

## **QI In-Person Event:**

### **In Conversation with South Africa's New Minister for International Relations and Cooperation, Ronald Lamola**

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National Press Club, Washington D.C.

#### **Trita Parsi 0:01**

Good morning, distinguished guests, esteemed colleagues, and friends. It is a true honor to welcome you all to today's Quincy event, where we will be having the privilege to host the conversation between MSNBC's Joy Reid, and His Excellency, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa, Roland Lamola. My name is Trita Parsi, I'm the Executive Vice President of the Quincy Institute. As we gather here, we are reminded that both the United States and South Africa bared legacy of heart fought battles for civil rights and human freedoms, struggles that have shaped the character and trajectory of both nations. From our joint efforts in multilateral fora from issues such as climate change to economic development, the relationship between the United States and South Africa has been and continues to be dynamic and evolving.

Today, we stand at a pivotal moment where the bonds between the two nations are more important than ever before. In a rapidly changing global landscape, South Africa plays a vital role, not just on the African continent, but also within the larger international community, particularly in fostering cooperation in the global south. As one of the most powerful and influential nations in Africa, South Africa's voice on the global stage represents not only its own interest, but also the aspirations of many nations seeking more equitable, fair, and just systems of international governance along with economic growth and their own rise in the international order. But it goes beyond that. Having peacefully defeated apartheid, Democratic South Africa emerged on the international scene as a moral superpower. Today, some would argue, and I would associate myself with this view, that South Africa continues to play that role through its efforts to end the carnage in Gaza, including through the International Court of Justice. This is of course an issue in which South Africa and the Biden administration don't necessarily see eye to eye, but as we face challenges such as climate change, global health crisis, and geopolitical instability, it's clear that no one country can go it alone, and no one country has monopoly on truth. It is only through collaboration, mutual respect, and open dialogue that we can address effectively the very, very complex issues of today. Here at the Quincy Institute, we are committed to advancing dialogue that prioritizes diplomacy over conflict and cooperation over unilateral action. We believe in the principles of responsible statecraft, principles that recognize the importance of listening to diverse perspectives, respecting sovereignty, and working toward a more peaceful and interconnected world, a world that ultimately also will serve the interest of the United States.

Minister Lamola, your country's commitment to multilateralism and your emphasis on cooperation with emerging powers is not only important for South Africa's development, but also holds lessons for the world at large. We are eager to hear your insights on how we can deepen cooperation between the United States and South Africa, and what is stronger partnership might look like. Also, we're very pleased to have with us Joy Reid, who of course, does not need any introduction, but here one goes anyways. The popular host of ReidOut, at AM Joy and MSNBC. Joy is a graduate of Harvard University, a Knight Center for Specialized Journalism fellow and the author of several books, including most recently, Medgar and Myrlie: Medgar Evers and the Love Story That Awakened America, published earlier this year by Harper Collins. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming Joy Reid and His Excellency, the Minister. Thank you.

#### **Joy Reid 4:15**

Thank you Trita, my friend. When Trita Parsi calls, I answer very quickly and get myself together to be wherever he asked me to be. I have such deep respect for this man, so thank you so much for having me here. Thank you to the Quincy Institute and of course to Minister Lamola. Thank you for being here. I just want to jump right in and ask because we are here, we are in Washington and you are visiting us, so I want to start by asking for you to characterize in your view, what is the nature of the relationship and the status of the relationship between South Africa and the United States?

#### **Ronald Lamola 4:51**

Thank you, Joy, and also to the Quincy Institute for the platform and the invite. We are thrilled as a country to be here. Our relationship with the US has been cordial, dynamic, and evolving, as per the explanation of Joy, and it has been reset after our democracy in the early 90s, initiated by our founding president, Nelson Mandela, and it has evolved over time. There has been challenges from time to time, but it has also been very beneficial. If you look at the various programs the US has steered towards the African continent, including South Africa, AGOA, we believe it has been a mutually beneficial program, which we have benefited through various three platforms, but we also believe so the US and its US companies, including our companies that are creating jobs in the US, it's a mutually relationship not only for South Africa, but for the entirety of the SADC region and also the continent because of the value chains that are interlinked with the South African markets. We've also benefited through PEPFAR in this relationship. As you'll remember, one of the most contentious issues was the HIV and AIDS issue, which these two countries had to overcome. Today, as we speak, life expectancy in South Africa has increased, and in many parts of the sub-Saharan Africa. This is the value that has come through this important bilateral relationship. It continues, it evolves, and we see it from our perspective that it should be a relationship of mutual respect and mutual beneficiation. Where there are contradictions and challenges, such as the issues related to the ICJ, there should be engagement in a mutual, respectful way. From our perspective, it is in that regard that we continue to engage with Washington and with various role players, the institutes, the State Department, Congress, and we do the same in our country with ambassador, and both ambassadors. We see this as a relationship of mutual respect and mutual beneficiation.

