recent actions with respect to the non-self-governing territories have defeated the purpose of Article 73(c) of the United Nations Charter (“Members . . . accept as a sacred trust . . . to further international peace and security.”). This purpose cannot be and will not be achieved if the UN continues to meddle in the affairs of these areas. Mr. Forsyth stated he would like to give some background on this particular trusteeship article in the Charter. Prior to going to the San Francisco meeting, which Mr. Forsyth attended, he was present at a conference in London of the delegations of the several Commonwealth nations which was to determine the action they should take in respect to the forthcoming conference. There was no provision in the Dumbarton Oaks draft of the Charter for reports to the United Nations on the administration of non-self-governing territories or any thought of having such reports submitted by the trusteeship nations. Australia, however, proposed that a clause be put in the Charter calling for purely voluntary information being sent to the UN Library for circulation to members for their information in regard to various statistical data concerning the areas they were administering. South Africa and the United Kingdom, Mr. Forsyth continued, took a dim view of this proposal, but it was decided that at San Francisco Australia would raise this subject. It did so, the Article was inserted in the Charter, and the result is apparent.

Recent developments such as UN mixing in South West African affairs and UN investigating bodies going to other non-self-governing areas are actions which were never even thought of by the framers of the Charter at San Francisco. This “interfering” process is the result of action by smaller nations, particularly in Latin America, who are in no way concerned directly in these areas and who are sufficiently numerous to outvote the major UN members who are directly responsible for these areas and who are opposed to such steps. If the numerical majority of minor nations in the UN insist on further
action of this kind against the wishes of the countries directly concerned, the collapse of the UN, Mr. Forsyth believed, will follow. (This statement was presumably based on the possible withdrawal from the UN of South Africa, France, Belgium, the UK, etc.) South Africa considers that the United Nations has no right to interfere in the administration of SWA as it is contrary to the original purposes of the Charter and the terms under which South Africa originally received the Mandate.

Mr. Forsyth explained that he had 14 years service in SWA and felt that he could speak with authority on the area. The European area in SWA has its own administration, officials, House of Assembly and will shortly have representation in the Union Parliament. A white person cannot cross the borders from the European section into the native reserves without a special pass. The blacks in the reserves run their own affairs themselves and in accordance with tribal custom. The SWA Administration has no say in running these tribal areas; the Chiefs can request the Administration's advice, which is given in an advisory capacity only. Furthermore, the tribes are not homogeneous. There are a number of different tribes with different customs and different organizations.

The only reference Mr. Forsyth made to the Michael Scott case was at the very end of the talk in which he stated that he had convincing evidence, the source of which he was not at liberty as yet to reveal, showing that Scott had become a member of the UK Communist Party in 1934 through the influence of one Emil Barnes and that Scott had come to South Africa in 1945 bearing a letter from the UK CP to the CP of South Africa. Mr. McGhee stated that if Mr. Forsyth wished we would endeavor to check that report, and as Mr. Forsyth had no objection, the Embassy's cable No. 45 (Cape Town series) of March 8, 1950 was sent to the Department.6

International Court of Justice.—Mr. Forsyth observed that South Africa still believed the SWA case should not have been referred to

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6 The telegram under reference here, not printed, transmitted to the Department of State the information about Rev. Scott related by External Affairs Minister Forsyth (745A.001/6-550). Airgram A-24, June 5, to Capetown, not printed, informed that an agency of the U.S. Government generally confirmed the information related by Forsyth (745A.001/6-550). Despatch 16, July 17, from Pretoria reported that External Affairs Minister Forsyth expressed appreciation for the confirmation of his report and asked if it could be ascertained if Scott were still a Communist Party member (745A.001/7-1750). Airgram A-52, November 10, to Pretoria, not printed, stated that it had not proved possible to confirm Scott's association with the British Communist Party (745A.001/7-1750). Despatch 202, October 17, from Pretoria, not printed, reported that the External Affairs Ministry had informed the Embassy that South Africa, at the request of the British Government, had decided not to announce to the United Nations that Rev. Scott was a member of the British Communist Party (745A.001/10-1750).
the ICJ, but since it has been, South Africa is preparing a brief for presentation. Mr. Forsyth stated that he felt South Africa had a good case, and would obtain a favorable decision if the judgment was made on purely legal grounds and was not influenced by other considerations. No decision as yet had been made as to who would represent South Africa before the Court; possibly the South African Minister at The Hague, or someone else, depending on circumstances at the time. The only doubt in Mr. Forsyth’s mind was that there might be some question of whether SWA was a non-self-governing territory. The European section is self-governing to the extent that it has its own administration, etc. The native reserves are likewise self-governing in accordance with tribal custom. This, however, is entirely a question of legal interpretation.6

India.—Mr. McGhee referred to Mr. Forsyth’s presence at the Colombo Conference7 and asked what he thought of Prime Minister Nehru. Mr. Forsyth replied he could not at first make him out, but had come to the conclusion that Nehru was an extremely able and ambitious man who was above all an opportunist. He felt Nehru wanted to head a group of middle and south Asian states with India as the principal member. Mr. Forsyth added that he felt India was remaining within the Commonwealth because Nehru considered that best suited his purpose at the present time. However, Nehru was not taking any clear stand against the Soviets, and Mr. Forsyth felt that if Nehru could achieve his goal by playing along with the Communists he would certainly do so.

Mr. Forsyth said that he is considerably worried over the possibility of Indian expansionism. South Africa has a very serious problem in the Indians resident in the Union and he gave the impression that this group might serve as an eventual fifth column. Since the annual increase in India’s population of 5,000,000 persons could not possibly be absorbed in manufacturing or other fields in the subcontinent, they would have to go abroad. As Mr. Forsyth put it, one of the Singhalese Ministers at Colombo said to him “We, like you, also have an Indian problem. But you are 3,500 miles away.” Mr. Forsyth referred to the large Indian colonies in East Africa which might serve India as an excuse for seeking that area. From there it is but a step to the Union.8

6 Regarding the attitude of the United States toward the United Nations decision to request the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to render an advisory opinion on the international status of Southwest Africa, see the aide-mémoire of February 20 from the Department of State to the South African Embassy, p. 1813.
7 Reference to the meeting of the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers at Colombo, Ceylon, January 9–14, 1950.
8 For selected documentation on the treatment of people of Indian origin in the Union of South Africa, a topic considered by the United Nations General Assembly in November and December 1950, see vol. II, pp. 559 ff.
Commonwealth Relations.—The Colombo Conference, Mr. Forsyth continued, had been worthwhile. Southeast Asia had to be strengthened against the Communist advance, but the Union had no funds to spare for use there since there was a greater need within the Union for any moneys available. Mr. McGhee said he felt the Commonwealth organization was a powerful force in the struggle for world peace and prosperity and that we hoped South Africa would remain in the Commonwealth. Mr. Forsyth answered that all talk of establishing a South African “republic” was, in his opinion, for local consumption, and that South Africa had no intention of leaving the Commonwealth. He pointed out that the English-speaking nations—the United States and the Commonwealth—were the only safeguards against a Communist-dominated world. We had the same language, the same traditions, the same way of life, and aims, and we had to stick together.

