

Panel to recommend Perkins

Black expected to be next U.S. ambassador

WASHINGTON—The Senate Foreign Relations Committee is ready to recommend the Senate confirm Edward J. Perkins as the first black U.S. ambassador to South Africa.

Sen. Nancy Kassebaum, R-Kan., chairman of the panel's African subcommittee,

Perkins, said if confirmed he would take up his new post in Pretoria in November.

During testimony Monday, Perkins was asked whether he supports the sanctions approved by Congress and enacted into law over President Reagan's veto.

"It's not a question of

Perkins, 58, said he will drop the use of the controversial phrase "constructive engagement" to describe Reagan administration policy toward South Africa.

He said he will expand contacts with all elements of South African society, black

player" in South African politics.

Perkins, who most recently has served as U.S. ambassador to Liberia, said he hopes the fact he is black will serve "as a small example to South Africa of how a nation's strength may rest on its diversity."

And he appeared to suggest that his race may help open doors to South African blacks, saying in his opening statement that he intends to "listen carefully to the views of South Africans inside and outside the government."

"I think the United States ought to be a facilitator (in the dismantling of the apartheid process) if the South African want us," Perkins said.

He said he understands "there is some skepticism in the minds of South African blacks as to where we stand" in view of President Reagan's resistance to imposing sanctions by law.

"But I think we are now in a position to move beyond that," Perkins said. "I need to do everything I can do to tell South African blacks that America does care, that we do stand for their aspirations."

Perkins, who was born in Sterlington, La., and is a

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resident of Portland, Ore., is a 1967 graduate of the University of Maryland and holds a doctorate in public affairs from the University of Southern California.

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Confirmation Hearing— Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., left speaks with Edward Perkins, nominated by President Reagan for ambassador to South Africa, after confirmation hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Monday.

said the Senate could act as early as Wednesday on the Perkins nomination.

Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., said he anticipated no serious opposition from the Democratic side, and

whether I support the sanctions," he replied. "I support the law."

"The president himself has said the sanctions bill is now the law of the land," Perkins said.

and white.

And he said he will, soon after his arrival, seek to meet with jailed black nationalist leader Nelson Mandela, whom Perkins called "a

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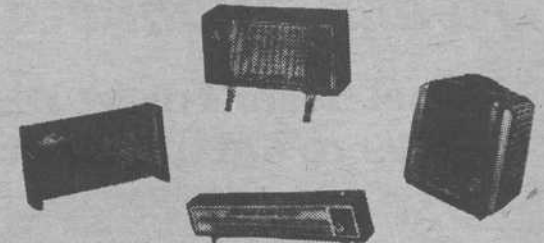
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