**Joy Reid 7:21**

I will note that our current president, President Joe Biden, when he was a United States senator was one of the most forthright opponents of apartheid. He was very vocal, particularly for a white senator, to be blunt, he was very vocally opposed to apartheid and spoke up in that regard. On behalf of the ANC and on behalf of Nelson Mandela and of the black majority in South Africa, how would you evaluate him now as president in the ways in which he has dealt with South Africa? Do you see and feel the same sort of support and strength of support from him today, particularly given the positions that South Africa is taking in the ICJ, et cetera?

**Ronald Lamola 8:04**

Yes, indeed, he was a very vocal critic of apartheid, so are many other Americans. The anti-apartheid movement here was big. We appreciate that particularly even the role that is currently even being played by the black caucus in the US Congress, as we were engaged with the black caucus. It is not only in the US, it's a movement. Even in London, the anti-apartheid movement was huge, both black and white. One of the biggest celebrations of South Africa's democracy, 30 years of our democracy as a beacon of democracy in the world was celebrated in London at the West Minster by more than a lot of people. We really appreciate this role, and I do think that Biden has been one of those presidents who understand the role of South Africa in the geopolitics of the world. It is for that reason that our relationship with the State Department remains very cordial. We agree to disagree. There are instances in this regard, the Russia-Ukraine war, the issues related to the ICJ where we agree to disagree on where we stand, but after engagement, sometimes they get our context. We also appreciate sometimes the State Department will give us some previews. For example, in relations to the summit of the future at the UN, upcoming summit, and in relations to the reform of the UN Security Council, you will know that the position of the African Union is based on what we call the Ezulwini Consensus, that we want two states in Africa to be part of the UN Security Council, which includes the veto power. The United States of America does support, but they say without a veto power, but at least they gave us a preview before they made an announcement, which then is and makes the discussions to be constructive, which we think is a step in the right direction to take the discussion forward.

**Joy Reid 10:19**

I want to come back to that because the United Nations not having a representation on the security council from the global south, from the African continent, stands out as an egregious missing element of the way that global power is enacted. I want to come back to some of these specific disagreements with the United States State Department. Let's start with Russia and Ukraine. What is the position of the South African government as regards the world's condemnation of Russia for invading and occupying Ukraine, its refusal to return territory that was taken from Ukraine, and its insistence in any negotiations must include giving up that territory permanently? What is South Africa's position regarding that?

**Ronald Lamola 11:08**

South Africa's position has been put forward at the various platforms of the UN Secretary Council, and in the various peace initiatives that have been initiated. We have done it in line with article 24 of the UN, the respect of territorial integrity, the respect of the autonomy and independence of the states, that that should be what guides the engagements and the issues. We do understand that there are challenges that have come through because of the view that came through the NATO processes that should be taken into cognizance, particularly by Russia. We have participated in this platform, as you'll remember, including the Africa Peace Initiative where our president led an Africa initiative to engage both President Zelensky and President Putin with a clear view of the respect of that integrity, but also of a peaceful settlement of the dispute. Where the situation has stalled now is with regards to the fact that we, as a country, are of the view that the Switzerland process has to bring Russia into the table because we don't see how you can resolve the conflict without engaging both parties. That remains our view, that we think that we have now participated in all these processes. We have now reached a stage where Russia must be brought onto the table to engage with on these issues to find a peaceful dialogue. As a country, we are anti-war, and it's the same context we have with regards to Palestine. We believe in peaceful engagements and negotiations, settlements of disputes in line with UN charter and resolutions as a prime multilateral platform for settling of disputes. It is in that regard that we are very clear about our condemnation of what we believe is genocide that is happening in Gaza. We think that the multilateral platforms of the UN becomes very important in this regard and they should be strengthened even through reforms to be able to play their role. States, as members of the UN Security Council also have a role to play.