Impressions of Union Officials.—Mr. Forsyth asked Mr. McGhee what he thought of the Government officials whom he had met. Mr. McGhee replied that he hardly thought it appropriate for him to comment. Mr. Forsyth said he appreciated Mr. McGhee’s position, was pleased with his answer, but observed that nothing said would go beyond the four walls of the room. Mr. McGhee then observed that he was greatly impressed with the officials whom he had met, particularly with their sincerity in trying their best to work out a solution of their problems. Mr. Forsyth stated he was very pleased to hear this since, while he did not always agree with the Government’s policies and measures, he was convinced the Government officials were absolutely sincere in their desire to solve their problems in the way which seemed to them to be the best solution.

Apartheid.—With respect to the Government’s policy Mr. Forsyth remarked he had once asked Doctor Malan what he conceived as the ultimate goal of apartheid. The Prime Minister’s reply was complete separation of whites and non-whites. The non-whites would be given all encouragement and help in improving their lot, economically and socially, but they would have to live by themselves. For example, in higher education the natives would receive identical instruction to the whites, given by the same teachers, but would be taught in completely separate buildings. Mr. Forsyth also mentioned that some of the extreme enthusiasts of apartheid even had in mind complete native states run exclusively by the natives.

Conclusion.—In saying that he hoped Mr. McGhee had a pleasant and interesting visit, to which Mr. McGhee answered in the affirmative, Mr. Forsyth stated that he was sorry Mr. McGhee’s visit could not have been several days longer, but that he fully understood how impossible this was in view of Mr. McGhee’s tight schedule. He added
that the Union Government would be pleased to see other senior officials of the State Department whenever they had an opportunity of visiting South Africa. Mr. McGhee again expressed his deep appreciation of the kindesses shown him, and of his pleasure at having been able to talk with the Prime Minister and other Government officials.

The Secretary of State to the Chargé in South Africa (Connelly).

TOP SECRET

WASHINGTON, April 17, 1950, No. 10

Sir: The National Security Council, on September 4, 1948, approved a project to examine the security of certain industrial operations in foreign countries with the objective of determining the measures which should be taken for the protection against sabotage of such operations as produce materials of strategic importance to the security of the United States. Responsibility for coordination of the implementation of the project was assigned to the Secretary of State.

In the case of South Africa, an examination of the production of metallurgical manganese is contemplated. The objects of such a security study of this industry would be:

1. To ascertain, if possible, the presence and strength of Soviet agents, Communist parties and Communist-dominated labor unions in the area of the industries;

2. To determine whether effective industrial security procedures are in force to minimize the vulnerability of the production and shipment of metallurgical manganese to sabotage or subversive activities.

The enclosed memorandum concerns a conversation held in the Department with the South African Ambassador on April 5, 1950, in which the interest of the Department was expressed in general terms.

The Department would appreciate the Embassy’s comments on this problem and any information the Embassy may have on the following points:

a. Have any industrial security surveys of the metallurgical manganese industry been made by government authorities or private concerns? (If such surveys are known to have been conducted, are reports available?)

b. Are surveys of this industry contemplated in the foreseeable future by the authorities or others?

Very truly yours,

For the Secretary of State:

GEORGE W. PERKINS

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1 Not printed.

2 George W. Perkins, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs.

538-188—78—110
The Chargé in South Africa (Connelly) to the Secretary of State

[Extracts]

CONFIDENTIAL

Cape Town Embassy Series 117

Subject: May Day Riots on the Rand

Summary:

The clashes between Natives and police on May 1, 1950 at several locations in and around Johannesburg, despite the Government ban on demonstrations, were part of a pattern of racial tension which threatens the internal stability of the Union of South Africa. Overly similar to previous riots, the May Day disturbances were uglier in mood than any in the recent past. Hostility between Natives and police reached a new high. Although elementary economic benefits, elimination of the pass system, and the right to present legitimate grievances constituted the immediate objectives of the Natives, there were signs of a new spirit of nationalism among the Natives, which, despite its vagueness, is becoming the basis of a growing faith. But for a growing number of Natives this goal of nationalism is not enough and these despondent ones are turning to Communism because it holds out the promise of equality—racial, economic and political.

Content to do no more about this riot than blame it on Communist agitators and gird itself for the next one, the Malan Government pretended to be unshaken. The United Party supported all the Government’s precautionary measures, floundered briefly immediately after the riots, and then launched a political attack on the “apartheid-mad” Nationalists. A few liberals urged the initiation of a debate on the riots as an urgent matter of public importance, but received virtually no parliamentary support. And here the matter might have rested, if it were not for the fact that this was South Africa’s most serious post-war racial clash. A surprisingly large and vocal minority on the Rand refused to allow the Government and the United Party to brush away without protest the subsequent Ballinger-Brookes plea for a round-table conference on the Native problem. They challenged the complacency of the majority of white South Africans who feel, as a simple expedient of self-preservation, that the Native must be “kept in his

1 In the omitted portion of this despatch, it is reported that on May 3 Mrs. Margaret L. Ballinger, Native Representative in the South African House of Assembly, and Senator Brookes, Native Representative in the South African Senate, called on Prime Minister Malan and requested the convening of a round-table conference of all political leaders, including Africans, to discuss the Native problem on a level above politics. Malan refused.
place”. But they were not successful. South Africa is reluctant to face this issue, and yet it is unmistakably clear. The Union can continue to practice uncompromising “white-supremacy” risking large scale Native uprising (which only the exercise of dictatorial repression can prevent), or recognition of the seriousness of the current racial tension can force all sides to sit down with the Natives and attempt to work out a compromise. The future of South Africa depends on the answer and only three answers are possible: Compromise, further riots, or a “police state”. Malan’s Government appears to be trending toward the latter.

[Here follow 19 pages in the source text describing in detail the planning for the May Day demonstration, the South African Government decision to ban demonstrations, the course of the violence during the demonstration, and the reactions in South Africa to the riots.]

