

Budget Vote 6: International Relations and Cooperation

Speech by Emma Louise Powell MP, DA Shadow Minister of International Relations and Cooperation

Madam Speaker:

Yesterday, the Honourable Minister Naledi Pandor openly told the international community at a media briefing that the BRICS nations are now actively working together to “challenge the global predominance of values and principles that have been promoted over many decades.”

What are these values that you now seek to challenge, Minister? Freedom? Justice? Tolerance? Universal Human Rights? Democracy?

In the same breath, the ANC has justified their failure to condemn Russia’s invasion of a sovereign state under the spurious auspices of so called ‘non-alignment’.

Honourable Members, imagine the international community had refused assistance to this nation under the same auspices during the apartheid regime?

You see, the plagues of despotism, genocide, and war are only defeated when democracies work together to preserve a rules based international order that respects the right to self-determination; the principle of territorial sovereignty and a rules-based international order.

Democracy in South Africa was not achieved through the barrel of a gun, and civil war was averted because countries throughout the world who shared our progressive vision worked with us to the defeat racial nationalism, oppression, and tyranny.

The hypocrisy of the ANC in turning their back on the very values and global solidarity that helped to ensure South Africa’s freedom from the grips of illegitimate rule is truly staggering.

That a crumbling, former liberation movement which now enjoys less than 50% of the popular vote, is willing to abandon South Africa’s commitment to Constitutionalism, and trade on the fortunes of 60 million people in order to protect an alleged war criminal is the clearest indication yet of the ANC’s desperation. It is now manifestly obvious that the ANC would rather protect its party funding streams by maintaining a patronage network with Moscow, than fight against tyranny.

Honourable Members, the ANC’s intellectually dishonest rhetoric about neo-colonialism is transparent and needs to be called out.

Cadres like to come up here and talk to us about the global ‘South’ being underdeveloped because of raw material and mineral resource exploitation by the West – but the facts tell an entirely different story.

Last year, 36% of SA's exports went to three large Western markets. Machinery, vehicles, electronics, and value-added manufactured goods totalled some 31% of SA exports to the US, whereas a much higher percentage of raw materials were exported to BRICS countries. Almost 77% of FDI stock into South Africa in recent years came from the EU, UK and the US. China and Russia account for a mere a 6.2%.

Russia currently accounts for as little as 0.3% of South Africa's trade ties. South Africa do not even have a trade agreement between BRICS states, whilst trade with the West worth R400bn is now at risk because of the ANC's failure to condemn Russian aggression and the illegal invasion of Ukraine.

Let's also put to bed the myth that somehow the ANC owe a particular debt of gratitude to Russia for assistance provided during the struggle. This is a whitewash of history. The fact is that whilst Soviet Russia provided assistance to the ANC, so did Soviet Ukraine. In fact, more than 328 umKhonto weSizwe fighters were trained at Odessa in Soviet Ukraine between 1963 and 1965, including ex ANC Minister Ronnie Kasrils (<https://www.ancpl.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/camps.pdf>)

Honourable Minister, for many years, the world has watched the direction in which the ANC is taking this nation with increasing disbelief.

South Africa now faces the real risk of being expelled from its single most important trade partnership – AGOA, all because the ANC wants to bend to the will of a Kremlin war monger and protect donations that are being channelled to your party by Russian oligarchs.

As the ANC continues to squander any last remaining goodwill from the international community, Constitutionlists at the highest levels of government are no longer willing to stand back as the ANC plays Russian Roulette with the future of our Democracy.

Let me tell you, Honourable Minister Pandor, you have got high ranking officials in your own Department who are now willing to move against you in order to do what is good and right for the future of this County.

South Africa cannot be held to ransom by ANC lawlessness in contravention of our Constitution and obligations under international law.

As the DA continues to meet with and remind foreign missions that the ANC does not represent the will of the South African people, we will keep shining the torch of freedom, justice and democracy for our Nation.