**Joy Reid 13:45**

The international courts, in addition to the rulings, South Africa has led in taking Israel into the international court system over the war that it is conducting in Gaza and making what are very credible claims of genocide there. There's also a separate ruling about apartheid. This comes directly to South Africa's history as a country that emerged from apartheid. Is it the official position of South Africa that what is happening in the occupied West Bank and in Gaza as regards Israel's conduct there is apartheid?

**Ronald Lamola 14:23**

Yes, it is. That's our official position, and it is also a submission we made to that process with regards to the unlawful occupation by Israel of Palestine. That's a submission we made and what led that the court has made a ruling that indeed, the occupation is unlawful and the issues related to annexation, and segregation is almost similar to what we have gone through as a country. It is for that reason that we feel vindicated, that we had a moral obligation than any country in the world to stand up and call for what the state of Israel to be doing to be unlawful but also through our case in line with the Genocide Convention. We feel that we were the right people, the right country, and people who had a bigger moral obligation having lived the

experience of what Palestinians are currently experiencing. We believe that we could be able to give the correct context to the people of the world to give to the people of society, but also to assert the importance of international rule of law, that an international law should be what guides and binds the international community to be able to live together because when there is no law, then it becomes a jungle and there will be no order in the world, but when there is an international rule of law, which has been bequeathed to us by various generations of international diplomats, therefore we are guaranteeing the future of the world in that regard. It's not only with regards to international rule of law, but also in regards to allowing democracies to flourish. Allow people of Palestine for self-determination. We are glad that we have now ran six elections in South Africa. We are a young democracy that has emerged out of very difficult elections recently, but we're doing it on our own and we have listened to the population. I come from the ANC, but we have accepted that for the first time, we have not reached the 50% majority required to govern the country. This context is important because we then said because there has not been this allowance or a popular vote mandate in terms of the 50%, we are still the leading party in terms of majority, but we do not get the 50%. We have got a moral obligation to lead the people of South Africa. We therefore initiated what we now call a government of national unity with everyone to govern South Africa. We believe this is the biggest example of democracy in the world, and also a good example that everyone must emulate. Self-determination is important and we think that is important to allow for the people of Palestine.

### **Joy Reid 17:23**

I'm going to come back to the government coalition in South Africa, but to stay for just one moment with Israel and the Palestinians, and Palestine. If, in fact, it is the official position of South Africa that what is happening in the West Bank in the occupied West Bank and in Gaza is apartheid and if it is the position, as you have said, that genocide occurring, when apartheid was taking place in South Africa, the world's answer other than the United States and the Reagan administration, but much of the world's answer was divestment, it was boycott. It's very controversial in the United States to talk about boycott and divestment when it comes to Israel, but is it the position of South Africa that the same remedy should apply in this case of apartheid as applied in the case of South African Apartheid?

### **Ronald Lamola 18:19**

Indeed, we think that as you have said with regards to the genocide case, we have unlawful occupation, which is now a finding of the court. There is no reason why such should be then be funded through supply either of weapons or of other means that necessitates or makes the war possible. There should be actions taken by member states and countries across the globe to put the necessary pressure to the state of Israel to stop what it is currently doing because if they still have the means to do it, they don't have an incentive not to do it. It is important that the people of the world, governments play a role to isolate and also to ensure that it does not happen. Obviously, there will also be multilateral platforms like the UN, which also put the necessary pressure, but nations on their own have got a duty and an obligation.

**Joy Reid 19:24**

Do you believe that isolating Israel is of a different sort of character than your conversation about what should happen with Russia? Why should there be more engagement with Vladimir Putin than there would be with Benjamin Netanyahu?

**Ronald Lamola 19:40**

As you'll be aware, it has been an historic position of South Africa with regards to Israel. It is over 25 years or over 30 years, it might even be older than me, this conversation about the state of Israel and what is happening in the occupied Gaza and also the West Bank. It has got a context. By the time we went to the ICJ, it's because all international platforms and methods had failed. Going to the UN, all platforms had failed over many, many, many years. As you are aware, the Russia-Ukraine war, while it is devastating, its impact, it's felt across the globe. We are also feeling it in terms of supply chain, but it's relatively new. We must start with the necessary tools of engagement first, and that is what South Africa did through the Africa Initiative, through the various platforms that at least let's start with an engagement to find a long-lasting solution. Even with the Gaza war, we still believe that they still... While we're going to court, we are doing all the other necessities, there must still be engagements politically to find a ceasefire, to find long durable solutions in terms of the rebuild, to allow for humanitarian access, to rebuild the civilian infrastructure.