VI. The Significance of the May Day Riots.

The May Day riots are the most serious in recent South African history. They are an accurate clue to the tension between Natives and Whites. In this tension respect between the parties has virtually disappeared. The Government did not want any mass demonstrations, no matter how peaceful, and it did not want to see any inter-organizational unity on the part of the Natives. Most of those who took the trouble to examine the situation knew that trouble was coming and it came. The reason it was not worse is because the Native leaders restrained their people, and because they had no guns. What surprised the Government most was the number who stayed away from work. If further riots are to be avoided certain obvious steps must be taken such as securing higher wages, more housing, health benefits, lessening the stringency of the pass laws, and giving the Native a greater role in the Nation's life. None of these steps will be taken. The obvious answer is more riots. The present Government will seek to prevent such riots by rigid control over the Natives. It can only exercise effective control through the passage of such legislation as the Population Registration Bill, the Group Areas Bill, and similar anti-civil rights measures. Taken together these legislative acts and pending bills reflect all the traditional trappings of the police

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² Cape Town Embassy Series Despatch 118, June 8, described the South African Group Areas Act of June 1950 as follows:

“The Group Areas Bill is a long and complicated proposal to set up a permanent scheme on a racial basis for the ownership and occupation of real property in South Africa. The Bill makes apartheid (segregation) a permanent part of South African law because it forces people to live in separate and distinct areas according to race. Thus, compulsion by law to restrict the use of land will be for the first time placed upon the Malay, Indian and Coloured (mixed blood) peoples of the Cape, without need for further legislation or approval by Parliament.” (845A.411/6-850)
state. The South African police-state-in-the-making is not directed against other Whites, as yet, despite what the United Party says. Its aim is the legislation necessary to perpetuate White supremacy in an Afrikaans republic.

For the Chargé d’Affaires, a.i.:
JOSEPH SWEENEY
Attaché

745A.5/7–1150

The South African Minister of Defence (Erasmus) to the Secretary of Defense (Johnson)¹

SECRET

CAPETOWN, June 15, 1950.

DEAR SECRETARY JOHNSON: During my visit to Washington in August of last year,² I informed you of the attitude of my Government towards communism, that is, the Government is prepared to support the Powers opposed to communism. Because of the possibility of an unsatisfactory internal situation developing in the Union I explained to you that the Government had, however, not found itself able to commit itself in principle to Union Forces serving outside the Union. Communism might prove to be a serious danger in South Africa with its large non-European population and if an international conflict were to arise, our Forces might be needed to maintain order and to ensure the security of the Union in the first place. It was at the same time decided by the Government that should the position regarding the security of the Union be satisfactory, the question of sending Union Forces outside the Union would be considered in the light of the circumstances prevailing.

Recently the position generally was reviewed and my Government has now decided that it will, in the event of war against communism,
be prepared to recommend to Parliament that Union Forces should participate on and in the defence of the African continent.

I have also advised Mr. Shinwell, British Minister of Defence in this sense and in view of the importance of the matter and our previous discussion, feel that you should know of this development.

Yours very sincerely,

F. C. ERASMUS

S45A.2547/6-2750: Telegram

The Chargé in South Africa (Connelly) to the Secretary of State

TOP SECRET

CAPETOWN, June 27, 1950—5 p. m.

82. Capetown series. Deptel 66 Capetown series June 14. 1 Embdes 122 Capetown series June 23 2 which left here by Cairo courier June 26 due Department about July 7, replies Department’s instruction 10, April 17, and states:

1. No postwar security survey Union’s manganese industry made and none contemplated.

2. As South African Ambassador Washington not yet reported his April 5 talk with Department officials, secretary for EA Forsyth requested written note, to which I replied my instruction did not provide for such communication and I would consult Department.

3. Despatch under reference includes draft such note.

4. While Forsyth merely said when informed our willingness furnish data on US experience in security techniques that such information would be of help to Union officials engaged these problems, he remarked in later talk he had mentioned whole matter to Prime Minister.

5. Embassy considers greatest threat subversive activity lies in field labor. No recognized native trade unions in mining industry but must be some illegal groups strength of which and Communist influence therein unknown. What might be taken for Communism among natives is often to great extent native discontent at and protest against authorities repressive measures. Sole Communist MP 3 who will lose seat under recently passed anti-Communist act, says of 10,000 Communist adherents during war peak days, only 1,500 paid dues. He states native apathy plus growing spirit African nationalism, which refuses trust any white leadership, prevents sizeable increase number

1 Not printed. It requested a reply to instruction 10, April 17, to Capetown, p. 1823.

2 Not printed. The substance of the despatch is presented in the telegram printed here. Enclosed with the despatch was a memorandum of May 22 by William O. Vandenburg, Minerals Attaché at the Embassy in South Africa, on the problems of manganese procurement from South Africa. (S45A.2547/6-2350)

3 Sam Kahn, described in despatch 133, June 23, from Capetown, as “the only Communist member of Parliament, and undoubtedly a member of the South African Communist Party’s Politbureau.” According to the despatch, Kahn’s remarks referred to here were made during a confidential conversation in the presence of an Embassy officer.
Communist followers at this time. South African CP last week announced dissolution view anti-Communist act, but since only CP program offers non-European hope equality and redress wrongs its attractiveness apparent and danger spread Communist influence among mine workers, although now relatively unimportant, remains.

6. Extent present industrial security measures practiced manganese industry unknown, but assume only usual safety precautions in force.

Embassy requests instructions whether note be handed Forsyth and whether Embassy minerals attaché visit manganese area to report on present conditions.5

Connell

4 Regarding the dissolution of the South African Communist Party on June 20 and the entry into force of the South African Act for the Suppression of Communism on June 28, see also despatch 106, October 3, from Pretoria, p. 1884.

5 Telegram 10, July 21, to Pretoria, authorized the Embassy to transmit a formal communication to External Affairs Secretary Forsyth and also authorized Embassy Minerals Attaché Vandenburg to visit South African manganese producing areas, if it were possible for him to do so without arousing South African officials, in order to report on the current situation there (845A.2547/7-1950).

Editorial Note

On July 11 the International Court of Justice handed down an advisory opinion on the international status of Southwest Africa, as requested by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1949. The Court stated that the Union of South Africa was under no obligation to submit a trusteeship agreement for Southwest Africa to the UN but held that South Africa could not unilaterally alter the international status of Southwest Africa and was obliged to submit reports to the UN on its administration of the territory. The Court's advisory opinion was considered at the Fifth United Nations General Assembly which opened in New York on September 17. On December 13 the General Assembly adopted a resolution, supported by the United States, which accepted the International Court's opinion, urged South Africa to do the same, and set up a committee of five nations (including the United States) to negotiate with South Africa on the procedural arrangements necessary to give effect to the opinion. For documentation on the Southwest Africa question, from the handing down of the opinion of the International Court through the discussions in the UN General Assembly, see volume II, pages 474 ff. For views of the United States on the question, see also the aide-mémoire of February 20, from the Department of State to the South African Embassy, page 1813.
845A.2547/9–1950: Telegram

The Chargé in South Africa (Connelly) to the Secretary of State

TOP SECRET

PRETORIA, September 16, 1950–11 a.m.

86. Absence Secretary External Affairs Forsyth, on leave, assistant chief Political Division Sole told me since original approach security measures South African manganese production had been made Ambassador Jooste, External Affairs telegraphed Jooste last week to inform Department.

