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## THE IMPACT OF NELSON MANDELA'S TOUR OF THE UNITED STATES

At the request of the Institute four American analysts, well-informed on the subject of U.S.-SA relations, and based in Massachusetts, New York, Atlanta (Georgia) and California, respectively, contributed the following brief assessments of the Mandela American visit to this special Brief Report.

ROBERT I. ROTBERG

Nelson Mandela enhanced his already significant credibility during his virtually unprecedented sweep through urban America last month. He advanced the cause of the ANC immeasurably in appearance after appearance, particularly as a result of his address to the U.S. Congress. No foreigner since Winston Churchill has so seized the imagination of the American people so boldly.

It was less what Mandela said than how he said it. He spoke unaffectedly to groups and to individuals "with a combination of directness and grace that Americans have come to think of as routine for him, if rare among politicians at home," said the *Boston Globe* at the end of his tour.

The *Globe* congratulated Mandela for "framing a political and economic vision that will be attractive and credible to most Americans" It quoted with approval his assertion that democracy cannot function "unless the material needs of the people, the bread-and-butter issues, are addressed." The *Globe* also welcomed Mandela's refusal to "pander to prevailing U.S. attitudes toward capitalism and socialism."

During his U.S. visit, Mandela on a number of occasions said that the ANC was not wedded to nationalization. Rather, he said that "the private sector is an engine of growth and development which is critical to the success of the mixed economy." The *Globe* and other newspapers in the northeast were pleased that he has assured the U.S. Congress about security of investments and his belief in fair rates of return and an overall climate of stability.

Mandela demanded that sanctions be maintained so that President F.W. de Klerk's rapid reform programme would not be slowed. An editorial (leader) in the opinion-shaping New York Times wondered, however, whether the maintenance of sanctions would not "undercut a leader committed to change," and make de Klerk's task harder, especially if he could show little for all his reform efforts. Columnists in the Times and the Christian Science Monitor took a pro-sanctions view, however, Anthony Lewis in the Times asserting that Congress was absolutely right to have imposed sanctions originally, and to maintain them - as the Monitor said - until Mandela called them off.

The one sour stop in Mandela's triumphal tour was Miami. He had earlier praised Fidel Castro, and the exiled Cubans of south Florida hardly welcomed such blasphemy. Nor did most Jews warm to his praise of Muammar el-Qaddafi or Yasir Arafat. Editorial and columnist criticism of Mandela was caustic. Flora Lewis, in the Times, put unease with Mandela's "misstatements" in full perspective when she wrote that the overwhelming reception for him was not just a tribute to the opposition to apartheid. It was also a celebration of human rights, and the American people's overwhelming affection for those who have stood successfully for humanity and finally triumphed over racism.

On those very grounds it was "impossible" to ignore Mandela's praise of Castro, Arafat, and Qaddafi. His excuse was that he had not had time to concern himself with the operations of those leaders. All he knew was that they had helped the ANC. But Flora Lewis wrote, his comments did not merely constitute a double standard; they represented "the narrowest possible single standard." She went on: "If there is no responsibility to assert human dignity except on one's own turf, why should Americans be anymore involved in judging South Africa than Mr. Mandela in judging Libya's terrorism."

That aside, Mandela won the hearts and minds of the American press, and its readers. The nationally syndicated columnist Mary McGrory called him a down-to-earth, tough-minded politician who had Moses-like qualities. He was much more than an elderly icon; he put President Bush in his place, lectured to Congress, and stood tall over all manner of local black and white mayors, governors, and members of Congress. The Globe praised Mandela for "neither sugarcoat[ing] reality to please his audience nor surrender[ing] his principles."

*Prof. Robert I. Rotberg has recently become President of Lafayette College in Easton, PA, after a career at M.I.T. and Tufts University.*

MICHAEL CLOUGH

Nelson Mandela's 11 day visit to the United States was a resounding success. In coming to the United States, he appeared to have five goals in mind: preventing moves to lift sanctions, enhancing the credibility of the ANC, raising funds for ANC efforts to organize inside South Africa, strengthening his own position vis-a-vis President de Klerk, and reassuring Western investors that post-apartheid South Africa will be a good place to invest and do business. He achieved all five goals.