**Joy Reid 21:15**

How do you feel about, and have you taken in Vice President Kamala Harris, who is now the democratic candidate for president, her positions on these issues, what do you make of them?

**Ronald Lamola 21:29**

I think it's refreshing. It is getting there because when we went to the Court, we were really vilified by all nations of the world, but we are seeing a movement in the sea of change in the various societies across the globe. Even here in the US, in some of the western capitals of the world, there is now a realization and a movement that is pushing for change and the people and societies are beginning to say indeed, there is something wrong that is happening in Gaza. Our governments must act. When I listened to Kamala, I think that she represent that shift that we are beginning to see in terms of what should be held in terms of accountability in the forum, but I believe that there could be more that this country can do because this is a friend of Israel. There is more that it can do to just enable the war to stop, to ceasefire, to allow humanitarian access, to then speak about the rebuild. I believe the US, it is at the most strategic and powerful position to do that.

**Joy Reid 22:53**

Let's talk a bit more about Vice President Harris, who is the Democratic candidate. She recently made a trip to the African continent. She visited Ghana, she visited Tanzania, where she actually lived for a while as a child. Do you see her as having a different view and a more engaged view of the continent should she become president, and how might you expect the relationship between South Africa and the global south to shift or alter if she becomes president?

**Ronald Lamola 23:23**

I believe that you have got strong institutions as the US. Ourself, we also have strong institutions. While individuals can play a role to change course, but the institutions will withstand the test of time. I see, as I've said, that I think she brings a refreshing... Particularly in looking into the African continent to engage and to take us forward, but we can only wish you well for the elections. As I've said earlier on, that we believe you have got a lesson to learn from this young democracy, which is South Africa, that with your elections, it's clear that almost more than 270 million people and with all polls showing that it's not clear, even now it does look like less than 100,000 people will end up deciding the outcomes, particularly in those swing states. With that very close margin, the likelihood is that there will be those who may not want to accept the outcomes of the elections. I think that will be a very set part of this mature democracy in the world. As I've said, we ourselves in the ANC, we have had these difficult elections. If you look, for those who follow South African politics, you will see that there were real challenges. Long queues, disappearance of voting codes and all that. At some point, there was a two hours blackout at the result center. We said as the ANC, it will not be in the interest of the country for us to put more emphasis on these negatives, they immaterial. What should be in the interest of the country is for us to bring everyone together to form a government despite these challenges. I know you're not a parliamentary... It is not a proportional system. It's different, but they will never be perfect elections.

**Joy Reid 25:34**

Beware, you might get hired as a pundit on MSNBC. Your analysis is very astute. Let me ask about the other candidate for president, Donald Trump. He has not made positive comments about Africa, about the nations in Africa, doesn't seem to show great deal of respect for this continent, which is the youngest continent on earth. It has the youngest net population. We're talking about a billion people who are potential consumers, producers. The global south is rising, and South Africa is a leader of the global south. How would you expect to engage with him if he were to become president again?

**Ronald Lamola 26:14**

We'll hope that he will see and prioritize the African continent, he will see us as an important player in the global geopolitics and also, as you have said, with the huge population of more than a billion, which is relatively young with its potential can be unleashed with the agenda 2063 of the African Union, and also the recent agreed upon AFCTA, which creates one of the global

markets in the world, a trading platform. We think that there is value to engage with Africa in that regard, and help with the modernization in terms of industrialization and various platforms. Many companies of the US have played this role in the past in the African continent, and they're still playing it. We are looking forward that even whoever becomes president must still continue to encourage the companies in this country to continue to play their role in investment and also to modernize the continent.

**Joy Reid 27:21**

Let's talk about a couple of the challenges on the continent, which have also been described as genocidal. We're talking about Sudan, and my father's country, the Congo. My maiden name is Lomena. I have a connection, so I'm going to speak as a daughter of Africa.

**Ronald Lamola 27:35**

Which Congo?

**Joy Reid 27:36**

The Democratic Republic of Congo. Kinshasa is where my father was from, the outskirts of Kinshasa. There are a lot of challenges in the DRC, obviously. They are struggling also as a democracy, but with violence that continues to play part of that country and obviously what's happening in Sudan and the exploitation of the Congolese people by foreign companies, like Apple, etc., that want the minerals under the earth. What is South Africa's engagement on the continent to try to stem some of those challenges and the exploitation that countries like Russia and China are doing on the continent, which they also want the resources but don't necessarily care about human rights or the people?