1. Matter had been taken up with Railways and Harbors Board which reported had full list vulnerable spots and had everything under control.

2. Union Secret Service was aware sabotage possibilities no danger at present and felt itself capable handling any subversive or sabotage threats.

3. Union appreciated US offer provide information re counter sabotage measures and if written form would be glad have it.

We consider written information more acceptable Union authorities (Deptel 28, August 24) because (1) present Nationalist Government only in power for two years extremely proud its achievements, resentful any outside unrequested offer assistance and newly set up Secret Service unwilling admit cannot fully handle whatever occurs. This follows from mentality Afrikaners who after nearly 150 years under British oriented governments now have come into their own and intend to do as they please. We recognize these growing pains but feel present government naive re dangers possible sabotage and personal visit expert desirable. Accordingly suggest after receipt minerals attaché's report, matter be reviewed possibly with Jooste [and in?] light instruction Ambassador take up with Prime Minister. Minerals attaché report goes forward next courier leaving about September 19 and indicates (1) no security measures taken versus possible sabotage manganese producing area (2) possible serious curtailment manganese production mines through sabotage remote (3) but single unguarded key bridge railway from production area to Kimberley is vulnerable to sabotage, if destroyed would bring manganese shipments destined seaports for export virtual standstill for some months.

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1 South African First Secretary W. Dirkse-van-Schalkwyk called at the Department of State on December 4 to present certain information received from his government concerning the security of manganese production and transport in South Africa. (Memorandum of conversation by J. H. Shullaw, December 4, 1950: 845A.2547/12-450)

2 Not printed. It asked why written information on American security techniques was more acceptable to South African authorities than a special visit by American officials. (845A.2547/7-2550)

3 Ambassador-designate John G. Ehrhardt arrived in Pretoria on September 19.
Despatch 4 will recommend (1) discussions most appropriate way Union Government guard bridge (2) further discussions re guarding dynamite magazines and tighter control sales dynamite (3) report by American Consul Durban on manganese conveyor belt loading plant that port which now believed somewhat vulnerable sabotage both from point view easy access and curtailment total volume manganese exports.

CONNELLY

Reference here is to despatch 161, September 18, from Pretoria, on the subject of the possibility for sabotage of South African manganese production (845A.25479/9-1850).

123 Erhardt, John G.

Memorandum of Conversation, by the First Secretary of the Embassy in South Africa (Connelly)

CONFIDENTIAL

PRETORIA, September 27, 1950.

Subject: Ambassador's courtesy calls on Acting Secretary for External Affairs, and on Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs.

Participants: Ambassador Erhardt, 1 Prime Minister Malan, Acting Secretary for External Affairs Donald Spies, 2 and Bernard C. Connelly, American Embassy.

The Ambassador called by appointment on the Acting Secretary for External Affairs. After an exchange of pleasantries the Ambassador said that he hoped he would be able to call on officials of the Department of External Affairs, as occasion arose, in order to exchange views on pertinent matters. Mr. Spies said that he would welcome such visits and External Affairs would do its utmost to co-operate.

Mr. Spies then took the Ambassador and Mr. Connelly into the Prime Minister's office and after introducing them departed. The Ambassador stated that he had been looking forward to his assignment to the Union, and, in reply to the Prime Minister's query, said that for the last six years he had been stationed in Vienna. He mentioned that the Russian Commanding General there, when apprised of the Ambassador's forthcoming assignment, had remarked that in South Africa there were a lot of dissatisfied Natives. To this Dr. Malan

1 Ambassador Erhardt arrived in Capetown, South Africa, on September 19, arrived in Pretoria on September 26, and assumed charge of the Embassy on September 27. Erhardt presented his credentials to the Governor General of South Africa, G. Brand van Zyl, on October 4.

2 Spies was South African Under Secretary for External Affairs.
observed that he was aware the Soviet Union felt there was a fertile field for Communist propaganda among the non-Europeans in the Union. In fact, there was a very large Soviet Consulate General not far down the road.

Dr. Malan referred to the Union’s need for foreign capital to develop its mines and industries, and mentioned with pleasure the fact that American capital was taking part in development of the copper industry (at O’Keefe in northwestern Cape Province and Tsumab in South West Africa) and was also participating in the exploitation of the new gold mines in the Orange Free State. He mentioned that some hundreds of millions of pounds would have to be expended in that area before any substantial returns could be realized, but that even now one mine was producing to some extent and that all reports indicated the Orange Free State area was even richer than the Witwatersrand.

Dr. Malan volunteered the statement that among the Union’s mineral wealth was uranium. The Ambassador then asked how the uranium matter was progressing (having in mind the current discussions on this subject between South African and U.S. officials). Dr. Malan replied that he believed the matter was progressing satisfactorily; he also said the Government realized it could only be delivered to us and not to those who would misuse it.

Dr. Malan spoke of the satisfactory turn of events in Korea and the Ambassador, in agreeing, spoke of the gratification the United States had on learning of the Union’s decision to send a fighter squadron to Korea.

In conclusion, the Ambassador mentioned his hope that he might be able to see the Prime Minister on suitable occasions on topics of mutual interest, and the Prime Minister said that he would be very glad to have these visits.

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9 Regarding the negotiations with South Africa for the procurement of uranium, see the editorial note, p. 1842.
4 Joint Weeka No. 32, sent in despatch 73, August 11, from Pretoria, reported as follows upon the South African decision to send military aid to Korea:

“After a six-hour Cabinet meeting on August 4 the Union Government reversed its previous stand and decided to offer a fighter squadron to the UN forces in Korea. This decision came as a surprise to all political observers in the Union as well as to the general public. Previously the Union Cabinet had indicated that it was both unpracticable and unrealistic for the Union to give any military assistance in Korea, and emphasized that the Far East was out of its sphere of influence. The reasons for the Cabinet’s change of opinion appear to be a combination of: (1) increasing public pressure for South African aid, (2) the belief that aid to Korea would influence the anti-Communist German vote in South West Africa, (3) the necessity for proving beyond any question the Government’s anti-Communism, (4) concern over possible U.S. Government economic reaction toward the Union’s unwillingness to help in Korea, and (5) a determination that under the circumstances the Cabinet should make the least possible acceptable gesture.” (745A.00(W)/8–1150)
Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Perkins) to the Secretary of State

SECRET [WASHINGTON,] October 2, 1950.

Subject: Visit of the Honorable F. C. Erasmus, Minister of Defense of the Union of South Africa.

Problem:

Mr. Erasmus, Minister of Defense in the South African Government, is arriving in New York on October 3 and will be in this country until October 10. According to the South African Embassy, he desires to discuss with you and with the Secretary of Defense general questions of African defense planning.

