

MEMO
TO: PAUL
FROM: CHRIS C.

SUBJECT: SCHEDULED EXECUTION OF SOLOMON MHLANGU IN SOUTH AFRICA

THE EXECUTION IS SCHEDULED FOR FRIDAY, APRIL 6

Maguire and Downey sent a telegram to Ambassador Sole of South Africa pleading for a stay of execution on the basis that the execution would damage South Africa's image and reputation and have serious repercussions which S.A. should not ignore.

I talked over the issue of how to respond with a number of people. Most feel uncomfortable, as do I, with any effort to save South Africa from international embarrassment. The public relations approach implies that we would like to have any future executions done in secret so that there will be no problems.

The legal approach is not too strong because according to South African law, he is clearly guilty. We also execute people for capital offenses.

The humanitarian approach is the strongest, I think, that is to argue that this man acted in panic with his partner and that he did not fire his weapon, nor injure anyone. We must do everything we can to save his life.

Still another approach is to condemn South Africa for its inconsistency. S.A. police murder prisoners, beat people to death, shoot indiscriminately at black demonstrators and they (the police) seldom if ever suffer the death penalty. This might be of use once the execution takes place, as a way to attack the South African decision.

This subject will certainly come up if you do not bring it up yourself. Demonstrations have taken place and more are planned. It is being treated along the lines of the Steve Biko affair, but clearly without the depth of conviction and indignation.