

South African white-black line could be blurred blood red

By Ad Hudler
Daily Nebraskan Staff Reporter

Racial tensions in South Africa could throw the United States into another Vietnam-type war, according to a UNL political science professor and "African specialist."

Louis Picard said because South Africa is strategically important to the United States, the U.S. government would probably send troops into the area if South Africa's predominantly white government was threatened by a revolution.

Picard, who recently returned from a trip to South Africa, said revolution is possible there because the government practices apartheid, the legal segregation of races. The government is controlled by whites. Blacks, the majority people, are excluded from political activities.

In his apartheid studies, Picard observed "homelands," rural black areas in South Africa. Homelands cover 13 percent of the continent and hold 80 percent of the African black population, Picard said. Picard is studying the political control South African government has over these homelands.

Picard said chances for a peaceful end to apartheid are "slim," but possible. He said peaceful demonstrations, moral

persuasion and international influence (mainly Western) could bring change.

Some African groups are already using violent actions to help end apartheid practices.

One anti-apartheid group, the African National Congress, is responsible for about a dozen bombings and sabotage events per month, Picard said. These events are not frequent now, but they could escalate into "something like we saw in Vietnam," he said.

The recent announcement that South African Bishop Desmond Tutu had won the Nobel Peace Prize will temporarily ease some tension, Picard said.

"The Tutu prize will act as a catalyst," he said. "It will bring many diverse groups together temporarily, both violent and non-violent groups."

Picard is internationally known for his African studies. Besides publishing articles in several periodicals and co-authoring a book, he will address the International Political Science meeting next summer in Paris.

The UNL professor has traveled to 17 African countries since his first visit in 1965, when he joined the Peace Corps after graduating from college. He's been back several times — teaching, researching and learning more about African culture.



Dave Weoley/Daily Nebraskan
Picard



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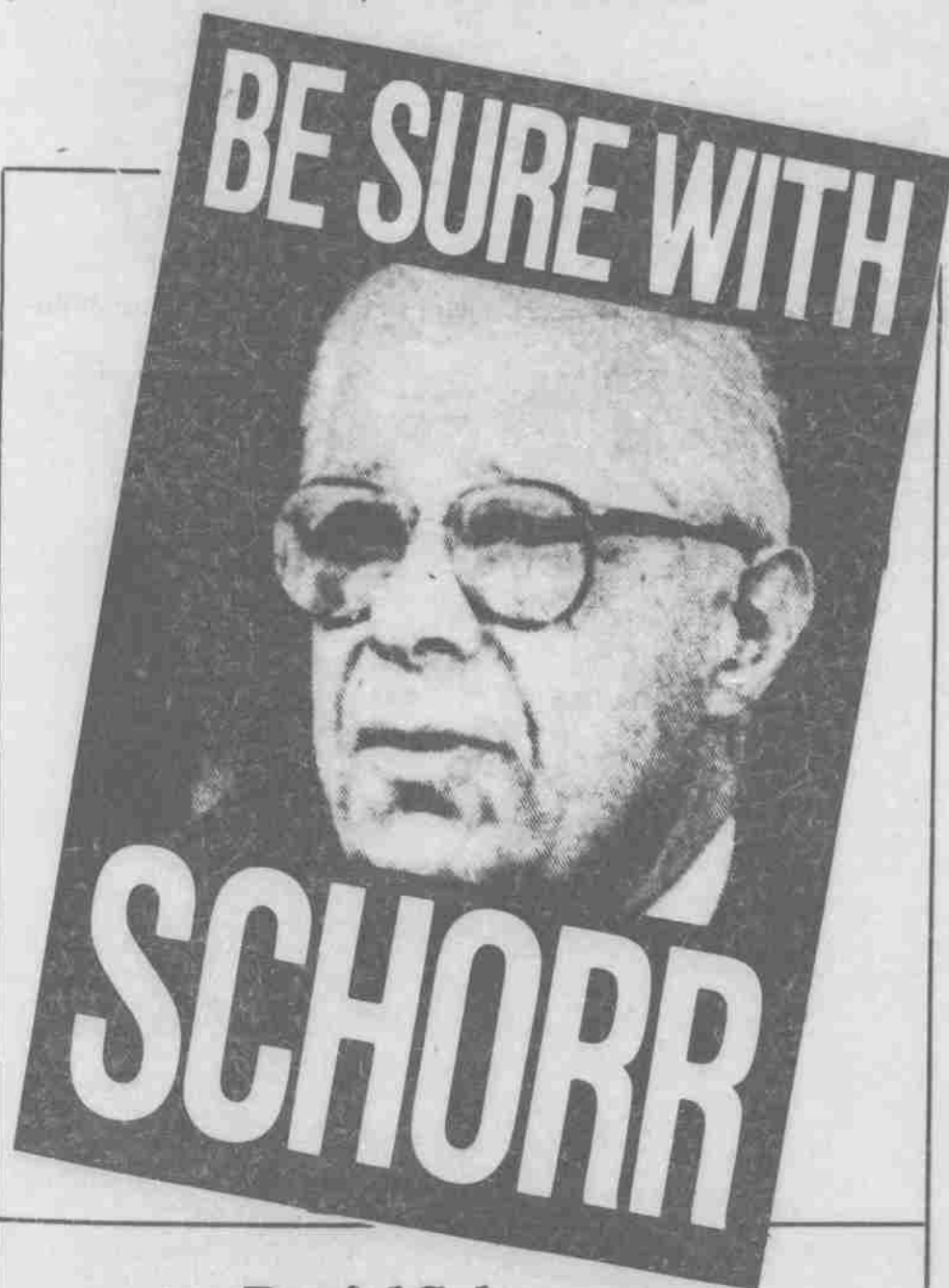
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