Background:

Mr. Erasmus has been in London for discussions with officials of the British Government of plans for the defense of Africa south of the Sahara. He has also explored the possibility of purchasing modern army and air force equipment. Before leaving South Africa a member of his party told our Embassy at Pretoria that if Britain were unable to supply the military equipment in the quantities desired they would seek to obtain the equipment in the United States.

Mr. Erasmus is accompanied on his visit to the United States by General C. L. du Toit, Chief of the General Staff; Brigadier H. B. Klopper, Director General of the Land Forces; Mr. R. F. Cuff, Secretary for Defense; and Mr. D. D. Forsyth, Secretary for External Affairs.

In August, 1949 Mr. Erasmus, accompanied by the then Chief of the General Staff, General Beyers, visited Washington and discussed with Mr. Webb the possibility of South Africa obtaining military equipment from the United States. Mr. Erasmus said at that time that, because of limited man power and financial resources, South Africa for the most part was interested only in obtaining training equipment which would enable South African forces to go into action, in the event of war, at an earlier date than would otherwise be the case. He was told that the MAP legislation, then in draft form, did not provide authority for the transfer of military equipment to South

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*A marginal notation on the source text indicates that this memorandum was sent to New York on October 2. Secretary of State Acheson was in New York where he was serving as the head of the U.S. Delegation to the Fifth Session of the U.N. General Assembly which opened on September 19.

*For the record of the Secretary of State's meeting with Defense Minister Erasmus in New York on October 4, see p. 1837. For the record of Erasmus meeting with Secretary of Defense George C. Marshall (who succeeded Louis Johnson on September 21), see Gen. Lemnitzer's memorandum of conversation, October 5, p. 1839.
Africa on a reimbursable basis and that there was no legislative authority for grant assistance to South Africa. Mr. Erasmus also discussed South Africa’s strategic importance in time of war with Secretary Johnson and with General Bradley.

In a letter to Mr. Erasmus in November 1949, Secretary Johnson stated, at the suggestion of Mr. Webb: “It is probable, however, that early consideration will be given to an amendment to the MDA Act so that the United States can extend procurement assistance to free countries whose security is of importance to the United States.” This amendment was in fact accomplished through changes in Section 408 (e) of the Act which were made by Public Law 621.

In view of the shortness of time, it would probably be impossible to arrive at a determination before Mr. Erasmus departs from the United States as to whether or not South Africa would be eligible for such procurement assistance in terms of the revised MDA Act. Since South Africa is in fact not eligible to join with the United States in any existing collective defense and regional arrangement, there would remain to be decided whether or not South Africa’s ability to defend itself, or to participate in the defense of the area of which it is a part, is important to the security of the United States. In any general discussions with Mr. Erasmus, however, it would be desirable to have in mind such a readily identifiable United States security interest as South African uranium. Ambassador Erhardt has been instructed to emphasize to Prime Minister Malan the urgency attached by the United States to the production of uranium in South Africa in quantity and in the shortest possible time. We are also interested in South African manganese production. As regards South Africa’s willingness to shoulder defense responsibilities, the Union Government several months ago informed the British Government that it had decided, in the event of war, to make two divisions available for service outside South Africa in defense of the African continent. The South African Government also advised us officially of this decision. Furthermore South Africa has despatched an air squadron for service in Korea.

Recommendations:

We were frank in our discussions with Mr. Erasmus last year with the result that even though he obtained nothing tangible from his visit he went away with a better understanding and appreciation of the problems with which we are faced in meeting even the most urgent defense requirements of the free world. Furthermore, he returned to South Africa convinced that we were mindful of South Africa’s de-

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2 Regarding the instructions of October 2 to Ambassador Erhardt on the matter of uranium procurement, see the editorial note, p. 1842.
fense problems and of its strategic importance on the African continent. Continued frankness in discussing the strategic position of the United States and its world wide commitments with Mr. Erasmus will contribute to the maintenance of our present cordial relations with him.

1. It is recommended that you take the opportunity to express our warm appreciation of the South African decision to send an air squadron to Korea.

2. It is recommended you state, if the question is raised, that there is no legislative authority at the present time which would permit the United States to extend military assistance to South Africa on a grant basis.

3. It is suggested that you explain to Mr. Erasmus the changes made in the provisions of the MDA Act relating to eligibility for procurement assistance. It is further recommended that you state that this Government would be prepared, upon receipt of a formal request from the South African Government, to make a determination as to the eligibility of South Africa, in terms of the revised Act, for military assistance on a reimbursable basis.

4. It is recommended that in your discussions with Mr. Erasmus you stress the fact that supplies of military equipment now and in the immediate future will be insufficient to meet requirements, particularly in view of the Korean war and the needs of Western Europe.

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745A.001/10-350

The Ambassador in South Africa (Erhardt) to the Secretary of State*

SECRET

No. 166

PRETORIA, October 3, 1950.

Subject: Communist Influence in South African Trade Unions.

The current influence of Communism in South African trade unions is complicated by recent developments which have resulted in the dissolution of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) and the passage of an Act declaring the CPSA an unlawful organization. It was known early in the last session of the South African Parliament (the 3rd session of the 10th Parliament which commenced on January 20 and ended on June 24, 1950) that the Nationalist Government intended to pass an Act outlawing the Communist Party. As the debate on the anti-Communist legislation got under way, the Communist Party of South Africa occasioned surprise throughout the country by dissolving itself through a unanimous resolution of its Central Committee on May 7, 1950. According to Communist spokesmen, this

*The Embassy wishes to acknowledge the assistance which it has received in the preparation of this report from members of the staff of the Consulate General in Johannesburg, particularly Charles O. Thompson, Consul, and Gideon A. R. Uys, locally employed economic analyst. [Footnote in the source text.]
action was accepted unanimously by general meetings of every district subdivision of the organization. A public statement was issued under Communist auspices on June 20 announcing the dissolution of the CPSA and this announcement was read to the House of Assembly on the same day by Sam Kahn, Communist MP. Subsequently Parliament passed the Suppression of Communism Act which received the Governor General's assent on June 26, 1950, thus coming into force on that date as Act No. 44 of 1950.

As a result of the dissolution of the CPSA and the passage of the anti-Communism Act there can be no such thing—legally—as a Communist in South Africa. Anyone who professes Communism or is declared to be a Communist is subject to specific legal penalties. To refer to a person as a Communist, if that person is not a Communist, renders one legally liable to a charge of slander and defamation in the Union of South Africa.

[Here follow those portions of the despatch, comprising 10 of the 16 pages of the source text, presenting a detailed review of the reaction in South Africa to the Suppression of Communism Act, an analysis of the numerical strength of Communist and non-Communist trade unions, the relative influence and effectiveness of Communist and non-Communist unions, and aspects of the strategy and internal activity of Communist-led unions.]