\* He was so successful on the sanctions issue that he hardly mentioned the need to keep pressure on in his address to Congress. Instead, he simply noted his agreement with Bush and Congress that now wasn't the time to lift sanctions.

\* The ANC gained a lot of credibility from this trip. Despite the tiff over Mandela's refusal to denounce Arafat, Qaddafi and Castro, Mandela succeeded in dispelling the lingering perception that the ANC is a "Marxist/terrorist" organization. His speech to Congress, which was carried live by all of the major national television networks, was especially important in this regard.

\* It is important to tell exactly how much money Mandela's trip raised for the ANC, but it was in excess of \$7 million. Moreover, his trip enhanced prospects that much of the money allocated by Congress for democratic parties in South Africa will go to the ANC once it formally abandons the armed struggle.

\* When Mandela enters negotiations with de Klerk, he is now assured of strong U.S. backing. His Congressional speech and his appearances on ABC Nightline and Public television showed him to be a reasonable man firmly committed to negotiations. Especially important in this regard were his comments on white politics, which included acknowledgement of de Klerk's good intentions and willingness to reach out to conservatives. It would now be much more difficult for the government to blame Mandela if negotiations don't move forward quickly.

\* Mandela's meetings with the U.S. business community went very well. he showed a welcome pragmatism in discussing the nationalization question and acknowledging that business could not be expected to invest in a post-apartheid South Africa unless they were assured of a reasonable return.

Beyond these accomplishments, Mandela established himself as a international figure on the level of Havel, Walesa and Gorbachev. In fact, he probably has a higher name recognition rating than any of these. His appeal is especially strong among Americans under the age of 40.

In the black community Mandela is now regarded as a current-day Martin Luther King. It is difficult to describe the emotion that surrounded his visits to Harlem and other largely black communities. Everywhere parents made extraordinary efforts to ensure

that their kids got a chance to see him. Many black Americans now look to Mandela as a symbol that can re-energize the civil rights movement and inspire young blacks.

In short, Mandela's visit probably exceeded everyone's expectations, which is remarkable given the fact that those expectations were so high.

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DR. CEDRIC L. SUZMAN

July 4, Independence Day, is perhaps an appropriate time to sit down and evaluate the impact that Nelson Mandela has had on America and U.S.-South African relations.

From the moment Nelson Mandela arrived in New York it was clear that he was more than just a South African freedom fighter, political prisoner, or even future president of his country. He was a symbol of hope and pride for black Americans, a reminder of what forceful and articulate leadership could achieve, and they came together in their tens of thousands to greet him at every stop of his tour.

Here in Atlanta, leaders of the civil rights movement clamoured to be with him at the wreath laying ceremony at the Martin Luther King grave site and welcomed him at Big Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, the site of so many earlier civil rights sermons. Uniquely, 38 predominately black American colleges and universities joined in presenting Mr. Mandela with joint honorary Doctor of Laws and Doctor of Humane Letters degree at an emotion-laden ceremony at Morehouse College - the Alma Mater of King, Andrew Young, and many other civil rights leaders.

Mandela was also, for all Americans, an embodiment of the fight against oppression and racial injustice everywhere. South Africa and the overthrow of Apartheid were only the vehicle for the larger message. But perhaps because of this, Nelson Mandela, the man not the symbol, was not without controversy. His firm acknowledgment of Yasir Arafat, Fidel Castro and Muammar Qaddafi as champions of human rights, because they have supported the ANC in its struggle, alienated and even outraged many conservative and middle-of-the-road Americans for whom Qaddafi is a total anathema. This position must have weakened Mr. Mandela's longer term ability to influence Congress and the American public. It caused Flora Lewis to write in *The New York Times* of June 30, "if there is no responsibility to assert human dignity except on ones's own turf, why should Americans be any more involved in judging South Africa than Mr. Mandela is in judging Libya's terrorism?"

The ANC also refused to accept funds or other forms of support for the tour from companies like Coca-Cola that still have their products sold in South Africa, even if they have sold or closed their company owned operations. Mr. Mandela also continued to

talk of nationalization and redistribution of wealth in South Africa, although he moderated his position both in private discussions and in his address to Congress. Nevertheless, these positions alienated important players in the corporate community who will be vital sources of investment in the future.