**Ronald Lamola 28:24**

Firstly is that we play our role in the continent under the auspices of a multilateral institution, the AU. You will realize that that's where we usually prefer, AU, UN, SADC, and in this regard, we're a part of the mission that is seeking peace in the DRC. We have played that role for over many years since President Mandela to date. As we speak, South Africa is part of what is called the SAMIDRC. Our soldiers are there to give some kind of stability and space for a political engagement that is aimed to resolve the conflict in the eastern part of the DRC. There are various processes, the Eastern Africa Initiative, led by President Ruto, but there's also what we call the Luanda Process, which is aimed to... It's referencing from the Eastern Africa Initiative. We are working with them with Angola, the president of Angola, who is currently leading the Luanda Process to engage all the parties in the war in the Eastern DRC to find long-lasting peace, which while we have deployed our soldiers, we believe we have deployed them as part of the SAMIDRC, the SADC and the UN, a platform to enable these discussions to happen. We're hopeful that a political solution will be found and we have welcomed the ceasefire that was found some month ago for the eastern part of the DRC. We believe that it will give more



chance for this political engagement for a long-lasting solution. Same with the Mozambique. You'll be aware where it also deployed SAMIM in the Cabo Delgado in Mozambique where there was a conflict, some terrorists, and it's stable now and we had to withdraw because that situation has been stabilized. We think that we have to resolve the challenges, underlining reasons in some of these areas. While there's terrorists and all that in many parts of the continent, but there is an underlining reason of unemployment, poverty and all. That, we have to help, all of us in the continent to resolve, in our country to resolve. That's why we need to ensure that our economies grows through the various platform, the AFCTA in a part of the AU. It's the same in Sudan, but the Sudan one is a more complex one because of the more external players or parties that are also complicating the whole situation in Sudan. The AU platform that has been initiated, we are also aware that the United States of America is also engaging the process which we are also participating in to support a process to bring all the parties together as to how do we resolve this issue to find the ceasefire, to engage on resolving the conflict also in Sudan? This is our approach in the whole continent where we play our role at the multilateral platform of the AU and SADC. As a country, we are very clear that we are anti-war. We want to see a peaceful resolution of disputes in any part of the continent under the auspices of what the AU calls the silencing of the guns.

**Joy Reid 32:05**

Let's open this up to questions. Please raise your hand and the mic will come to you. I do have one more question at the end, but I'm going to go right here.

**Ryan Grim 32:16:**

Oh hello, there's pressure from the United States Congress for South Africa to withdraw its case before the ICJ. Is there any response to that?

**Ronald Lamola 32:27**

Yeah, we have not had the pressure. While members of Congress do point out that they're critical of our reasons of going there and we have seen some reports, but there has not been direct instruction. We always say that even when we engage with Congress, we think that we should be engaging each other at mutual respectful way. We engage to persuade members of Congress that our decision to take the case to the ICJ is based on international law. We are asserting the international rule of law. We are acting within the institutions of the United Nations. It's in terms of the rules, in terms of what has been established, there should be no issue about us going there to the Court and using these platforms that democracies have taught us that this is how you should resolve disputes. We have not carried any gun, we have not sold guns. We have just said we're using these rules of the UN, we're using the platforms created and this should be welcomed by any democracies in the world, particularly the United States. It is our context as we engage with Congress that this is a correct thing and we'll be proceeding with the case. We will be filing the memorial as required by the Court at the end of October.

**Joy Reid 33:59**

Any other questions? Here and then... Yes, here. Right here.

**Q&A #2 34:08:**

Thank you. Thanks very much for the opportunity for this discussion. The resolution that's coming up in the United Nations in a couple of days is designed to implement the advisory opinion of the ICJ about the illegality of the occupation. One part of it speaks to the question of stopping the flow of arms. You mentioned that South Africa is not sending arms in these conflict zones. The United States, of course, is the main supplier. Could you describe the position of South Africa on the need for an arms embargo to stop the flow of arms that are enabling the genocide that's underway in Gaza? Thank you.

**Ronald Lamola 34:50**

Yeah. No, we think that there should be indeed the position that does not allow the sale of arms to Israel. With the context of the findings of the case, a plausible genocide, we know that it's not final. There are still going to be merits and so forth, but there is grounds. At face value, it does look like selling of arms to Israel fuels the conflict and so forth. We think that that discussion is necessary.