7. Sources of Communist Strength at the Present Time.

The great source of Communist strength in South Africa at the present time is the restrictive and often repressive treatment of Natives. Until its dissolution the Communist Party was literally the only political party a Native was eligible to join, as he was not eligible to membership in any other recognized political party, and is still not eligible. The Native problem is a complicated one, but suffice it to say in the interests of brevity, the Native in South Africa receives low wages, has inadequate housing, limited opportunities, and under the apartheid (racial segregation) policy of the present government is considered a member of an inferior race which must be held down in order to maintain white supremacy. The legitimate grievances of Natives are legion and among the few persons who espouse these grievances the majority of vocal ones are Communists. Racial relations have deteriorated so badly in South Africa since the advent of the Nationalist Government that there are few white people in the country who have anything like an adequate understanding of what is going on among Native leaders and Native organizations. Liberals like the Ballingers, Senator Brookes and others are fearful that in the final analysis the Natives will have to turn to Communism for help, because as their plight grows worse they are coming to the conclusion that, whether Communism is a good or bad thing, it is the only outside
force that they can call upon for assistance. Even moderate Native leaders, such as Dr. Xuma, the former President General of the African National Congress, has admitted that his colleagues among native leaders believed they must utilize Communist help in their struggle. They hope that African Nationalism will eventually win the day after the issue of white suppression has been settled by revolution. Alarming as these statements appear, it is a fact that moderate white opinion has been discredited among urban Natives because it has been shown ineffective in securing any redress of legitimate grievances. As the tide of white opinion in South Africa grows overtly more pro-
apartheid, the Communists are able to assert, “We are your friends, all other white people are your enemies and those who pretend to help you are hypocrites whose real aim is to maintain apartheid.” In the non-European unity movement (an attempt to unite Natives, Coloreds, and Asiaties) a strong part of the incentive comes from Indian leaders, and the most prominent of these leaders, Dr. Y. M. Dadoo, President of the South African Indian Congress, was a member of the Central Executive of the legally defunct Communist Party of South Africa.

One of the most optimistic signs on the horizon has been the plea of prominent industrialists for better treatment of the Natives in order to use them more effectively in an expansion of the country’s industry. So far the Government has paid no heed to these industrial leaders. Their views are not taken seriously by native opinion† which distrusts them. These industrialists do not talk to the Natives, and it is easy for Communists who know the Natives, and often know them very well, to undermine the appeals of industrial leaders for a more tolerant attitude on race. Where Communists in South Africa have the advantage is that they are the only organization which is assertedly in favor of complete racial equality. To say that they are not sincere carries no weight with the Natives because they know that even the white Liberals do not go this far, and the Natives want to believe in complete racial equality.

†Native opinion is a difficult term to define. Obviously it is a vague concept because of the limitedness of Native organization. It is confined to the urban Native who represents anywhere from a third to a half of the total Native population of some 8½ million. It is popular to say that Native opinion does not exist; but this is wishful thinking on the part of advocates of “white supremacy.” As the term is used here it means the expression of Native leaders stemming from Professor Matthews of Fort Hare to the right, through the moderateness of Dr. Xuma in the center, to the progressive leftism of Dr. Moroka, the current President General of the African National Congress; the statements issued by Native organizations, such as the African National Congress, the All-African Convention, the Native Advisory Boards Congress, etc.; the editorials of representative Native newspapers such as Inkunzala ya Bantu and The Voice of Moroka (Johannesburg) and the planned or spontaneous reaction of Natives in their protest against apartheid. The Embassy believes the cohesiveness of Native opinion is generally underestimated. [Footnote in the source text.]
It is difficult to speculate on what effect re-armament will have on Communist strength in the Union. Communist propaganda is hard at work preparing Native opinion to oppose the "white imperialist nations" if another world war comes. Present anti-Communist legislation and the dissolution of the CPSA will make any overt increase in Communist strength unlikely. It does seem probable, however, that in the event of another war, the Communists would attempt to provoke internal strife in the Union by agitating the Natives.

[Here follows the concluding portion of this despatch examining the caliber of Communist and non-Communist union leadership.]

For the Ambassador
JOSEPH SWEENEY
Attaché

745A.5/10–560

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State

TOP SECRET


Subject: South African Defense Problem

Participants: Mr. Francois C. Erasmus, South African Defense Minister
Mr. Douglas D. Forsyth, Secretary of South African Department of External Affairs
Ambassador G. P. Jooste, South African Delegation
The Hon. Dean Acheson, United States Delegation
Mr. G. Hayden Raynor, United States Delegation

I received South African Defense Minister Erasmus this morning at the request of the South African Ambassador. He was accompanied by the Ambassador and by the Secretary of the South African Ministry of External Affairs Forsyth.

The South African Defense Minister opened the conversation by expressing appreciation of my receiving him. I returned this amenity and then expressed the warm appreciation of the United States Government for the South African action in sending combat air assistance for the united effort in Korea.

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1 Ambassador Jooste served as Vice Chairman of the South African Delegation to the 5th Session of the United Nations General Assembly which opened on September 19.
2 Secretary Acheson was head of the U.S. Delegation to the 5th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.
3 Raynor was United Nations Adviser in the Bureau of European Affairs of the Department of State.
4 Evidence in the files of the Department of State indicates that this conversation, which was apparently held at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, took place on October 4.
Erasmus then said he would see Secretary of Defense Marshall tomorrow and go into certain problems in more detail but that he wished to inform me of recent developments in South African defense policy and to let me know in a general way of certain problems facing the Union in this regard. I said that I would be very glad to have this general information. He elaborated the general theme by stating that South Africa had made a decision to assist in resisting aggression by communism in any part of Africa, by which term the Middle East was also included. He did not define their concept of the latter term. He said South Africa now regarded an attack by communism anywhere in this area as an attack on South Africa.

He then said that they were planning how to implement this policy if the necessity arose. He had just been reviewing this with defense officials in the United Kingdom. He said he had told United Kingdom officials and also wished to tell us that the Union had decided to make available for service outside of the Union, in the event of this kind of emergency, one armored division and one combat air squadron. The problem then facing the Union was how to handle the financial burden of equipping the armored division which he said would be a very heavy one for a small state such as South Africa. He had discussed this in the UK and had been given assurance of assistance in procurement on a cash basis. They would also need procurement assistance here on certain items. He indicated that the Union would have the greatest difficulty in carrying out the program if they have to pay this heavy cost themselves.

I explained the revision in the Military Defense Assistance Act which has been made which, under certain circumstances, would permit us, if a determination was made that South Africa was eligible, to assist in procurement on a reimbursable basis. I stated, however, that we had no existing legislative authority which would permit us to extend this kind of assistance on a grant basis. I also took occasion to point out the heavy demands now pressing upon us from all sides for military equipment outlining the needs in Korea, the program for rearming the Atlantic Pact countries, assistance to Latin American countries, and finally for our own increased rearmament here at home. I also pointed out the heavy increased financial burden this was placing on our own people.