However, from the ANC point of view, the tour was an overwhelming success. \$7 million (before expenses) was raised to support the establishment of the ANC as a political organization in South Africa. There is also little doubt that, at least for the time being, sanctions will not be lifted, in spite of the Bush Administration's leaning in this direction and the rather blunt discussion between President Bush and Mr. Mandela over the ANC's refusal to completely and categorically denounce the use of violence.

Mandela's response was that those concerned over the use of violence would be better advised to pay attention to the emerging right wing vigilantism in South Africa.

Mandela, by holding his ground and convincing the European Community and the United States to continue their economic sanctions, can now enter negotiations with President de Klerk and his government colleagues with as strong a hand as he could wish for.

While President de Klerk received clear support from Mrs. Thatcher, a sympathetic hearing in Europe, and has a good deal of support in the United States for his bold and forward looking moves, this support will quickly evaporate unless he moves forward firmly and quickly with the total elimination of all apartheid legislation and with negotiations for a non-racial constitution for the country.

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ROBERT M. PRICE

The overwhelming reception that Nelson Mandela received from the American people exceeded the expectations of even the visit's U.S. organizers, who could have imagined that her in probably the most conservative and actively counter-revolutionary of the industrialized nations, in the heartland of "imperialism and monopoly capitalism," the leader of the ANC would be received with the respect accorded an international dignitary, and with a level of enthusiasm never before seen for a foreign political figure and beyond living memory for any domestic one? From the moment of his arrival in New York, with the Empire State Building lighted in the ANC colours, to the rally at the Oakland Coliseum just prior to his departure, where some 60,000 cheering citizens waived yellow, green and black pennants, it was clear that not just Mandela the man, but his organization as well, had come to be viewed very broadly in the American body-politic as the embodiment of the struggle for freedom, democracy, and human rights in South Africa and, by example, beyond. When one recalls that until very recently the organization's presence in the U.S.

was confined to a tiny office in Manhattan, and that in 1988 it was branded a terrorist organization by the Defence Department, it simply "boggles the mind."

The way in which the U.S. responded to Mandela is, of course, much more a reflection of the nature and problems of American society than it is a result of a deep understanding of the South African situation. The vast majority of the tens of thousands who so enthusiastically greeted him in each city he visited know little about South Africa and even less about the ANC.

But in terms of the significance of the visit for South Africa and especially for the ANC that is of little consequence. That significance would seem to be in at least three areas:

1. The primary objective of the ANC for the Mandela visit was to prevent a lifting of U.S. sanctions in the near-term. This goal clearly appears to have been accomplished. It seems inconceivable that in the political atmosphere created by the visit, the Bush administration will risk the political fall-out that easing sanctions at this time would produce.

Mandela asked, in a masterful address to a joint-session of Congress, that sanctions not be lifted until the ANC provides the signal to do so. Formal acceptance of this notion is highly unlikely, and indeed Bush Administration spokesmen rejected it. The visit nevertheless created a political environment in which the ANC's and Mandela's wishes will be weighed very heavily before a decision to lift sanctions is taken.

2. The Mandela visit dealt the coup de grace to Gatscha Buthelezi's campaign to become Washington's "great hope" for South Africa. For a time in the mid-1980s the U.S. policy elite appeared ready to embrace Buthelezi as a South African version of the "Savimbi-Muzorewa option." After the Mandela visit that notion seems completely dead and incapable of resuscitation.

3. A foundation has been laid for a special relationship between the U.S. and South Africa in a post-apartheid future. Although the public and private U.S. resources for use abroad are shrinking, and while the claims on what resources do exist are increasing, the American response to Mandela indicates that a non-racial South African democracy will be in a political position to effectively compete for them.

In the weeks ahead we can expect the ANC's critics to become more vocal. Mandela's support for Palestinian rights and his association with Arafat, Qaddafi and Castro, forthrightly stated by him during his visit, are not helpful to him in the American political environment, and they will surely be focused upon by his critics. But already it is clear that the negative reaction to these affiliations has been far more muted and less consequential than would have been predicted prior to his visit. The remarkable thing is how little these associations have cut into Mandela's stature in the U.S. It would be absurd to expect universal celebration of Mandela and the ANC in America, and we should expect the dissenters to become more visible as his U.S. visit recedes in time. But that should not distract us from recognizing the extraordinary advance that the ANC has made within U.S. politics.

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