**Joy Reid 35:25**

Is there a broad consensus about that in the AU from your position? Is your position shared by a majority of countries in the African Union?

**Ronald Lamola 35:35**

Obviously, I can't speak for the AU, but there is indeed the broad consensus in the AU about condemnation of the actions of Israel, about the role that it is playing in the Gaza Strip related to human rights, and so forth.

**Joy Reid 35:52**

How is this affecting Israel's relationship with the global south because we are seeing the global south rise and really take an assertive role in the world. How is it affecting the broader relationships with Israel?

**Ronald Lamola 36:06**

Yeah, it does affect it. As you're aware, in the AU there was an attempt to have Israel as an observer status, which we objected to, and many countries of the AU objected to. This also does affect trade and so forth but at the end, we do think that there should be a political

engagement that the US is a very important player. We welcome what happened in Qatar, which is aimed to find some solution, ceasefire, bringing all the parties. At the end of the day, that will lead to a long-lasting solution in line with UN resolutions.

**Sarang Shidore 37:01**

Sarang Shidore, Director of the Global South program here at QI. We are very privileged to have you over today, and thank you for your presence. My question was actually building up on something you just said about trade. We at QI are a proudly trans-partisan organization, but what we see today is a consensus in a bipartisan sense that is abandoning the ideas of more open trade and turning into a regime of greater and greater tariffs, and also a much more of a obstructionist approach in some ways to the World Trade Organization. With all its flaws, it is the rule of law, it is international law today. What is South Africa's message to the United States, to the American people, and to all of us on the question of a more open, more rules-based, more system of open trade that upholds international law? How do we get back to that?

**Ronald Lamola 38:04**

We place a huge premium on international law because it can't be changed will. We think that the world should revolve around this notion of a rules-based society respect for international law. The institution of the WTO are very important, but we are concerned, obviously like any other country, that some disputes in the WTO really take very long. By the time a resolution is found, technology has evolved in some of the disputes that arise. It's also within that context that we see the importance of AGOA to be modernized, to be expanded, to enable the current value chain that has been developed under AGOA to flourish and not delink any of the countries because that value chain has been built over years. We can only build from there, and also it can be a platform where we can engage including on issues of critical minerals, the industrialization of the African continent itself, and so forth. That's how we view it and that is where we continue to engage.

**Joy Reid 39:26**

To build on that point, I think that because for so long, Africa has been seen as a source of mineral wealth to benefit Europe, to benefit the west, and not as a partner to develop wealth for the people of the continent. That has been the relationship, whether it is enslavement, or whether it's colonialism, that is the history of South Africa. How do we get from that frame of exploitation, of the west viewing Africa as just a place to go get minerals to make our things, and to see the continent more as a partner?

**Ronald Lamola 40:03**

Yes. That's why we talk about partnership now. Anywhere we go as an African continent, and the AU is currently developing a partnership strategy for the African continent and also as individual countries at bilateral level. That is the message we send everywhere we go, to most

of the developed countries in the world that we are seeking partnership. To see value-add being done in the continent in terms of the beneficiation of such critical minerals, local manufacturing, and the AFCTA, as I've said, which is a bigger platform. We'll still enable local trade and also be a gateway for a number of countries. The big companies will still make money in the African continent through that platform of the Africa fair trade area through ensuring intra-Africa trade value-add and beneficiation. In fact, there is more money they could make because it cuts all the cost of transportation and all that, so there is a case to be made and we believe that the developed nations of the world, they should also see it from this context and play a role in terms of incentivizing their companies to invest in the continent, various ways that they can still get the products but benefitate them in those continents and find a workable model that is mutually beneficial.

#### **Joy Reid 41:36**

Any other questions? One and two. One, two, and three. We have once, two, three more. I think that's about how much time we have. One, two, three.

#### **Q&A #4 41:45**

Good morning. Thank you so much for taking my question. How do you respond to the connection that some are making to the IJC South Africa and Iran, that Iran put pressure on South Africa financially?

#### **Ronald Lamola 42:04**

I guess you mean the ICJ. We don't have any pressure from Iran either financially or physically, or in whatever form. If you look at the trade between Iran and South Africa, it's very low, so there could not be any financial pressure. The only pressure we have in South Africa, it's a moral pressure from the apartheid history that we have. We felt we are duty-bound, we have got an obligation in terms of the Genocide Convention, which is not just international law, which we respect, but it's also domesticated by our parliament. We had a duty to act in this regard and that is the reason. The other issues of financial pressure or incentives, really there is none in whatever form.