Mr. Forsyth interjected at this point that, in addition to the commitments outlined by Erasmus, South Africa was also undertaking the defense of the coasts of South Africa and also would undertake the protection of convoys farther north. This meant some increase in naval tonnage on their part.

*See Gen. Lemnitzer’s record of that conversation, infra.*
Mr. Erasmus then turned to another matter and said that the Union felt there should be consultations among the African states and the powers responsible for adminstering African territories on the subject of defense. He said specifically that the Union felt Egypt should either be included or consulted in some way on this matter. This was also raised in his visit to the United Kingdom. He said that when such a meeting was arranged, and they hoped to hold it shortly after the beginning of the next year somewhere in Africa, he hoped the United States would be able to have an observer attend the meeting. I replied that we would give consideration to this request. I indicated that we were greatly interested in the defense of Africa and that I had listened to the South African decision to play an active role therein with the greatest interest. On leaving, Ambassador Jooste said he would like to attempt to summarize in one sentence the point which his Government wants us to appreciate which is that they are prepared to undertake very serious responsibilities of importance with respect to the defense of Africa, but that they have very limited resources of their own with which to do this.

ISA/MDAP Files: Lot 52-26

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Director, Office of Military Assistance, Department of Defense (Lemnitzer)\(^1\)

TOP SECRET

WASHINGTON, 5 October 1950.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Subject: Record of Conversation between Secretary Marshall and Mr. Erasmus, South African Minister of Defense.

PRESENT

U.S.

Secretary Marshall
Major General Lemnitzer, OSD
Colonel A. Drexel Biddle, Army
Captain Craig, OSD
Major George, OSD

SOUTH AFRICA

Mr. Francis C. Erasmus, Minister of Defense;
Mr. Hubert F. Cuff, Secretary for Defense;
Major General Christian L. DuToit, Chief of General Staff;
Brigadier Klopper
Ambassador G. P. Jooste
Colonel DeVos, Combined Air Military Attaché

\(^1\) The source text was circulated in the Office of the Mutual Defense Assistance Program, Department of State, by its Deputy Director, John O. Bell. A copy was also provided to the Office of European Affairs of the Department of State.

539-188-78—117
1. Mr. Erasmus discussed the strategic importance of South Africa and the security problems with which it is faced. He stated that South Africa is proposing to hold a conference somewhere on the African Continent during the early part of 1951 to discuss security problems with the nations concerned, particularly the British, French, and Belgians. He hoped that the U.S. would be able to send a representative to this conference as an observer.

2. Under present plans South Africa intends to make one armored division and one fighter bomber squadron available for the defense of the African Continent. He envisaged that the most likely threat existed in the Northeast part of the Continent and that the South African forces would also be available for employment in the Middle East.

3. The South African Government has a serious internal security problem which stems from the fact that the population comprises 2½ million whites and 8 million blacks or Indians. To meet this situation Home Guard units were organized and partially equipped.

4. At the present time the South African armed forces are practically "naked" as regards equipment. Their primary needs include tanks, weapons and other equipment for the armored division; radar for air defense purposes, Navy patrol aircraft for antisubmarine patrol of the 3,000 miles of coastal sea lanes adjacent to South Africa and jet fighters for the fighter bomber squadron.

5. He indicated that he and his delegation had been to London to discuss the South African equipment requirements with Defense Minister Shinwell and the British Staffs. He indicated that the required equipment could be built in the U.K. but the financial terms were such that South Africa was unable to meet them. He told Mr. Shinwell that he was coming on to Washington to discuss South African equipment requirements with U.S. officials.

6. Secretary Marshall explained that since the Minister's last visit to Washington in August 1949, Congress had approved an amendment to the MDAP legislation in such a way that it was now possible for reimbursable aid to be extended to South Africa, and had amended procedure on payments in such a way as to make it much more acceptable to nations obtaining assistance from us.

7. Secretary Marshall asked how we should proceed in dealing with this problem and I recommended that the subject is being explored by the South African staff with appropriate Defense staffs with a view to obtaining information regarding amounts of equipment involved, availabilities and costs. Upon receiving this information, if the South Africans decided to request U.S. equipment under Section 408(e) of

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*Regarding the visit under reference, see Perkins' memorandum to the Secretary of State, October 2, p. 1832.*
the MDA Act, a formal request could be submitted by the South African Embassy through the Department of State. I then explained the general features of Section 408(e), as amended, and I agreed to furnish the South African Embassy with copies of Public Law 329 and 621 in order that they could study the provisions under which equipment would be provided (copies were furnished on the afternoon of 5 October).

8. During the discussions the South African delegation did not mention the possibility of a barter arrangement using uranium ore to pay for equipment purchased from the U.S., as was proposed during their visit in August 1949, nor did they indicate why they were unable to meet British financial requirements for any equipment purchased in the U.K.

L. L. Lemnitzer
Major General, U.S. Army

745A.5/10-950
The South African Ambassador (Jooste) to the Secretary of State

SECRET

WASHINGTON, 9 October, 1950.

Sir: In implementation of the undertaking given by Mr. Erasmus, South African Minister of Defence to the Secretary for Defence in the course of the interview on October 5th,1 I have to confirm in broad outline the policy of the Union Government with regard to the defence of Africa, viz.—

1. (a) Any military attack by a communistic power or powers on the Continent of Africa will be regarded by the Union of South Africa as a direct attack upon itself and will be resisted with all the force at the Union’s disposal.

(b) A military threat to Africa might have to be met beyond the confines of the African Continent.

2. In furtherance of its continental defence policy as now enunciated the Union Government has in mind the provision of an expeditionary force consisting of one Armoured Division and an Air Fighter Group of nine Squadrons.

3. The strengthening of the South African Naval Forces to afford adequate protection for the lengthy South African seaboard. A strengthened South African Navy would permit of additional cover being given to allied convoys beyond the northern limits of South African waters.

4. (a) In order that full effect may be given to this policy it will be necessary for the Government of the Union of South Africa to procure the major portion of the equipment it requires from external

1 See General Lemnitzer’s record of the meeting under reference, supra.
sources. For all practical purposes this means from the United Kingdom or the United States of America.

(b) The Union Government's equipment requirements may conveniently be classified into two groups—

(i) that required immediately for the training of its normal peace-time forces, and

(ii) that required for equipping an expeditionary force.

With regard to (i) the Government of the Union of South Africa would follow its normal practice of paying for equipment. Insofar as (ii) is concerned it is the hope of the Government of the Union of South Africa that the Government of the United States will find it possible to extend the least onerous financial terms bearing in mind the fact that the Union Government has already incurred and is committed to heavy expenditure on equipment for normal training purposes and for the equipping of 125,000 men in the event of war, and also that the South African Expeditionary Force will, if and when it is required in the Middle East, be undertaking "front line" responsibilities. The equipment for the Expeditionary Force would not be required until the Force arrives in the theatre of operations.

5. It is my Government's understanding that informal discussions as to the Union's requirements will now take place between the Service Attachés of this Embassy and representatives of the United States Department of Defence. Thereafter the matter will be dealt with further in the light of the information received.  

Accept [etc.]  

G. P. JOOSTE  

*In a note of November 9, Secretary Acheson acknowledged this note and expressed appreciation for the information contained therein concerning South Africa's intentions in the event of a military attack by a communist power on the continent of Africa. The Secretary's note concluded as follows:

"It is the understanding of the Department that informal technical discussions are now taking place between the South African Service Attachés and representatives of the Department of Defense concerning the Union's defense requirements and that the Ambassador will communicate with the Department again in the light of the information which these discussions develop." (745A.5/10-950)  

Editorial Note  

In November 1949 representatives of the Combined Development Agency (an American-British body concerned with atomic energy development) and the South African Atomic Energy Board reached agreement for the basis of subsequent negotiations regarding contractual arrangements for the purchase of uranium. At its meeting on April 25, 1950, the Combined Policy Committee (American-British) approved policy guidance for the conduct of negotiations for the purchase of uranium from South Africa and the response to be made to any South African request for a "special position" in the atomic energy field.
South African Ambassador Jooste called upon Secretary of State Acheson on July 12 in order to express his government's desire, in view of the expected position of South Africa as a producer of uranium, "to associate itself with the 'inner circle' of Western countries in atomic energy." Jooste made it explicitly clear that the South African Government had no interest in obtaining information regarding the manufacture of atomic bombs. Secretary Acheson took note of Jooste's remarks and promised to give them sympathetic consideration. The Secretary took the opportunity to express the eagerness of the United States for an agreement on the contractual terms for the delivery of uranium from South Africa.

In a note of August 24 to Ambassador Jooste, Secretary of State Acheson referred to their conversation of July 12 and gave reassurances that the South African request for a special position in the atomic energy field would be given sympathetic consideration in consultations with the United Kingdom. In the meanwhile the United States wished for rapid progress toward the understandings relating to a contract for the procurement of South African uranium.

On October 2 Ambassador Erhardt was instructed (in telegram 61, October 2, to Pretoria) to deliver an aide-mémoire to the South African Prime Minister or his deputy in which the United States accepted a South African invitation for representatives of the Combined Development Agency to resume negotiations regarding the purchase of South African uranium after the middle of October. The aide-mémoire also invited South African Minister of Interior T. E. Dönges, who was serving as head of the South African Delegation to the Fifth United Nations General Assembly meeting in New York, to visit Washington in order to clarify the South African request for a closer association with the United States and United Kingdom in the field of atomic energy.

Negotiations between representatives of the Combined Development Agency and the South African Atomic Energy Board in Pretoria, South Africa, during October and November 1950 resulted in the conclusion of an agreement on November 23 on uranium procurement.

South African Minister of Interior Dönges visited Washington in December 1950. During a call upon Secretary of State Acheson on December 8, Dönges again raised the question of a special position for South Africa in the atomic energy field. The Secretary expressed certainty that "something could be worked out in the problem."

For further information on the meetings and texts of documents cited, see volume I, pages 493 ff.
SECRET

[WASHINGTON, undated.]

1. Proposed International Bank Loans to South Africa

Mr. Willis pointed out that because of certain unusual conditions the Staff Committee had not submitted a formal recommendation to the Council on this matter. The loans had been under consideration for a considerable period of time, and it was important to note that worldwide economic and military conditions had changed since the original negotiations were begun. He observed that the British were very much in favor of these loans, since most of the goods to be purchased with the proceeds would come from the United Kingdom, and dollars would accordingly flow to the United Kingdom. Mr. Willis stated that the United States' need for strategic materials seemed a very important consideration to the Staff Committee, and that the lack of adequate transport facilities for such materials could well be a limiting factor in their procurement. He also pointed out that short supplies in the United States must be taken into consideration, although most of the material scheduled for procurement under these loans had been contracted for in the United Kingdom. Mr. Willis also observed that most of the dollar proceeds of this loan would be paid to the United Kingdom, and noted the fact that the United Kingdom had released virtually none of its 18 percent contribution to the Bank's capital. He pointed out that these loans would probably not completely satisfy the demand of the South Africans for loans, since their development plans envisaged far greater sums. In conclusion Mr. Willis said that the relation of these loans to the total available funds of the Bank ($71 million) had been discussed by the Staff Committee, and that no real problem seemed to exist in that connection.

1 Lot 60 D 137 is a master file of the documents of the National Advisory Council on International Monetary and Financial Problems for the years 1945-1958, as maintained by the Bureau of Economic Affairs of the Department of State.
2 For this meeting of the National Advisory Council, at which Secretary of the Treasury John W. Snyder served as Chairman, 27 persons were present including officials of the Department of State, Department of Commerce, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, Export-Import Bank, Economic Cooperation Administration, Securities and Exchange Commission, and the Department of the Treasury. Two representatives of the Atomic Energy Commission (Jesse C. Johnson, Manager, Raw Materials Operations, and his Special Adviser, Frank W. McQuiston) were also present as "visitors".
3 George H. Willis, Director of the Office of International Finance, Department of the Treasury, and Acting Secretary of the National Advisory Council.
Secretary Snyder introduced Mr. Jesse Johnson of the Atomic Energy Commission who spoke unofficially on the subject of the Atomic Energy Commission’s interest in development projects in South Africa. Mr. Johnson stated that the development programs, especially power projects, contemplated through use of these loans were of importance to the over-all operations of the Atomic Energy Commission.

The Council agreed unanimously to advise the United States Executive Director of the Bank that it approved consideration of the loans.

Action: The following action was taken:

The National Advisory Council advises the United States Executive Director of the International Bank that it approves his consideration in the Board of Directors of a loan to the South African Electricity Supply Commission (ESCOM) of $30 million and a loan to the Government of South Africa of up to $30 million for the South African Railway System.

*In a brief memorandum of December 28 to H. Merrell Benninghoff, Officer in Charge of Dominion Affairs in the Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs (BNA), Norris S. Haselton, Officer in Charge of Economic Affairs in BNA, reported as follows on the National Advisory Council’s consideration of the proposed IBRD loan project for South Africa:

“This case had been discussed two or three times at the staff level in the NAC where a number of questions had been raised. At today’s meeting of the top council a representative of the Atomic Energy Commission made a strong statement in support of the loan on the grounds that the projected expenditures would contribute to an increased production of gold-bearing ores of direct interest to the AEC. There was no discussion following this statement and the transaction was approved.” (398.14/12–2850)