#### **Joy Reid 43:06**

Who has the mic now? I think it was this direction. Okay.

#### **Q&A #5 43:12:**

Hi. Mr. Lamola, if you were a visiting professor at an American university teaching foreign policy students, and adding to Joy's point of the existing mindset among the global north foreign policy establishment, which roots itself into the colonial mindset, post-World War II mindset, what would you teach them? What should new graduates in foreign policy from American universities

and in the west and the global north in general learn from you and South Africa to bridge this gap between the global north and the global south?

**Ronald Lamola 43:52**

That the world has evolved. It's not 1960. As you engage and interact now with the African continent, it should be with different mindsets and the policy shift in terms of value-add, help the continent in terms of industrializing, help us solve our domestic challenges; unemployment, poverty, and inequality. That, you can do it still making money. I think for me, in terms of geopolitics, that you also cannot instruct these countries. Allow them to play their independence as a sovereign state, but persuade them. We reason. If you say to us we think you are wrong and these are the reasons, if your reasons are valid, we will be persuaded. That is the message that we always send to all the capitals that we can engage, we understand, and that's why we really appreciated when the US gave us a preview of the announcement they were about to make about the two Security Council positions because if they just made an announcement, we will have reacted differently but because they give us, we understood the context, we said no, at least you are putting something on the table for discussion. We get it.

**Joy Reid 45:26**

Does China take that same approach? Because China seems to be very aggressive on the continent. Are they interactive in the way that you're saying that the United States is?

**Ronald Lamola 45:37**

If you read the recent outcomes of the FOCAC platform, which we also view as a multilateral platforms to further enhance our development, it does unequivocally state the position of non-interference. We were very clear that that should be in the statement directly in our relationship with them, that there must be non-interference in political affairs of each and every country. The countries must be allowed to take their own independent positions, but we always welcome when they come to help us with the issues of value-add in the continent industrialization. If you look, you will see the various investment in terms of infrastructure that enables some of the modernization and industrialization in the continent. Indeed, some extraction still do happen and so forth, but the recent outcomes of FOCAC are very clear pointedly in terms of industrialization.

**Joy Reid 46:44**

Okay, and I think we had a question here.

**Q&A #6 46:51**

What role does South Africa see for the new expanded BRICS in the world, and what does it see as its own role within the organization?

**Ronald Lamola 47:03**

We see it as a platform of the developing south to expand trade with each other, to exchange views on geopolitics, to also expand in terms of enabling some value-add in each other countries platforms. We see our role as a country also initiating moves that will strengthen that role of the global south. Also ensuring that the developmental agendas that each part of those member countries, we also take it into some of the multilateral platforms like the UN, the WTO. We see it as that part of a cooperation.

**Joy Reid 47:55**

Minister Lamola, thank you so much for this conversation. I do believe we are out of time. I'm trying to keep my eye on my timekeeper, but I want to thank you. This was a robust conversation. I really appreciate it, and I hope you all have enjoyed the conversation between Lamola and Lomena.

**Ronald Lamola 48:16**

Thank you.

**Lora Lumpe 48:18**

Before you get up, sir, sorry. I want to add my thanks. I'm Lora Lumpe, the CEO of the Quincy Institute. I want to thank His Excellency, Ronald Lamola, for giving us the honor of being with us for his first public appearance in Washington as the new Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa, and we want to thank Joy for leading us in a spirited conversation. Thanks to all of you for joining us. If you're not familiar with the Quincy Institute yet, I invite you to check us out at [quincyinst.org](http://quincyinst.org), as you see all over this backdrop here, where you'll find out about our six programs that we have undertaken, one of which is our Global South program, headed by Sarang Shidore, through which, we seek to fundamentally transform US foreign policy and make it fit for the 21st century. I also invite you to check out our online publication, called Responsible Statecraft. You join a million other readers per month in getting a fresh take on US foreign policy and a new approach and new direction. With that, I invite you to mix and mingle, and eat the biscuits. Thanks again to Minister Lamola, Ismael Esau, Ambassador Modlomo, and your colleagues from the embassy. Thank you so much, and thanks to all of you. You do us honor. Thank you.